# Central Jersey Orchid Society Newsletter

**March 2020 Issue**

## President's Message March 2020

**Today I received an email from D&R Greenway stating they have cancelled all events at the Johnson Education Center for the rest of March and up through April 5.** Since our April meeting is scheduled for April 1, as of now the meeting has been cancelled. I will keep you updated if there is any change in their policy.

I want to thank everybody who came to the meeting this past Wednesday for their cogent comments and suggestions. A special thanks to Jonathan Weiner who ran the well orchestrated discussion. For those of you who could not attend I want to try to summarize what transpired. The discussion focused on how our club should be run and structured. A suggestion was made that we just be a social society and not be strapped by bylaws. The majority were not in favor of this approach. The bylaws from 53 years ago were handed out. It became clear that we needed updated bylaws before proceeding with selecting a new slate of officers for the 2020-2021 season. A bylaws committee was formed with Luanne as chair. The plan was for the committee to report back at the April meeting. Clearly this will have to be delayed until CJOS can have another meeting.

I know everyone saw the rambling diatribe that Chris sent to all the society members. He and I had a private conversation which I thought went well but obviously he did not. I wish Chris well and hope he continues to pursue his orchid passion.

Yesterday I spoke to Graham Wood of Lehua Orchids. The plan was that he would send 4 dozen Paphs in spike for our April meeting. The cost including shipment will be an amazing $12 per orchid. Since this is not a profit making venture that will be everyone's cost. If we have any left over they will be sold at the auction. Obviously this plan may have to be modified if our meeting schedule is changed. I will contact Graham informing him of the situation.

Following the bylaws discussion (whenever it will be held) we will have our annual question and answer session. Please bring your problem orchids and any questions you have for our panel.

The date of the auction is now also in limbo. When it is held it will be an internal one at the Johnson Education Center. Please start looking through your collection for orchids to donate. These can be either divisions of your plants or others that you no longer wish to raise. An accompanying photo would be very helpful to enhance the bidding. Make sure your plants are healthy and disease free.

My fondest hope it that all of you stay healthy during this pandemic.

David

## Orchid of the Month

**Tolumnia No ID- Joe Thomas**

**Newsletter Contents**

## Meetings and Events 2019-2020

Meetings, 7:00pm, are held the first Wednesday of the month at the at the Johnson Education Center (D&R Greenway Land Trust) One
Preservation Place Princeton, NJ 08540

**Sept**: Ed Weber: Topic TBA

**Oct** Wayne Hollenbach Topic TBA

**Nov:** Richard Ho: Mounting orchids and their Care.

**Dec:** Holiday Party

**Jan:** David Off of Waldor Orchids

**Feb:** Bayard Saraduke

**March:** David Rosenfeld **WHO WERE THESE GUYS: 19TH CENTURY ORCHID PERSONALITIES.**

**Apr: Meeting Canceled: D&R Greenway Building Closed**
Event will be rescheduled if possible - Potting party / panel discussion.

