



CLUB NEWS



Steve Hawkins

June 6 Monthly SAOS Meeting

by Lola Stark,
seacuter@bellsouth.net
and Janis Croft,
croftie1984@gmail.com

Welcome and Thanks.

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Schimmel at 7:15 pm with 55 people present. Bob welcomed seven visitors and recognized

our newest members from south Florida, Anne Whittaker and Amy Bromsfield, who joined because they appreciate our website. He also thanked Jeanette Smith, Dianne Batchelder, Barbara Dinkins and Dorianna Borrero for their wonderful refreshments and reminded all to enjoy while dropping a dollar in the jar.

Business. Linda Stewart recognized our three birthday people with free raffle tickets. Our guests are also given a free raffle ticket as a way to welcome them. Gail Marshall recognized Sue Bottom as a new feature writer in the AOS magazine Orchids and Terry Bottom for his accompanying charts and photos. Gail also noted that Sue is now on the editorial board of the American Orchid Society.

- Mike thanked all of the SAOS members who clerked at the Jacksonville Orchid Show and stated that the judges commended all the volunteers that helped.

- Penny Halyburton, SAOS Librarian, brought in two books on Oncidiums and reminded all members that there is a list of library books available to borrow on the SAOS website. Just email her with your selection and she will bring your requested book(s) to the next meeting.

- For those in need of supplies, there are potting mixes and fertilizers for sale at the side table every meeting. There are a variety of choices available.

- Bob reminded all to attend the next Keiki Club (May 18, 1 to 3 pm) at his and Yvonne's home located at 702 Wilkes

Court where we will be discussing Summer Orchid Care and also splitting an Oncidium. Bring a pot if you want a cutting.

- The next Repotting Clinic at Ace Hardware on U.S. 1 is Saturday, June 7 from 9 am to 1 pm.

Orchid Events. The Volusia County Orchid Society Show is this weekend. Mark your calendars for the best

orchid show on the Florida east coast, The Redlands, May 16 to 18. If you've never been, you should go. There will be vendors from all over the world.

Program. Steve Hawkins, The Orchid Specialist from Apopka, spoke about growing oncidiums. He discussed general oncidiums culture as well as the special care required for Psychopsis and Tolumnia oncidiums. Oncidiums are easy to grow. Called Dancing Ladies, one of the original hybrids was Onc. Gower Ramsey.

Temperature. He suggested growing them outdoors during the summer months under a tree or in a screened area. Most oncidiums grown in our area can only handle temperatures down to 45 degrees and he advised to err on the side of caution during our winter months. There are some types of oncidiums such as those with Odontoglossum crispum and Miltoniopsis that can handle much cooler temperatures, but these types cannot tolerate our summer heat. Hybrids with Brassia and Miltonia like Miltassia, Brassidium, Beallara etc. tend to have very good heat tolerance. Steve also



Mike comments on one of Steve's growing points

Continued on page 3



CLUB NEWS



Upcoming Orchid Events

May

- 10-11 Volusia County Society Show
Volusia County Fairgrounds
- 16-18 Redlands International Orchid Festival
Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead
- 18 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm
Summer Orchid Care
Yvonne and Bob Schimmel's Home
702 Wilkes Court, St. Aug 32086

June

- 3 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Potting Without Pots
Michael Polen, Art Stone Orchids
- 7 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 10 JOS Meeting, 7 pm, Topic TBA
Bill Thoms, A-doribil
- 22 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm
Repotting Phalaenopsis
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home
6916 Cypress Lake Ct., St. Aug 32086

July

- 1 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Fred Keefer, Auctioneer Extraordinaire
Summer Orchid Auction
- 5 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 8 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
Paphs and Their Culture
Thanh Nguyen, Springwater Orchids
- 27 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm
Growing Different Types of Orchids
St. Augustine Beach City Hall
2200 SR A1A S, St. Aug Beach 32080

