

## CLUB NEWS

### April 5 SAOS Meeting

by Janis Croft, [secy@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:secy@staugorchidsociety.org)



**Bob Schimmel leads the auction.**

**Welcome and Thanks.** President Bob Schimmel opened the meeting at 7:15 pm with approximately 45 attendees. Bob welcomed our guests, returning members Ed Atkins and Cindy & Randy Hall, new members Lisette Taylor, Tanya Loomis and Joey Hopkins. He also thanked Jeannette Smith, Mary Ann Bell, Celia McElroy and Dianne Batchelder for the refreshments while reminding all to drop a dollar in the jar.

Our Sunshine Coordinator, Linda Stewart recognized our one April birthday people with a promise of a free raffle ticket when we have a raffle next month. Bob also reminded all to vote for their favorite orchid on the show table

**Club Business.** This is the end of our membership renewals (\$15/individual and \$25/family), after which will update our membership lists to include only renewing members. If you haven't renewed, you can mail your check to Bill Gourley at 807 Kalli Creek Lane, St. Augustine, FL 32080.

There is a new way for our members to support the club.

If you are an Amazon shopper, log onto [Smile.Amazon.com](http://Smile.Amazon.com), select St. Augustine Orchid Society as your favorite charity and start shopping. This is a mirror site to Amazon and they will donate 0.5% of your purchase to the club - remember the Smile part!



Instead of our regular Keiki Club, we will be holding our 10th Anniversary SAOS Picnic and Orchid Swap on April 17 at the Memorial Lutheran Church 2 to 4 pm. Dianne Batchelder is organizing the event and passed around a sign up sheet for side dishes. The Club will provide the hot dogs and hamburgers. Please email Dianne ([ladydi9907@aol.com](mailto:ladydi9907@aol.com)) if you plan on attending and didn't sign up so she can order the correct amount of food.

The Ace Repotting Clinic will be on May 7 from 9 am til 1 pm.

If you need potting supplies, email Sue Bottom ([sbottom15@hotmail.com](mailto:sbottom15@hotmail.com)) to make sure she brings what you need to the meeting.

SAOS Librarian Penny Halyburton brought in Four Seasons of Orchids by Greg Allikas and Ned Nash which was promptly borrowed. Check out the club's library collection on the website and email Penny ([phalyburton@comcast.net](mailto:phalyburton@comcast.net)) your request and she will bring the book(s) to the next meeting.

**Orchid Events.** There are several orchid shows in Florida this month. Check out our SAOS website for dates and locations.

Janis Croft, Jacksonville Orchid Show Coordinator, reported that our club took home first place with an AOS award to Sue Bottom for her C. Sue Bottom 'St. Augustine' and 27 total individual plant ribbons. Janis thanked all of the following team members for their help in preparing their plants, ferrying them to and from the show, setting up the exhibit and placing the plants in the exhibit: Bob and Yvonne



**Continued on page 3**



# CLUB NEWS



## April

- 12 JOS Meeting, Advancing Orchids out of Compots, 7 pm  
Jim Roberts, Florida SunCoast Orchids
- 16-17 EPIC Celebration of Spring  
Annual Flower and Garden Expo  
Ag Center, St. Augustine
- 16-17 Tallahassee Orchid Society Show  
Doyle Conner Building
- 17 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm  
Picnic and Orchid Swap  
Memorial Lutheran Church  
3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086
- 29-1 Platinum Coast Orchid Society Show  
Kiwaniis Island Park Gym & Annex

## May

- 1 JOS Picnic  
3611 Richmond St., Jax 32205
- 3 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Courtney Hackney, Hackneau Art & Orchids  
Blue Cattleyas
- 7 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 7-8 Volusia County Society Show  
Volusia County Fairgrounds
- 13-15 Redlands International Orchid Festival  
Fruit and Spice Park, Homestead
- 15 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm  
Watering & Fertilizing Your Orchids  
Leslie and Chip Brickell's Home  
1319 Wentworth Avenue, Jax 32259