**May:** Auction

**June:** Annual CJOS Picnic

## Officers and Committee's:

President -David Rosenfeld
orchiddoc@comcast.net

Vice President -TBA

Treasurer/Secretary -Anne Skalka
anne@skalkacpa.com

Refresments – Joy Gabriel
joy.a.gabriel76@gmail.com

Editor Newsletter- Ed Frankel
Edsharkf@yahoo.com

# JUDGING March 2020

## Cattleya:

**1.Rlc (Blc) Lawless Romeo 'Delight': Jlm. M.**

**2.Pot. Hsinying  Pink Doll 'Hysinying' AM**

**3. Slc. Vallezac: Jim M.**

# Dendrobium/Oncidium:

1. **Onc. Sweet Sugar 'Lemon Drop' HCC: Jeff Tryon**

**2.. Onc. viperanum: Jlm. M.**

**3. Den. Micro Chip: Jeff T.**

# Vanda/Phals:

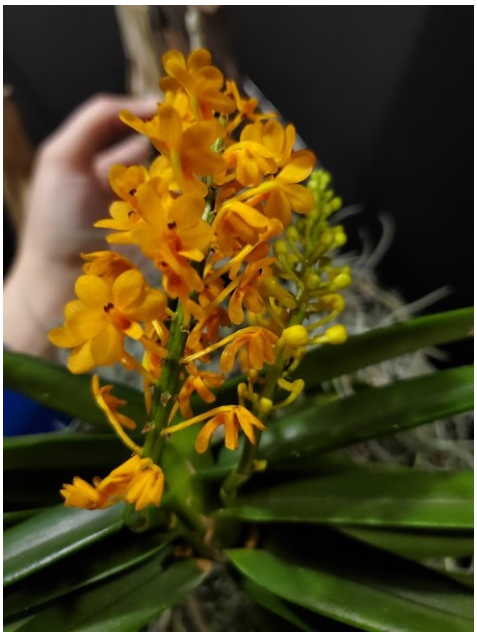
**1. Phal Snow Princess: Karen K.**

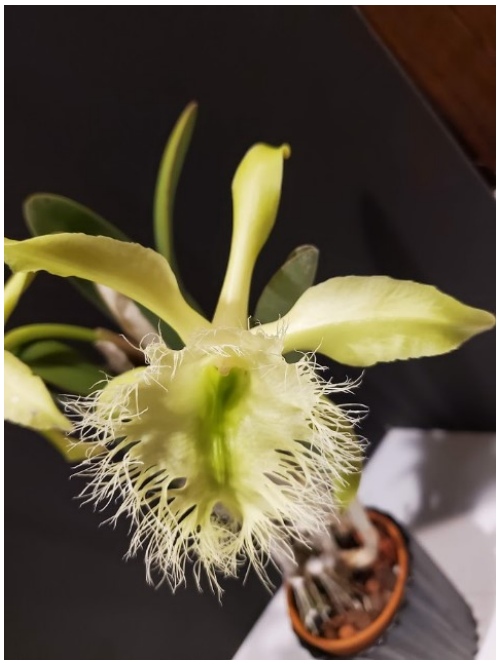
**2. Phal NOID: Ed and Pam F.**

**3. Phal Taida Blush: Michelle A.**

# Species:

**1. Den unicum: Rachel L.**





**2. Rhyn. bigbyana: Chris B.**

**3. Asco. garayi: Jaime S.**

# Other:

**1. Tolumnia NOID: Joe T.**

**2. Aerangis Valley Isle somalensis x mystacidii):**
**Jaime S.**

# Paphs/Phrags:

**1. Paph NOID: Renee Jolley**

# Orchid of the Month:

**Tolumnia No ID- Joe Thomas**

## ***How Do You Grow?***

**Each month, I would like to show a member's growing methods/conditions. We started with ours. Please send me pictures of your growing conditions (summer/winter)** edsharkf@yahoo.com No submission this month. Let's get some pictures of your growing space

# American Orchid Society


## Upcoming AOS Webinars for AOS Members

Greenhouse Chat March 2020

Ron McHatton

Thursday, March 19th, 2020
8:30pm EST

Orchid Q&A


A Junior Orchid Show

Barbara Schmidt

Tuesday, March 31st, 2020
8:30pm EDT

How to involve kids in orchids

**Please support the American Orchid Society (AOS)**
**Become a member there are so many benefits and you are supporting a great cause.**

**JOIN at AOS.ORG**
**Go to their website and see all the valuable information the Society provides**

# CULTIVATION

**The following is reprinted with permission from the St Augustine Orchid Society**

*Approximately 350 flowers on 70 inflorescenses on Sue Bottom's Dendrobium Micro Chip 'St. Augustine' CCE/AOS (aberrans x atroviolaceum) which scored 90 points at the Jacksonville Orchid Society Show in March of 2015.*

## Grown-Up Orchids

Beginning with Mature Orchids Offers Advantages
by Ken Slump

It's ironic that most of us acquire our orchid plants at an immature stage, often waiting patiently for years for that first flower. Once they reach blooming size and begin to thrive, we all too frequently spend the rest of our days struggling to confine their mass to a volume we can manage. Few of us have the facilities that would allow us to grow all of our orchids to specimen size, and most would prefer to maintain several different blooming-size plants in the space it could take to grow one monstrous example. That may be good for the divisions table at your local orchid society, but not so good for those, like myself, who thrill to see large, mature orchid plants in the glory of full bloom.

Certainly those hybrids and species classified as miniatures are more manageable, and the orchids with monopodial growth habit may be a bit easier to keep as the years go by. Still, I'd wager that most orchid hobbyists (who live in temperate climates) have collections that are grown primarily in pots of 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter or less, and a remarkably small percentage of plants grown in pots with diameters of eight inches or more. Grown-up orchids, however, often seem to have vim, vigor and vitality that is unmatched by their smaller divisions, and it is unfortunate that few such specimens are seen.