August

- 2 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 5 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Watering, Water Quality and Fertilizer
Sue Bottom, St. Augustine Orchid Society
- 12 JOS Meeting, 7 pm
How to Care for Your Orchids
Roundtable Question and Answer
- 17 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm
Understanding Your Plant Label
Moultrie Oaks Clubhouse
245 Wildwood Drive, St. Aug 32086

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

President	Bob Schimmel schimmelr55@bellsouth.net
First Vice President Program Chair	Sue Bottom sbottom15@bellsouth.net
Second Vice President Publicity Chair	Yvonne Schimmel yrs58@bellsouth.net
Secretary	Lola Stark seacuter@bellsouth.net
Treasurer	Bill Gourley wgourley@bellsouth.net
Directors at Large	Penny Halyburton phalyburton@comcast.net Jeannette Pacetti jdp187@aol.com Linda Stewart lindstew@hotmail.com
Exhibit Committee Chair	Harry McElroy cymbidiuman@msn.com
Librarian	Penny Halyburton phalyburton@comcast.net
Membership Committee Chair	Linda Stewart lindstew@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editors Webmasters	Sue and Terry Bottom bottomt@bellsouth.net
Operations Committee Chair	Jeanette Smith jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com



CLUB NEWS

Continued from page 1

reminded us that most orchids do better with a minimum 10 to 15 degree drop in temperature at night as a general rule of thumb.

Light. When growing outdoors, oncidiums like patterned, dappled light and most will bloom at least once and up to three times a year with spikes appearing out the side of the bulb. If you don't get blooms, it generally means your plant is not getting enough light. One way to tell if your oncidiums are getting enough light is to check the color of the leaves. If they're dark green, they need more light. Oncidium plants like more light than phalaenopsis but less than cattleyas, somewhere in the range of 1500 to 2000 foot candles. Also the type of light (indoor vs. natural sun) can affect the color of the flowers. When you bring your plant indoors during cold spells, keep them by a bright window. If you put them in a dark garage during cold snaps, two to four fluorescent bulbs kept 12 to 18 inches above the plant foliage work well.

Potting Mix. Steve uses a 50% coconut shell mix, 30% sponge rok and 20% sphagnum for most oncidiums. For larger plants, he has been using a medium Rexius bark that can last up to 5 years. For these, he uses an 80% bark, 10% sponge rok and 10% sphagnum moss mix. He considers the Rexius Bark much superior to the Sequoia bark that rots so rapidly.

Watering and Fertilizing. Steve waters weekly from the top and thoroughly wets the potting mix. He uses a weak fertilizer (20-10-20) every watering, 1/2 teaspoon per gallon. He is on well water so he adds a pinch of Epson salts per gallon that supplies additional magnesium and sulfur. He also uses Peters 15-0-15 once a month for calcium.

Psychopsis. Steve discussed the specifics of growing *Psychopsis papilio*, the Butterfly Orchid. These flower at the end of the stem and shortly after the flower drops, a new flower appears on the same stem end. If you have multiple spikes, each spike will bloom on a different cycle. They like lower light than other oncidiums types. They hate having their roots disturbed during repotting so it is advisable to use a mostly inert mix, like clay pebbles.

Tolumnias. These used to be called Equitant Oncidiums and they grow on twigs in their natural habitat. It is a miniature that likes to dry out fast and thrives in small pots. It is better to divide the plant and keep it in small pots,



Jeanette & Shirley catch up during the break



Dick counting up ballots for our first ever 'Three-way Tie'

never larger than a 3 inch pot. He uses small clay pots with half inch charcoal pieces and waters twice a week. This one also reblooms on the same stem so don't be in a hurry to cut the flower spike. These plants like bright light, and light intensity can alter the flower color.

Pest Control. Strong plants resist infection. Watch your struggling plants closely for the common mealy bug and scale. For these pests, he uses a systemic insecticide containing imidacloprid like Merit, Marathon, Temprid or one of the Bayer products. He also uses an oil spray like Neem and sprays every 7 to 10 days once infected. Never use dormant oil on your plants. For thrips, he alternates spraying Temprid plus Orthene twice ten days apart and then alternates to Neem Oil, soap and Avid. He advised spraying during the cool part of the day either in the morning or the evening. Don't spray when the plant is under moisture stress so spray a day after, not the day before, watering. Steve ended his talk by answering questions from the audience.