## June

- 4 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm  
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine  
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 7 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm  
Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids  
Catasetums
- 12 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm  
Growing and Repotting Phalaenopsis  
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home  
6916 Cypress Lake Ct, St Aug 32086

- 14 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids  
Kiwaniis Island Park Gym & Annex

## July

- 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  
George Hausermann, EFG Orchids  
Landscaping with Orchids
- 12 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm  
Louis Del Favero, Del Favero Orchids
- 17 Keiki Club for Orchid Beginners, 1 pm  
Orchid Pests and Diseases  
Mark and Kathy Young's Home  
160 West Genung St, St. Aug 32086

## St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

President	Bob Schimmel <a href="mailto:schimmelr55@bellsouth.net">schimmelr55@bellsouth.net</a>
Vice President Membership	Linda Stewart <a href="mailto:lindstew@hotmail.com">lindstew@hotmail.com</a>
Vice President Programs	Sue Bottom <a href="mailto:sbottom15@hotmail.com">sbottom15@hotmail.com</a>
Vice President Publicity	Yvonne Schimmel <a href="mailto:yrs58@bellsouth.net">yrs58@bellsouth.net</a>
Secretary	Janis Croft <a href="mailto:croftie1984@gmail.com">croftie1984@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Bill Gourley <a href="mailto:wgourley@bellsouth.net">wgourley@bellsouth.net</a>
Directors at Large	Dianne Batchelder <a href="mailto:ladydi9907@aol.com">ladydi9907@aol.com</a> Mary Colee <a href="mailto:mcolee4@gmail.com">mcolee4@gmail.com</a> Suzanne Susko <a href="mailto:suzsusko@bellsouth.net">suzsusko@bellsouth.net</a>
Exhibit Committee Chair	Harry McElroy <a href="mailto:cymbidiuman@msn.com">cymbidiuman@msn.com</a>
Librarian	Penny Halyburton <a href="mailto:phalyburton@comcast.net">phalyburton@comcast.net</a>
Newsletter Editors Webmasters	Sue and Terry Bottom <a href="mailto:tbottom14@hotmail.com">tbottom14@hotmail.com</a>
Operations Committee Chair	Jeanette Smith <a href="mailto:jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com">jesmith@watsonrealtycorp.com</a>



# CLUB NEWS

## Continued from page 1

Schimmel, Sue and Terry Bottom, Harry McElroy, Mary Colee, Mary Ann Bell, Roberta Hicks, Penny Halyburton and Michael Rourke, Linda Stewart, Cathy Mayo, Gail Marshall, Linda Powell, Mary Tatem and Wes Dean.

**Show Table Review.** Courtney Hackney, just returning from a trip to Hawaii, noted that our club's show table rivals the one he saw while visiting a Hawaiian orchid club. He noted that we should be commended on the variety of plants that our club members grow. He discussed the interesting hybrids that are being created in the Hawaiian nurseries. Courtney started by discussing the parent, *C. aurantiaca*, that hybridizers use for its orange color. He pointed out several plants that have it in their lineage. Next he moved on to the *C. skinneri* that grows in lots of light and tolerates heat well as long as it's in a medium that doesn't rot. Harry brought in a *Cyrtopodium punctatum* that is a native in southern Florida and is now almost extinct out in the wild. Continuing on down the table, he noted the *Phal. stuartiana* with its mottled leaves as being exceptional along with the *Phal. Brother Sarah Gold*. We had four beautiful miniatures that he encouraged all to view up close. Check out the photos of all our show table examples at the end of the newsletter.



## Shop at Smile.Amazon.com, Help the SAOS

You can name the St. Augustine Orchid Society as your favorite charity using the AmazonSmile program and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the St. Augustine Orchid Society. Here's a link to [register SAOS](#) as your favorite charity. Don't forget to log into [Smile.Amazon.com](#) (rather than amazon.com) when making purchases so the club is credited.