CULTURAL AWARDS It is safe to say that among the AOS awards that require the greatest effort are the CCM (Certificate of Cultural Merit. 80 to 89 points) and its companion award for higher scoring specimens, the CCE. These awards are a testament to the grower's ability and do not reflect on the quality of the orchid flowers per se. Photographs and slides of these winners often elicit oohs and aahs when viewed, and in some cases, one cannot help but think the exhibitor deserved an award simply for wrestling the large plant to a site where it could be judged.

If you are considering growing some of the plants in your orchid collection to specimen size, it is wise to put a bit of thought into your selections. Vigorous growers that produce multiple leads are logical candidates. It is also smart to choose a species or hybrid that produces rather long-lasting flowers, and lots of them. For sheer impact, you may he happier with a specimen that opens its flowers simultaneously rather than sequentially. Mature orchid size varies considerably, so give some thought to how large the orchid plant you choose may eventually become.

*Two hundred eleven flowers topped this Anguloa xacostae 'Marsh Hollow', CCE/AOS (hohenloii x eburnea), which scored 96 points at the Toronto Judging Center. The 44-inch (110-cm) specimen had 36 leafless pseudobulbs and 17 immature growths when it was judged. Grower: Glen and Heather Aim. (Certificate of Cultural Excellence, 90 to 100 points). Photo: Michael MacConnaill.*

One such plant in my collection is an example of Brassocattleya Maikai 'Mayumi', HCC/AOS (Brassavola nodosa x Cattleya bowringiana). Like many B. nodosa hybrids, it grows rather quickly into a specimen plant of manageable size. The flowers, for a Cattleya Alliance hybrid, are also comparatively long lasting. Mine is currently growing in a 10-inch (25-cm) pot.

Consider the growing medium and container for your specimen orchids. You do not want to have to repot such plants often, if ever. I've seen some beautiful specimen orchids grown in baskets, both wooden and wire, sometimes without any growing medium at all. When media is used, it should he one that deteriorates slowly. Coconut husk and tree fern outlast bark. Inert materials such as expanded clay (Aliflor) and charcoal may last years but have no nutritional value so fertilization practices must be adjusted accordingly. Smaller-scale orchid specimens can be grown on cork or tree-fern slabs. I know one grower who has produced handsome specimens in wire baskets with coir or fiber liners that were filled with rather coarse bark.

CONTAINERS If pots are used, clay has an advantage over plastic in this application because it is important that the large volume of growing medium often needed does not become soggy or stale. Even if large clay pots are used, some thought should be given to providing a mechanism for allowing the growing medium in the center of the pot to have an opportunity to dry out between waterings, or the roots in that area will surely rot. I solved the problem for my Bc. Maikai by inverting a small clay pot in the center of a 10-inch (25-cm) azalea pot before filling the larger clay pot with growing mix. The little pot provides a permanent air space that eliminates the soggy zone.

There usually comes a day when even the best-cultivated and -managed orchid specimen must be divided and repotted. Fortunately, such plants often produce large vigorous divisions that will reestablish quickly. Always remember that this is a great time to share divisions with your fellow orchid society members and friends. Regrettably, the award for the best-grown plant in various categories at many orchid shows is seldom much of a contest. Where are all those plants with multiple leads and inflorescences? Like many show hopefuls, I suspect some specimen plants are among those that finish flowering just before show time or open right after the event. Nevertheless, I hope everyone has a few plants selected from their collections that they are trying to grow to specimen size. With a little forethought, it is a pursuit worth the extra effort.

*Six inflorescences displayed 48 flowers and 10 buds on this specimen of Phaius schlechterii 'Haley Suzanne', CCM/AOS. The 22-1/2-inch- (56-cm-) tall plant earned 83 points at the Deep Cut Orchid Society Show. Grower: Glen F. Decker, Photo: Charles Marsden Fitch.*

*This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in January 2004 (Vol. 73:01, pp. 10-12), reprinted with permission*

## Good Grooming

How to Make Your Collection Work for You
by Ken Slump

Before you pack up your flowering orchids and head off to your orchid society's show table or AOS judging center, or to enter the nearest orchid show, take a few minutes to make sure each of your plants looks its best. First, carefully inspect every plant for insects or disease. Be sure to check the undersides of leaf surfaces and axils and even the backs and interiors of the flowers, where pests can often go unnoticed. A cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol may be all that is required to eradicate them. A buggy plant may be regarded as a pariah at an orchid society show table, so you should expect infested plants discovered at orchid shows and AOS judging centers to be disqualified by the judges or show committee.