Meeting Conclusion. After a short intermission, Dick Roth announced that we had a three way tie for the Member's Choice Award: Linda Stewart for her *tolumnia* Rdc. Angel Heart, x Rdc. Velvet Queen, Harry McElroy for his *C. skinneri* f. *alba* 'Cherokee' and John VanBrocklin for his *Paph Oberhausens* Diamant. The raffle table was the final event of the evening with Bob Schimmel, Christie Peppard and Dianne Batchelder presiding. Thanks to Melody Loll for running the computer and all of those that stayed and cleaned up the room.

Thanks to Watson Realty and Jeanette Smith for the use of their meeting space at 3505 US 1 South



CLUB NEWS

May 18 Keiki Club

Summer Orchid Care

Yvonne and Bob Schimmel's Home

We'll talk about how to water and fertilize your orchids, provide enough of the right kind of light and make sure your orchids get enough fresh air to maximize their growth during the summer growing season. Bring a folding chair and any plants you have questions about. Guests and visitors are always welcome. Call Bob or Yvonne at 794-7676 if you have any questions.

Where: Yvonne and Bob Schimmel's Home

702 Wilkes Court, St. Aug 32086

When: May 18, 1 to 3 pm

June 3 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Potting Without Pots

Michael Polen, Art Stone Orchids

Michael Polen of Art Stone Orchids in St. Petersburg will talk about potting orchids without pots. His program will address mounting orchids in different ways instead of using pots for them and show members and guests different techniques for hanging orchids. Art Stone Orchids has been a premier supplier of orchids and potting supplies since 1986. Michael will have supplies, mounts and orchids for sale and will be glad to answer any questions.



April 27 Keiki Club

Potting Without Pots

About 20 familiar and new faces came to the April potting without pots session at the Bottom's home. We talked about the difference in orchid care for mounted orchids stressing the importance of daily or more frequent watering for most mounted orchids depending on the type of mount:

- Plaques, cork or wooden mounts that don't hold water can be used as either a horizontal or a vertical mount. Because they hold no water, they generally have to be watered daily during the growing season and every second or third day during the winter. Mary brought her phal mounted on a flip flop and showed how to attach a B. nodosa to its mate.

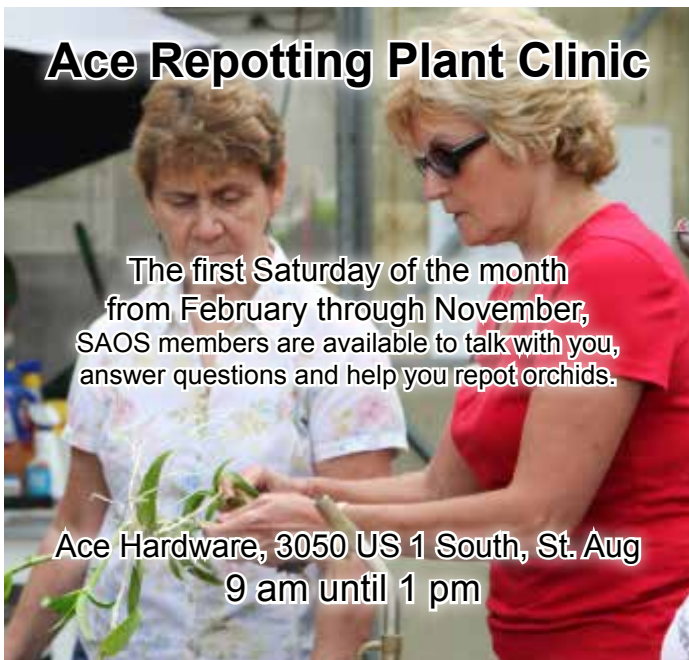
- Tree fern mounts can also be used and the roots will grow into the mount. Because the tree fern retains some water, watering every other day during the summer is generally enough. Baskets are a neat way of providing the aeration around the roots that orchids love. The orchids can be placed in plastic, wooden or metal baskets with or without potting media. Those potted without media are essentially mounted and enjoy frequent wetting. If potting media is used in the basket, the material chosen will determine watering requirements so a coarse freely draining mix requires more frequent watering than one with lots of organic matter. Tree fern baskets are a very attractive way of potting up smaller orchids and keikis