**SAOS Program.** Our evening event was the club's mid-year fund raising orchid auction. Bob Schimmel was the auctioneer and Courtney provided descriptive selling points of each plant. There were several active bidders that bought some beautiful and unique hybrids.



**Meeting Conclusion.** Harry McElroy announced the Member's Choice Award as the *Phal. Brother Sarah Gold* grown by Bob and Yvonne Schimmel. Thanks to all of those that volunteered to stay and clean up the room.



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





# CLUB NEWS

---



## March Keiki Club Potting and Mounting Orchids

About two dozen familiar and new faces came to the March Madness repotting and mounting session at the Bottom's home. We talked about the various ways to pot your plants, either in pots, in baskets or on mounts and why you might select one method over another.

- Planting orchids in pots is a simple way for the orchid grower to manage his or her collection. The plants become established in their container, can be set on a bench or hung with a wire hanger, are easily moved and the potting media helps maintain a little moisture around the roots so they don't require daily watering.

- Mounting orchids on sticks, slabs or plaques allows your orchids to grow similarly to the way they grow in nature, where the roots can tolerate extended rainy periods because they are open to air so they can easily absorb oxygen for their metabolic processes. Of course, if it doesn't rain, they have to be watered once or twice a day during the growing season if they are mounted.

- Growing in baskets is a hybrid between pots and mounts, where the plant experiences some of the positives of each method. Baskets allow more exposure of air to the roots while also retaining a bit more moisture than mounts. There were examples of different types of mounts

We had a group participation project dividing up an overgrown cattleya, with Janis Croft doing the honors. Next up was a large oncidiums alliance plant that was potted down a pot size.

Then the free for all. Mary Colee had a lottery system so each participant could choose the division of their choice without the mad dash we've had in other years. We had Suzanne Susko, Mary Colee, Bob Schimmel, Harry McElroy and Terry and Sue Bottom to assist orchid growers with their pot selection and repotting technique as well as their choice of a mount and mounting techniques. We'll be looking forward to seeing these plants on the Show Table in the months to come.

## April 17 Picnic and Orchid Swap First Annual SAOS Picnic

This is the ten year anniversary of our orchid society and we're going to celebrate with a picnic and orchid swap. We'll be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs for all. Feel free to bring a side dish and liquid libations and join the fun. Bring any extra plants you have to swap with other members. If you don't have plants to barter with, cash works too! Joanna Shaw is driving up from Venice with some of her clay pots and mounts, make sure you bring enough cash cause you'll want to bring some home! The picnic will replace the keiki club get together this month, and if we enjoy it we may make it an annual event. Please let Picnic Planner Dianne Batchelder know if you plan on attending ([director3@staugorchidsociety.org](mailto:director3@staugorchidsociety.org) 436-5618) to assure there is a hamburger and/or hot dog for you.

**Where:** Memorial Lutheran Church

[3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086](#)

**When:** April 17, 2 to 4 pm



## May 3 Monthly SAOS Meeting Blue Cattleyas

Dr. Courtney Hackney will talk about how the hybridizers developed blue cattleyas. Courtney, crowd favorite and author of the book *American Cattleyas*, will give us some insights into how the coerulea color forms in various species and hybrids of cattleyas came into existence. Courtney recently retired from teaching coastal biology at the University of North Florida so he will have more time to devote to his passions, orchids, fishing and whatever Rose wants! Orchids will be available on the sales and raffle table. Friends and guests are always welcome.

## Have You Forgotten Anything?

Thanks to all our renewing members. Our newsletter and website are jam packed with information to help you grow your orchids. If you have been overcome by events and haven't sent in your dues (\$15 individual, \$25 family), you can mail your check to SAOS c/o Bill Gourley, 807 Kalli Creek Lane, St. Augustine, FL 32080. By this time next month, we'll have updated our SAOS roster and newsletter distribution list. We hope you're still enjoying orchids and all the benefits of being a member of the St Aug Orchid Society!