Do not be afraid to remove fading or unattractive foliage as well as old blossoms from your plants. The same goes for any remaining dried stems from past inflorescences. Dead canes or pseudobulbs, as well as dead aerial roots, should also be removed. Remember that a leafless pseudobulb, such as those on some dendrobiums, is not necessarily dead.

Dried leaf tips can be cut off with a sterilized cutting tool, and if so desired, the dried sheaths on canes or pseudobulbs can be carefully peeled away. Try wetting those with a spray of water to make them easier to remove. If they are stubbornly attached, you may have to wait for them to mature a bit more before you can remove them successfully.

Some exhibitors prefer to detach the dried sheath from any inflorescence that has one, but this must be accomplished with great care or you may unintentionally break or cut off the flowers. Orchid foliage that is badly spotted by fertilizer sprays or mineral deposits from the water should be cleaned. Do not use commercial leaf polish or leaf shine. These leave an oily, overly glossy appearance that is both unnatural and unattractive. Milk is my personal favorite for cleaning plant foliage. A milk-dampened paper towel that is gently rubbed over the leaves will often clean them in a single application, but the process may need to be repeated to remove stubborn stains. Milk also leaves the foliage with a natural, healthy looking luster. Other growers favor lemon juice for a similar result.

Finally, study each plant individually and determine if staking or wiring could enhance its symmetry or floral presentation. Plants frequently grow in odd directions or produce their flowers in less than ideal postures, both of which might be easily improved with judicious staking. Such mechanics should be as unobtrusive as possible but can frequently impart stature and beauty to an otherwise ordinary looking specimen. Keep in mind that good staking and wiring leaves the plant with a natural appearance and does not produce rigid results where the subject appears lashed to the stake. Good staking can truly turn a plant that appears rather ordinary into a winner.

*Proper grooming ensures the best presentation of orchids, such as with this Neostylis Pinky 'Orchidgrove', HCC/AOS (Neof. falcata x Rhy. gigantea).* Photo: Charles Marsden Fitch, Grower: David L. Grove, PhD

Also be certain that each plant is able to stand firmly without falling over. Since many orchids are grown in lightweight plastic pots of a relatively small size in relation to the plant, they are frequently top-heavy, and are susceptible to considerable damage when they topple. It is not uncommon for the other plants on a shelf or bench to help prop up each other, so when you pull one for display, you may need to place its container inside a heavier pot or cachepot to help ensure stability.

Orchid plants cultivated in hanging baskets and on mounts present special problems when the need arises to display them individually. If growth habit and root development allow, hanging plants may be placed on a sturdy base that elevates them a bit above table height. It is a good idea to secure the plant's container to its support, if possible, to avoid a calamity it the plant is nudged or moved by an unsuspecting onlooker. Tape, wire or cable ties may suffice, depending on the materials of the container and its support. Be sure to remove the wire hanger if you are not hanging the plant.

However, often the only way to effectively display hanging or mounted plants is to suspend them, and this is the time to tap into your creativity. The best solution to the problem will be portable, lightweight, unobtrusive and yet stable. Brackets that fasten to the tabletop, wire mesh stands, old lamp bases and small pedestals all offer possibilities. Do not expect your orchid society, judging center or orchid show committee to solve this problem for you.

It's a good idea to water every plant thoroughly and allow them sufficient time to drain before transporting them for display or competition. Once they are entered in an orchid show, you probably will not be able to provide them with more than an occasional misting once the exhibit opens to the public. The plants you take to the orchid society show table or orchid show should be respectable examples of their type and a credit to you as their grower. A few minutes of attention to grooming and preparing them ahead of time will help ensure that they are both.

*This article appeared in the American Orchid Society Orchids magazine in January 2005 (Vol. 74:01, pp. 14-15). Reprinted with permission.*

## Styrofoam

by Sue Bottom

The woke may hate Styrofoam due to its persistence in the environment, but it can be repurposed by orchid growers in many different ways. Most commonly, Styrofoam packing peanuts are placed in the bottom third or quarter of the pot for drainage. It is sort of the opposite of semihydroponics, where the Styrofoam provides an air filled space in the bottom of the pot while the potting media holding water and nutrients is in the upper part of the pot. When you repot several years later, you find the happy orchid roots growing through and around these Styrofoam peanuts.