Bill Gourley brought divisions of a red cattleya Slc. Tutankamen and yellow oncidium Onc. sphacelatum and Sue Bottom had divisions of a smallish white cattleya Bc. Lindleyi along with a few others to share. We had many interesting mounts when we were all done and are looking forward to seeing the fruits of our labors on the Show Table!

Ace Repotting Plant Clinic

The first Saturday of the month from February through November, SAOS members are available to talk with you, answer questions and help you repot orchids.

Ace Hardware, 3050 US 1 South, St. Aug
9 am until 1 pm



INSPIRATION



Brassidium New Start 'Galaxy'

© Terry Bottom 2011



CULTIVATION

Your Orchids in May based on Robert Scully articles, courtesy of the AOS



General Growing Tips. Summer is right around the corner. Now is the time to maximize growth and develop the plant strength and food reserves needed for good flower production. Larger plants typically produce bigger and better flowers than smaller ones so resist the urge to divide your plants just for the sake of having more plants. Recycle your clay or plastic pots but be sure to sterilize them first along with any wire products. Do not reuse potting mix or drainage material.

Cattleyas. Get a head start on dividing cattleyas by severing the rhizome in whole or in part (at a point where you will have 3 to 5 pseudobulbs per division) with a sterile tool while the plant is still in the original pot. The new growths will emerge weeks later at which point you can finish repotting using a rhizome clip to secure the divisions. Continue feeding cattleyas with a dilute fertilizer solution with each watering and flush with fresh water monthly.



Cymbidiums. Finish repotting these elegant orchids if they are bursting out of the pot. If the medium is in good condition, you may be able to move the plant from one container to another with the addition of a small



amount of medium and not disturb the roots. Keep the pots moist and syringe the foliage frequently, particularly if you have moved the plant into brighter light.

Paphiopedilums. This is the ideal month to complete repotting of your lady's slippers. Prepare a fresh terrestrial mix (say 85% bark, 10% peat and 5% charcoal). Remove dead roots and keep as many growths together as practical. The single flowered types should be in shade though the multiflorals like more light. Keep root zone moisture levels high (though *Brachypetalum* types generally like drier conditions).



Phalaenopsis. Repotting plants that have finished flowering is a priority. When you repot, remove the old inflorescence and eliminate all rotten or completely dehydrated roots and cut the roots back to about 2/3 the depth of the new pot. Remove also the dried bottom section of the old crown until you reach fresh tissue. Resume fertilizing when new roots become visible. Consider a spraying program with a recommended fungicide.



Vandas. Some plants may need more room for root development. If your plant is in a wooden basket, simply drop it into a larger size basket. If your plant has become top heavy and unsightly, cut away the top part of



the plant as long as this section has three roots to sustain it and rebasket it being careful to secure it so roots will not be damaged in the wind. Keep the bottom section of the plant in the old basket as it will usually sprout keikis at the base and be well established by the end of the summer.