# INSPIRATION

---



*Den. amethystoglossum*

© Terry Bilton 16





# CULTIVATION



## Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@hotmail.com

**Q1.** My orchids have attached themselves nicely to this tree branch and have good healthy blooms coming along. They get watered and fed regularly when we are here, then pretty

much fend for themselves over the summer. However, yesterday I noticed that the tips of the roots are turning black. What does this mean?



**A1.** Is that root really black or is it just starting to grow? If in fact the tip does turn black and die, you would think it would be salt toxicity, but I wonder if it is just waking up and starting to grow again. I think they're fine. If they start looking dead, we'll come up with Plan B.

**Q2.** After searching the web for a site to help me identify a recent orchid purchase in south Florida, I stumbled upon your site. Little did I know, my search brought me home, here in St. Augustine. The tag said simply, "rare orchid". The leaves are different from the only other orchid I have in that they are longer and somewhat translucent. Can you help me identify it?



**A2.** Small world, isn't it! That could be a *Phaius tankervilleae*, known as the Nun's Orchid, or one of its hybrids. It probably came from George Hausermann of EFG Orchids in Deland, and he can give you a positive ID if you want to be sure.

By the way, I noticed some white spotting on the leaves, perhaps you should take a close look at them to make sure there is no scale on it. It sure looks like it is going to put on a great show for you!

**Q3.** Have you ever seen anything like this? Our first stem of the flowering season seemingly grew back into itself! Will the stem grow and bloom if we cut it?



**A3.** I have seen this on one or two plants each year. Sometimes the spike is growing around a leaf and gets twisted around itself. I have tried to very gently unkink the spike and usually have ended up breaking it with my attempt to fix it. Now if unsuccessful after one or two gentle attempts at reorienting it, I just let it do what it wants to do. Ultimately the spike will grow upward reaching for the sun and you may end up with a shorter spike, but it will flower and next year should flower normally. If you cut it, your chances of the stem continuing to grow and bloom are slim.





## Repotting Phals, Cattleyas and Vandas Courtney's Orchid Growing Tips

April is the busiest time of the year for orchid hobbyists and commercial nurseries alike, because most orchids are beginning their annual growth cycle. Fertilizing now will make a difference later when plants put out new growths and flowers.

Hobbyists using Nutricote or Dynamite, 6-month release form, should apply it now. By the time cattleyas and most dendrobiums are ready for a rest, the release of fertilizer from these products ends. Phals and other continuous growers will require this type of fertilizer again after 6 months.

**Phalaenopsis.** Standard Phalaenopsis, those with large flowers and no fragrance, should be in peak flower now. If you grow indoors, your standard phals' flowers may be just beginning to open unless they did not experience an early fall



cooling period. If they haven't spiked, remember next year to cool them down at night to 60 F for 7 to 10 days to initiate flower spikes. For now, enjoy the phal flowers, which should last into late spring if the plants are healthy and you get them a good supply of humidity during the dry spring days. If your phals begin to drop flowers while still opening new ones, it may signal low humidity or an inadequate root system. A healthy phal will put out new roots and new leaves even while flowering.

If you plan to repot a phal, it is best to remove the spike when the last buds have opened. Remove the old medium and any dead roots and place into a pot in which the roots fit with just a little extra room. It is always better to under pot than over pot. If your phal has lots of leaves, but few roots, pot in to what may seem to be too small a pot. Once repotted, place the pot into a larger clay pot for support. If the plant is healthy, roots will quickly emerge and grow out the bottom of the small pot onto the clay pot, which is fine. This is preferable to overpotting and losing your roots and likely the whole orchid.

**Cattleyas.** Most cattleya hybrids can safely be repotted now, but it is always best if repotting is done just when the plant is initiating new growth. There is no way to save most of the old roots that are attached to the pot, so most growers remove the bottom third of the root mass.