Styrofoam is the trade name used in the United States and Canada for expanded polystyrene foam, registered by Dow Chemical for its insulation and craft products. Styrofoam peanuts are widely available as packing materials. Some caution against using the colored peanuts although I have never suffered any ill effects from using them. The green ones indicate they have been made with recycled materials, the pink ones are treated to be anti-static, but sometimes the white and green ones are treated to be antistatic too. Do avoid the starch based biodegradable peanuts that dissolve in water. Styrofoam is often custom molded to be used as packing for electronics and other products, although this type of foam is sometimes too thick and rigid to be easily used when repotting. Better to find the sheets of insulation that can easily be broken up into chunks appropriate for the pot size you are using.

*Here very healthy roots are actively growing into the mixture of sphagnum moss and Styrofoam prepared as described. Photo by Phil Spence.*

*After only a short while, vigorous root systems can be established. Note the absence of any necrotic root tissue. Photo by Phil Spence.*

When using Styrofoam packing materials as drainage in the bottom of the pot, don't just put a big slab in the bottom of the pot. You want to break up the pieces into angular chunks to maximize the air space between them. The bottom middle of the pot is the area of the pot that retains moisture for the longest period of time, and if you fill the entire pot with potting media, this is where the root rot will begin, particularly if you use organic components like bark in your potting mix. The Styrofoam does facilitate water draining from the pot, but more importantly, it provides a reservoir of air at the bottom of the pots that orchid roots can tap into.

Styrofoam can be used in potting mixes iin addition to or in lieu of sponge rock, providing porosity and airiness to the potting mix without worry about it decomposing like bark. It does not hold moisture or absorb salts, so Styrofoam is a good counterbalance to sphagnum and peat based mixtures that tend to be water and salt retentive. The major disadvantages are that the light particles are easily windblown and spent mixes cannot be easily reused in the garden.

Phil Spence wrote a letter to the AOS Orchids magazine editor in June of 2016 about his experience with Styrofoam. Of particular interest is how he uses it with small seedlings:

*At first, I used to just rub pieces of a sheet of polystyrene over a 0.5-inch (1.25cm) sieve and use the particles that went through the sieve… I now use a byproduct of architectural mock-ups and formations that is kibbled into small beads and sold as packing. These small pieces are about 0.19–0.25 inch (5–6 mm) in size and have a rough surface from where the little beads were torn apart.*

*I sieve out the pieces larger than 0.25 inch (6 mm) and use them with New Zealand pine bark and a small amount of charcoal for my larger plants. The smaller polystyrene pieces are best for deflasking and my seedling losses are minimal.*

*I mix it dry at the following ratio: sieve dry, compressed (not super-compressed) sphagnum moss (use a mask to prevent breathing the dust) through a 0.5-inch (12-mm) sieve and place this sieved sphagnum in a storage container. Then mix nine parts of the small polystyrene to one part of sphagnum moss…*

*When I pot deflasked seedlings, I dip the seedlings in an antifungal mix with added iron chelates to help with the loss of chlorophyll, and then I allow the seedlings to dry on newsprint. Once dry, I pot them in flats with the above dry mix. Then I lightly mist spray with a rooting hormone. I place three labels in the seedling flat so as I can take one out to use as a copy for writing more labels when repotting. This flat is placed on a heating mat or a bed of jumbo-sized sponge rock. Roots do not venture into the sponge rock as they prefer the above mix. I mist the seedlings for 60 seconds twice a day, first misting around daybreak and then about an hour before dark. Feed the seedlings in the normal way.*

***Here a mature Latouria Dendrobium is happily growing in a medium containing Styrofoam chunks. Photo by Phil Spence.***

***A compot of vigorous Cymbidium seedlings growing in a mixture of sphagnum moss, white Styrofoam particles and charcoal impregnated Styrofoam. Photo by Phil Spence.***

Styrofoam is a recyclable material. If you flip over the Styrofoam from egg cartons, meat trays, etc., you will see the recycling symbol with the letter 6. You cannot add it to your curbside recycling, but Publix and presumably other grocery stores will accept the foam products in their recycle bins. Styrofoam peanuts can generally be brought to UPS or a pack and ship location where they will be reused as packing materials. Electronics and appliance packing Styrofoam is more difficult to recycle with few drop off locations, the closest to us being DART Container Corporation in Plant City. Friends bring me their Styrofoam, and I happily use it when repotting orchids.

Citations

Spence, Phil. 2016. Letter to the Editor, *Orchids*. 88:6, pp. 410-411.