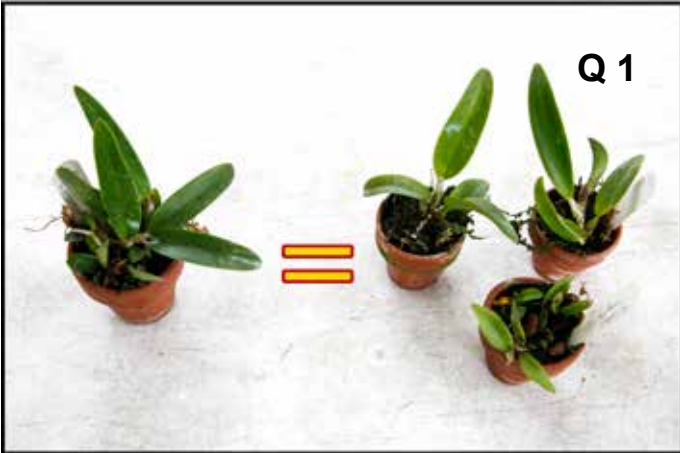
CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@bellsouth.net

Q1. I have ordered some compots that will need to be repotted. What is the normal way to repot baby plants? Do I need to sanitize them?



A1. Community pots, or compots, usually contain anywhere from 10 to 25 plants and there will likely be several large plants, some medium size plants and some runts in the pot. Get the best quality sphagnum moss you can find, some styrofoam peanuts and small clay pots, like 1" or 2" clay pots. Once the plants in the compots are totally overgrown in the compot, you'll take them out, wrap some sphagnum around the roots and drop the plant in a tiny clay pot. Clump the runts together into a second mini compot. You can treat them with fungicide (like pool algacide) and root stimulator (like Superthrive) as a soak before repotting or as a drench after repotting.

Q2. What is causing these black marks on my vanda leaves?



A2. That is the bane of the vanda grower's existence, the dreaded Thai crud, caused by the fungus Guignardia. The



black diamond shaped lesions that feel like sandpaper are actually the spores getting ready to spread more fungal disease around your collection. Some people coat the lesions with clear nail polish (closing off the stomata in the process), others remove the leaves to remove the source of infection from spreading to their other plants. Once thought to be incurable, monthly spraying with the specialty systemic fungicide thiophanate methyl will help exclude this fungus from your collection. You can order 6 oz of ThiomyI online for less than \$30.

Q3. I have a white phalaenopsis that has roots coming out where the flower spikes normally emerge. During the flowering season there were three separate sprouts in between the leaves that would normally be flowers but ended up being roots. Can you give me an idea what is causing this?



A3. Roots forming between leaves is perfectly normal. Phals are monopodial orchids which simply means they grow upward along a stem with new leaves emerging at the top and new roots and flower spikes from along the stem between leaves. If your plant is only throwing off new roots rather than flower spikes, perhaps it did not receive the low night temperatures this past fall that are the signal for the plant to form flower spikes. Let your plants chill down to 55F at night for 2 or 3 weeks during the Halloween cold snap we always seem to have and then bring them inside to their winter home. You should see flower spikes by Christmas and flowers by Valentine's Day.



CULTIVATION

Tolumnias, Equitant Oncidiums

by Anita Aldrich, August 1994 AOS Bulletin
Reprinted with Permission from Anita Aldrich



Anita's Growing Area

The group of orchids now called Tolumnia were at one time called Oncidium section Variegata or commonly referred to as "equitant oncidiums". The foliage seldom exceeds 6 to 8 inches in height, and a 4-inch pot can house a "specimen" plant. The leaves are arranged in pairs overlapping or straddling one another at the base, accounting for the popular term "equitant" (derived from the Latin meaning riding avhorse). Most of the species produce growths at short intervals along the rhizomes, resulting in a compact, clumping growth habit. A few, however, possess elongated rhizomes that create rambling tangles of growth. Flowers are produced primarily in the spring on 12- to 18-inch inflorescences that are often branched on older plants. Some types have much shorter, bouquet-like displays.

Compared with most mainstream genera, the Tolumnias have been hybridized for a relatively short time -- about 50 or so years. The short time it takes to reach flowering size (approximately 2 1/2 years from pollination to bloom) has enabled breeders to make significant advances in just a few years. Today's hybrids offer an astounding array of colors and patterns not seen in the species. Their petite size and ability to adapt to a fairly wide range of conditions make them suitable for growing spaces under lights or on windowsills. The key to growing Tolumnias is understanding their natural habitat. The species are endemic to the Caribbean Basin with many confined to a single island. Most of the species involved in modern hybrids are found in intermediate to warm conditions growing on twigs where they are exposed to bright light and air movement. Moisture is provided by high humidity and by daily rain showers or heavy dews. Due to constant air movement by the trade winds, plants never remain wet for long.