Most orchids that die right after repotting do not die from repotting itself, but from infections that occur during the process. Moist, damaged roots are easily invaded by both bacteria and fungi during this time.

Some hobbyists cut the roots, tie a label on the plant and let it sit with lots of air movement in a shady, but well-lit location until new roots appear. This allows any wounds to heal and ensures that the cattleya is ready to grow when potted. Why waste a pot and medium if the orchid is not going to grow? Other growers do the same thing, by setting the orchid in a pot without medium until new growth is initiated. Commercial growers often do not worry about infections and, instead, use anti-bacterial and anti-fungal drenches. Others buy cinnamon powder in bulk and sprinkle it on the roots to kill bacteria and fungi. The cattleya is then potted in dry medium and left unwatered for a week or so.

**Vandas.** One of the hardest orchids to repot is a vanda. Most experienced growers never repot members of this group, but just hang them up and let them grow. Often the original container disappears amid the



roots. Miniature versions of the vanda group, notably hybrids with Neofinetia, are now being grown for indoor hobbyists. These grow well under lights, but are sold in dense media, which requires repotting. The roots of this type of vandaceous orchid still like to dry out more than most orchids, but will tolerate more moisture as long as there is either good air movement around roots and/or the medium is acidic. New Zealand sphagnum is a favorite for this type of orchid and is used very effectively by the best growers in Japan.

*Note: Courtney Hackney wrote a monthly column of his orchid growing tips for about 20 years, we're reprinting some you might have missed, this one from April 2008.*





# CULTIVATION

## Spotted Brassavola nodosa Hybrids

by Jim Brydie, [Ku-Ring-Ai Orchid Society](#)

Reprinted with Permission



*Brassavola nodosa, the Lady of the Night*  
photo courtesy of Art Vogel

I am by no means a dedicated aficionado of the Cattleya alliance, but the spotted progeny of Brassavola nodosa, “the Lady of the Night” orchid, have always made me curious. All the nodosas that I have seen looked pure white and pale green to me, virtually albinos. Found from Mexico and all the way down to Colombia and Venezuela, B. nodosa comes from lowland coastal habitats, generally below 500 m (1640 ft), on either trees in lowland tropical forests and mangrove swamps, or on exposed rocks and cliffs near the shore. It is a lovely species whose flowers are dominated by its wide, heart shaped, white lip. The flowers are very fragrant at night and are pollinated by night flying moths. Curiously however, nodosa is known to produce spots or striations in the lip of its hybrids. So, where do the spots come from?



*Brassavola nodosa showing a very obvious form of the spots that can show up in the species, photo courtesy of David Genovese*

Well it turns out that nodosa itself sometimes has red spots inside the lip. I guess that even in clones where the spots are absent or not noticeable, the genetic coding for them is still there. The second nodosa picture shows a very obvious form of the spots that can show up in the species itself.



*Bc. Binosa 'Wabash County' AM/AOS – B. nodosa x C. bicolor*  
photo courtesy of Lynn O'Shaughnessy

All these years growing orchids and I didn't realise that nodosa could be spotty. Before I came across this new information, I consulted our local orchid oracle Ken Siew. He has an amazing knowledge of orchids, among many other things and as usual his response was fascinating. I have repeated part of it here: “The spotting in nodosa hybrids is a well-known phenomenon. When bred with



*Bc. Maikai – B. nodosa x C. bowringiana*  
photo courtesy of M.E. Thompson

Continued on page 9





# CULTIVATION

Continued from page 8



**Bc. Richard Mueller** – *B. nodosa* x *L. milleri*  
photo courtesy of Jean Wilson



**Blc. Apache Sunrise** – *B. nodosa* x *Blc. Apache Gold*  
photo courtesy of Jean Wilson

a plant with a coloured labellum, the spots will appear. This is because *nodosa* itself reputedly have labella with white and green spots, but operate almost like an alba. With albas the genes related to the placement of colour are still there even if the mechanism for colour production isn't. When matched with a plant which normally produces red pigments (anthocyanins), even if there is none in the labellum, the progeny usually produce colour in the labellum. This problem is one I am trying to work around as one of my aims when breeding Cattleyas is to produce classical flowers which are pink with only yellow in the labellums. No red allowed. I don't have too many species with those specifications to start with. I have to rule out using albinistic parents because I never know what their normal lip colour patterns would be like if they weren't anthocyanin deficient.