Temperature and Humidity Grow Tolumnias almost anywhere an intermediate range of temperature (55 to 90F) and relative humidity of 50 to 70 percent can be provided. Those cultivated in windows or under lights benefit from summering outdoors where climate permits.

Light Provide bright, diffused light that is somewhere between the optimal for phalaenopsis and that for cattleyas. The general rule of thumb is if shadows on the orchid bench are just discernible, the light is about right. Plants that are growing well but reluctant to bloom usually need an increase in light intensity. Once conditioned to high light, tolumnias are fairly tough, but when moving tender plants to a higher light situation, increase their exposure gradually to prevent burning. This is especially true when moving plants outdoors for the summer.

Watering This is the most crucial aspect to success with tolumnias. There is no hard and fast rule for how often to water. Only close observation of your conditions will indicate frequency. Plants must dry out between waterings. Drying will be faster outdoors than on a humidity-enhanced windowsill. Damp, cloudy days will retard drying while



*Tolumnia Golden Sunset
'Maili', AM/AOS*



CULTIVATION



Tolumnia Loveable 'The Hollow', AM/AOS

bright, breezy days will hasten it. Plants on mounts can be misted daily because drying is rapid, but those in pots must be observed more closely for complete drying. The adage "if in doubt, don't water" applies here. Avoid misting or watering during the heat of the day. Water that collects in the overlapping leaf bases can reach "cooking" temperatures and severely damage plant tissue, especially the tender young growths.

Fertilizing In the natural habitat, plants are bathed with nutrients derived from decaying plant and animal matter with every rain. So, for cultivated plants, frequent and dilute feeding is the preferred approach. A balanced fertilizer applied every second or third watering at half to quarter strength should be adequate. Flushing with plain water between feedings is important because residual salts can damage the roots.

Mounting and Potting Frequency of watering and selection of substrate are closely integrated. The objective is to achieve the proper combination allowing for good irrigation with adequate aeration and rapid drying of the root area.

Mounting is the method of choice; at least for a start. Twigs, cork bark, small wood or tree-fern plaques all work well. Place a pad of moss or coconut fiber around the roots and secure the plant to the mount with monofilament line or strips cut from nylon hose. A daily light misting will help establish growth. If plants on mounts show a tendency to shrivel despite regular waterings, this may indicate conditions drier than optimum. Pare off some of the mount without disturbing the plant and simply set it in a clay pot (with no medium). This procedure may afford just the right amount of extra moisture around the root area. If conditions still seem too dry, sift potting mix into the container around the base of the plant. The medium used should be porous and drain readily.

For those just starting to grow the tolumnias, this step-by-step procedure causes minimal trauma to the plant while it and the grower are getting acquainted. As you observe the results you will be able to choose the method that works best in your conditions.

Problems The airy, bright and dry cultural preference discourages most disease problems. Mealybugs and scale are encountered most and may be dealt with simply by direct removal using a cotton swab soaked with ordinary rubbing alcohol. For larger infestations, wettable powder formulations of Malathion or Orthene (used according to manufacturer's directions) provide efficient control. Cygon seems to be toxic to the plants and should be avoided.

Unless plants are cultivated in a basket, a 3- to 4-inch pot full is the maximum size to which a plant should be allowed to grow. When this size is reached (every two years on average), divide and repot the plant. Otherwise, as the central part of the plant begins to decline it may affect the healthy portion through bacterial or fungal rot. Repotting should be done when new growth begins in the spring to assure quick establishment in the new quarters.

And wait ... don't cut off that spike after the first blooms fade. There is often a secondary spike waiting to form and provide several more weeks of bloom.



Mounted Tolumnias



CULTIVATION

Does My Orchid Have to be Repotted?

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@bellsouth.net



Repot. *This encyclia will be happier when dropped into an 8" pot.*

We get more questions about repotting than any other subject. Some folks never repot their orchids because they are intimidated by the whole process, so their potting mix ultimately rots causing their roots to rot and their orchids are well on their way to orchid heaven. Other folks repot their orchids several times a year because they say their plants are just not blooming for them. Their plants never get a chance to get established, so they too will soon find their way to orchid heaven. There are really only three reasons I can think of to repot an orchid.

Repot All New Additions Before Adding to Your Collection. I almost always repot an orchid I bring home, immediately if it is not in bloom. If I buy a blooming orchid, I enjoy the flower and don't touch the roots until the plant is bloomed out. Then I pot the orchid in my mix of choice for that kind of orchid. All my cattleyas and dendrobiums are in a coarse, freely draining, largely inorganic mix so they can all be watered every second or third day during the growing season. My phalaenopsis are all in a soilless peat mix so they can all be watered every week or two when they approach dryness.

When you bring orchids home, they can be growing in wildly different potting mixes, from pure sphagnum moss, pure bark, pure clay pebbles or gravel, or mixes containing these materials. Each of these mixes retains water at a different rate. If you bring orchids home and just water them all on your normal watering schedule, you'll find the ones potted in sphagnum moss stay too wet, the ones potted in gravel/clay pebble mixes stay too dry and the ones potted in a bark/coco mix may be just right.

Some growers also set you up for failure when they grow their seedlings in sphagnum moss and then pot them up

to a larger pot by packing bark around the sphagnum core. These plants are impossible to water correctly because if you water when the bark approaches dryness, the roots in the sphagnum moss will be smothered from overwatering and if you water when the moss approaches dryness, the roots in the bark will wither from dehydration.

If you repot your orchids into your mix of choice when they first enter your growing area, you will know when you repotted them and how long they should grow well in that mix. You can water all your similar type orchids in the same mix at the same time without water logging or dehydrating them. It makes taking care of your orchids much simpler.

Potting Mix is Degraded. Many people use organic matter in their potting mixes. It retains moisture, helps buffer pH and holds nutrients for later uptake by the plant. Of course, being organic, it will degrade over time and degrade is a nicer term than rot. When the potting mix rots, the roots that are growing in the potting mix will likewise rot because the potting mix smothers the roots.

Different organic materials degrade at different rates. The generally available 'premium' sphagnum moss tends to have a life of between 6 and 12 months. The much more expensive sphagnum mosses like the AAA to AAAAA grade long fiber New Zealand sphagnum moss will last for 2 to maybe 5 years for the highest quality moss. Coco husk is widely used and has a useful life span of 1 to 2 years in the pot. The quality of bark varies wildly and I use bark hesitantly as a result. The highly touted Orchita bark is reported to be long lasting and we'll be testing this claim over the next couple of years. Tree fern fiber is also variable. I stopped buying the medium grade because it had so much fine material in it, now I only buy the coarse grade. I have gotten bad batches of tree fern where snow mold appeared in mixes barely 2 years old, though good



Don't Repot. *This orchid is happy crawling around the outside of the pot with dozens of buds ready to open.*

Continued on page 11



CULTIVATION

Continued from page 10

quality tree fern has a life of from 3 to 4 years. The highly desirable redwood bark is no longer available commercially. Regardless of the quality of the organic matter, it will ultimately rot and it is best to repot your orchids before the mix rots.



Don't Repot. *Roots are growing out of the pot but the plant can be picked up by the bulbs with no wobble.*

The easiest way to test whether your potting mix is past its prime is to try to lift the plant up by its leaves. A well established plant growing in a still fresh mix can be picked up by the vegetation. If it is wobbly in the pot, stick your finger an inch or two deep inside the pot. If it feels soft and dirt-like, odds are the mix is rotting. If you catch it early enough and repot before there is too much root loss, perhaps your plant will not suffer. Many times though, I discover the degraded mix because my plant starts to look unhappy. Trust your instincts, if your plant doesn't look happy, if it is wobbly in the pot, you've got your excuse. Knock it out of the pot and put it into some fresh mix.