**Blc. Humdinger 'Cariad's Peppermint'** HCC/AOS – *B. nodosa* x *Lc. Razzle Dazzle*, photo courtesy of Steve McNerney



**Bc. Hamlyn's Magic 'Claus'** HCC/AOS – *B. nodosa* x *C. Jalapa*  
photo courtesy of Loren Batchmen

The interesting thing about *nodosa* spots is that in breeding, the *nodosa* breaks up a solid coloured lip into spots. I wonder if this has anything to do with a recent evolution from a diurnal pollination to night moth pollination. Is this the way a marked labellum lost its colour? Did pre-*Brassavolas* lose colour two ways? Would a pre-*Brassavola* have had a coloured lip more suitable to some form of day pollination syndrome? Should we regard *Brassavolas* as being albinistic plants? Mostly they take whatever colour is put onto them. The spotting on the lip is dominant and highly characteristic of *nodosa* hybrids even several generations later. So Jim, its spotting is not recessive at all! But the albinism might be!" Ken.

Isn't it fascinating?



# CULTIVATION

## Top Dressing

by Sue Bottom,  
sbottom15@hotmail.com



Orchid growers can talk about different orchid potting mixes for hours on end. Whether or not organic matter should be incorporated into a mix, what types of organic materials are preferable, is it better to just use inorganic media so you don't have to worry about the mix rotting, how do you buffer pH, prevent salt accumulation, and on and on. Regardless of where you settle on the potting mix debate, here's a new twist. What benefits can you obtain from top dressing your orchid potting mix with different materials?

**Different Potting Materials.** You may have decided on the potting mixes that work best for you and your orchids, and still benefit from top dressing the pot with different materials like sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, coconut fiber and similar materials.

**Retain Moisture.** A layer of sphagnum moss placed on top of your pots will help retain moisture in the pot as well as provide a little extra moisture for the newly emerging roots. When I have very small seedlings, such as from a compot or a plug tray, I'll pot them up in a 2 or 3 inch clay pot filled with medium lava rock chunks. This provides plenty of air around the roots but is a bit of a shock to the new plants. Add a top layer of sphagnum moss over the lava rock for a little moisture retention at the top where new roots emerge.

**Protect from Chewing Pests.** Covering the new roots with a top dressing will protect newly emerging roots from snails, slugs and cockroaches.

**Prevent Washout.** If you are using a fine bark or soilless mix, top dressing the pot with sphagnum, cypress mulch or coconut fiber will keep the mix from washing away when you're watering the pot. This is particularly important for paphs grown in a fine bark mix or phals and some terrestrials grown in a soilless type mix. Top dressing will

also help keep timed release fertilizers and other nutrient top dressings from washing out of the pot.

**Buffer Alkalinity.** A top dressing that has an acidic reaction like sphagnum moss or cypress mulch can help buffer alkalinity in the pot. If you have a very alkaline water source and are concerned about maintaining the proper pH in your root zone, adding some acid generating material can help introduce a little acidity to keep your potting mix in the slightly acidic range, which is optimum for nutrient availability.