Orchid Unstable from Growing Out of Its Pot. The longer you can grow your orchid without disturbing the roots, otherwise known as repotting, the happier your plant will be. If it is a monopodial orchid like a phalaenopsis, it may be growing well out of the pot with lots of aerial roots and not many roots anchoring the plant in place. It then becomes top heavy and a candidate for repotting. For a sympodial orchid like a cattleya, it seems like it always



Repot. *The new pseudobulbs are growing horizontally and the plant needs to be reoriented in a new pot.*

blooms better when there is a bulb or two out of the pot. Eventually there will be four or five bulbs out of the pot and your plant becomes unstable and unwieldy in the pot. Once your plant is physically unmanageable for you, repot it so it will be able to grow and bloom for you for another two or three years without touching its roots.

Don't repot unless you have a reason to repot. Each time you disturb your plant's roots, it will go through transplant shock and take some period of time to recover. You can minimize the transplant shock by repotting just before your plant starts throwing off new roots. You can also help your plant recover from transplant shock by adding root stimulating hormones when repotting. Some people spray seaweed, Superthrive or other root stimulants on the bareroot plant or add these supplements to their water/fertilizer mix for the next month or so. I add a protective drench of the fungicide Banrot plus seaweed after repotting to minimize the inevitable damage that occurs during the repotting process.



Repot. *This plant looks unhappy and is loose in the pot.*



MY FAVORITE ORCHID

My Favorite Orchid

by Yvonne Schimmel, yrs58@bellsouth.net
and Bob Schimmel, schimmelr55@bellsouth.net



Ascda. Somsri Gold

Yvonne: Selecting a favorite orchid is a difficult task. I like vandas and their hybrids with ascocentrums, etc. A vanda was one of the first orchids I ever purchased and I proceeded to kill it through ignorance. I have several now and they are doing well. I especially like the way they hang free and when they are so beautiful in bloom.



Bc. Cynthia 'Lilac Gem'

Then there are the cattleyas ranging from their big fragrant blooms to the tiny riotous clusters of the minicatts. Oh, and then there are the dendrobiums with the long canes and flower spikes that last for months. How could I forget phals with their many colors, variegations, spots, etc. that last for months. I also like the smaller varieties that don't have the wow factor of the larger varieties but they are also special.

How can I choose one? I can't, they are all special to me.



Blc. Frank Fordyce 'Walkakea Uka'

Bob: My turn! Ditto to what Yvonne wrote almost. My favorites are those that need to be nurtured to some extent until they finally bloom. These are the plants that we are lucky enough to pick up during the Society's monthly raffles. It is a good feeling when you repot these plants and see them grow, sprout, spike and bloom after a sometimes long time. Some have taken up to 3 years to bloom. Patience is needed.

Now as to my favorites - I have a lot of luck growing dendrobiums and oncidiums, they are relatively hardy and seem to like being outside in our yard. Actually all of our plants are outside for most of the year. I have attached a few photos of some of our successes.



SHOW TABLE



Grower Viv Rowe
Onc. sphacelatum



Grower Steve Hawkins
Blira. Purple Haze



Grower Dick Roth
Den. unicum



Grower Sue Bottom
Lc. Irene Finney 'Spring's Best' AM/AOS



Grower Steve Hawkins
Eplc. Charlie Brown



Grower Sue Bottom
Epi. parkinsonianum



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Phal. Mini Mark



SHOW TABLE



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
C. skinneri f. alba 'Cherokee'



Grower Linda Stewart
Rdcm. Angel Heart x Rdcm. Velvet Queen



Grower John Van Brocklin
Paph. Oberhausens Diamant



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Cym. York



Grower Sue Bottom
Phal. Olympia's Cameo x Phal. Little Netsuke



Grower Linda Stewart
Sed. japonica