Some people extend the concept of top dressing to the entire pot building up layers like a 7 layer dip. Canadian orchid grower and AOS judge Jean Allen-Ikeson outlines her approach:

I plant my orchids in layers of potting mix going from completely open at the bottom of the pot to sphagnum moss on the top. Lava rock or expanded clay pellets are placed on the bottom about ½ to 1 inch deep (1 to 3 cm) depending on the size of the pot. Then I add a mix that is coarse with bark, a bit of charcoal, expanded clay pellets or baked clay 'corn' and a bit of oyster shell because I use rainwater. If it is a large pot, then I add a little more bark as I get close to the top and then all pots get a ½ to ¾ inch (1 to 2 cm) thick layer of sphagnum on the top depending on the pot size. How often do you dump a pot and find the roots on the top a bit desiccated and the ones on the bottom rotted and the mix soggy? This way the mix is drier as you go down. The sphagnum catches the water so that it drips more slowly through the pot and wets the mix better and then retains more moisture at the top for new roots, which need it the most. If you fog, it slightly dampens the sphagnum so that you can let the pots dry out more. Of course with small pots, I use more sphagnum because they dry out very fast and the plants do not have much water storage at that size. Bigger pots need less water or watering less often than smaller pots, but that is why fogging or misting with a filter-less cool mist humidifier is so helpful, particularly when growing in a low humidity environment in the house where you are forced to water every other day. The plants all love it and grow much better roots.

**Fertilizers and Nutrient Supplements.** Water soluble fertilizers containing all the essential mineral nutrients are great to feed your plants. The advantage of water soluble fertilizer is you know exactly what nutrients you

**Continued on page 11**





# CULTIVATION

---

Continued from page 10

are supplying to your plants each time you fertilize. If you apply the water soluble 15-5-15 Cal Mag fertilizer, you can calculate exactly how much nitrogen, calcium, magnesium and other nutrients you are supplying to your plants. There is no similar conversion factor for slow release fertilizer. With slow release fertilizers, you simply top dress your orchid pots with the fertilizer and wait for it to slowly dissolve and be taken up by your plants.

**Timed Release Fertilizer.** Top dressing with timed release fertilizer is a common practice. Timed release fertilizer is simply fertilizer that has been encased in a resin that breaks down slowly releasing the fertilizer. Dynamite is a popular timed release fertilizer with various formulas that is available in nurseries and the big box stores. If you go to a nursery supply outlet, you can find hundreds of formulations, fertilizers with different ratios of the macro and micronutrients, fertilizer with coatings designed to release over a time period anywhere from 70 to 360 days, and some fertilizers intended for spreading on top of the pot while others are intended to be incorporated into the potting mix.

Whether you use water soluble or timed release fertilizer doesn't have to be an either or proposition. I use water soluble fertilizer throughout the year at a rate that is best for the cattleyas. In the growing season, that translates to about ¼ tsp/gal of 15-5-15 Cal Mag fertilizer with each watering to supply about 50 ppm nitrogen. For the heavier feeders like phalaenopsis and the catasetum family, timed release fertilizer is also added to pots as a top dressing. In fact, when the catasetum relatives are repotted, the timed release fertilizer is interlayered with the potting mix to make sure these plants have enough nutrition to fuel their summer growth.

**Calcium and Magnesium Supplements.** Calcium and magnesium aren't mentioned on many fertilizer labels, but they are essential nutrients for your orchids and are contained in the popular cal mag fertilizer formulations. Test your water to see whether or not it contains sufficient calcium and magnesium. Our well water typically contains plenty of calcium but is generally deficient in magnesium. If you're using a pure water like rainwater or reverse osmosis water, you will have to supply all your plants calcium and magnesium needs. There are water soluble supplements that can be added to your irrigation water, including calcium nitrate (available from feed stores) for calcium and Epsom salts (available from the grocery and drug store) for magnesium. Your local hydroponic store has several other calcium and magnesium supplements that can be used.

There are also "natural" supplements that can be used as top dressings on your plants or incorporated into your potting mix. Sources of slow release calcium include



granular dolomitic lime (which also supplies magnesium), crushed oyster shells, steamed bone meal and fish bone meal. Even crushed egg shells can be used although perhaps making an organic tea is more aesthetically pleasing than looking at crushed egg shells under your orchids. The disadvantage of these supplements is they tend to increase the root zone pH. Gypsum (chemically calcium sulfate) can be applied to supply calcium without causing a basic reaction in the potting mix. You might sprinkle a teaspoon (5 cc) or so over for every 4 inches in pot diameter several times a year to supply extra mineral nutrition.

**Organic Fertilizers.** There are a host of organic fertilizers and supplements that can be applied as top dressing. Besides the calcium supplements, there are nitrogen supplements like cotton seed meal, feather meal, soy bean meal and blood meal, although caution with blood meal is advised because it is a quick to release nitrogen form that can burn plants. Alfalfa meal is often used by organic gardeners to increase the organic matter in the soil and tends to stimulate the microbial life in the rhizosphere around your orchid roots. It also has trace minerals and trianconatol, a natural fatty acid growth stimulant favored by the marijuana farmers. Fish meal is a general purpose, slow release fertilizer. Kelp is a rich source of trace minerals, plant growth regulators, vitamins, hormones, amino acids, enzymes and chelated nutrients.

There are lots of organic fertilizers on the market that supply the essential plant nutrients and some like Purely Organic also have growth stimulating kelp and alfalfa meal. These formulations tend to enhance the microbial action in the rhizosphere around your plant's roots which enhances growth, but will also increase the rate at which organic matter like bark or coconut husk will degrade. Another negative is the odor and potential for fungal growths that may be unattractive if not harmful.

Women have been top dressing for years, applying a little make up here and there to supplement what nature gave them. You are limited only by your imagination!



# 2016 JOS SHOW



## SAOS Exhibit Jacksonville Orchid Society Show

We finally did it, took first place in Society Exhibits at the Jacksonville Orchid Society. Janis Croft and her band of merry pranksters installed the exhibit on Friday before the show... and we were done by 2 pm so there was plenty of time to shop.

Janis reports: Terry, Bob and Harry did great with infrastructure and making it look natural; first timer Roberta did great ferrying the plants in and out and in and out. The outdoor crew of Mary Ann, Penny, Yvonne, Mary, Sue and Gail did a fantastic job of getting the plants organized, the stakes in, the pot socks on, the colors organized, and preparing the final list of what made it into the show. Thanks to Mary Ann for the chocolate chip cookies to keep our energy up. Special thanks to Gail for her exquisite hand writing on the plant labels and Penny's efforts on making the numbers and labels easily viewable for the judging. Special thanks also to Mary Tatem for making the supercool pot socks and to Wes Dean for collecting the driftwood we used in the exhibit. And of course, a big thank you to Sue for handling all of the show list paperwork. We had additional help from Cathy Mayo, Michael Rourke and Linda Powell during breakdown. I was pleased with how well we all worked together and got the setup done in record time.

Our plants were fabulous and each of our exhibitors, that included Mary, Gail, Harry, Bob and Yvonne, Susan (Smith), Sue (Bottom) and Linda, all brought home ribbons. Sue got an 85 point AM award on the C. Sue Bottom, which now has the cultivar name 'St. Augustine'.





# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Yvonne & Bob Schimmel**  
***Leptotes bicolor***



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
***Zns. Murasakikomachi***



**Grower Courtney Hackney**  
***Phal. City Girl x***  
***Phal. Krull's Butterfly***



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
***Blc. Ann Kientzy x Blc. Orange Nuggett***



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
***Lc. Fire Dance 'Patricia' AM/AOS***



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
***Smbc. Cupid's Arrow***



**Grower Linda Stewart**  
***Leptotes pohlitinocoi***



# SHOW TABLE



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*C. skinneri*



**Grower Yvonne & Bob Schimmel**  
*Phal. Brother Sara Gold*



**Grower Sue Bottom**  
*C. Caribbean 'Orange Bowl' HCC/AOS*



**Grower Suzanne Susko**  
*Schombocattleya Luster*



**Grower Harry & Celia McElroy**  
*Cyrtopodium punctatum*



**Grower Linda Stewart**  
*Aergs. James G. Coyner*

