

CLUB NEWS



December 6 SAOS Meeting

President Bob Schimmel welcomed our 58 attendees to the Annual Christmas Dinner and Auction at the Memorial Lutheran Church. Events Veep Dianne Batchelder did a great job organizing the party. Dianne made a yummy chicken and orzo dish and Sue brought a tray of pork medallions in cream for the main courses and everyone brought delicious and varied side dishes to share. The food was terrific and the desserts were irresistible. Mary Ann Bell made beautiful flower arrangements for table centerpieces to add to the festivities as well as a lovely door prize centerpiece won by Jeanette Smith.



Terry Bottom produced our 2017 calendar showing all the Member's Choice plants during this past year as well as the slide show featuring all the plants brought to the show table this past year.

Courtney arranged for 20 budded cattleyas from Hawaiian Hybrids and Linda Stewart, Sue and Terry Bottom met up with Linda's brother Steve in Apopka to pick up the rest of our auction plants. Joanne Stygles donated a portable greenhouse for the auction. Everyone received bidding numbers and Courtney and Bob started the auction after desserts. It was quite a lively and successful event.

Thanks to all who stayed and helped clean up after the party. Another great party, ain't we got fun!

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Upcoming Orchid Events

January

- 3 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
How to Grow Orchids in St. Augustine
Suzanne Susko, St. Aug Orchid Society
- 7-8 Sarasota Orchid Society Show
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium
- 10 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm
Speaker TBA
- 13-15 Tamiami International Orchid Festival
Dade County Fair Expo Center
- 15 Keiki Club Get-Together, 1 pm
Staking Your Orchids, Terry
Orchid Toolbox, Mary
Charles and Kathy Young
160 West Genung St, St. Aug 32086
- 20-22 Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society Show
War Memorial Auditorium

February

- 4 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine
Repotting and Plant Clinic
- 4-5 Venice Area Orchid Society Show
Venice Community Center
- 7 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Unusual and Natural Mounts
Tom Kuligowski, Angraecum Blog
- 11-12 Boca Raton Orchid Society Show
Safe Schools Institute
- 14 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm
Speaker TBA
- 19 Keiki Club Get-Together, 1 pm
A Winterizable Shade Structure, Janis
Designing a Rain Barrel System, Linda
Janis Croft and Alan Winer's Home
8311 County Road 208, St. Aug 32092
- 24-26 Naples Orchid Society Show
Moorings Presbyterian Church

March

- 4 SAOS at Ace Hardware, 9 am til 1 pm
3050 US 1 S in St. Augustine

- 4-5 Tampa Bay Orchid Society Show
Egypt Shrine Center
- 7 SAOS Meeting, 7 pm
Growing Orchids in Cypress Mulch
Steve Arthur, Orchid Hobbyist
- 12 Keiki Club Get-Together, 1 pm
Potting Mixes and Repotting Orchids
Sue and Terry Bottom's Home
6916 Cypress Lake Ct, St Aug 32086
- 14 JOS Meeting, Topic TBA, 7 pm
Speaker TBA
- 18-19 Port St. Lucie Orchid Society Show
Port St. Lucie Community Center
342 Cracker Swamp Dirt Rd, E Palatka
- 24-26 Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance Show
Naples United Church of Christ

St. Augustine Orchid Society Organization

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**Reserve your 2017 Calendar, only a few left.
\$15 each or two or more for \$12.50 each.**



The food was wonderful!



Dining with friends and orchids



Bob, Courtney & Sue did a great job with the auction.



Thanks to Dianne Batchelder for organizing the fixings



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



CLUB NEWS

January 15 Keiki Club

Double Header at the Garage Mahal

We're having a mid course correction on our Keiki Club get-togethers in 2017. We've decided to double up on our meetings in the spring months and take a summer vacation in June, July and August when attendance has been pretty low. Here's our January lineup:

Topic 1: Staking Your Orchids

Moderator: Terry Bottom

It's good to spend some quality time with your orchids, particularly if you take the time to stake the flower spikes for their best presentation. Staking techniques will be discussed, along with some other tricks for getting your plants ready to exhibit.

Topic 2: Orchid Toolbox

Moderator: Mary Colee

There are handy gadgets and tools that all orchid growers should have readily available. Keep them in a toolbox close to your growing area for instant access.

Where: Charles and Kathy Young's Home

160 West Genung Street, St. Aug 32086

When: January 15, 1 to 3 pm

January 3 Monthly SAOS Meeting

Growing Orchids in Palm Coast

This is the third year of our new tradition in which the January meeting is a presentation by our local growers describing the specifics of their orchid growing practices. Last year we ran out of time before Suzanne Susko could give her full program. This was our loss because Suzanne grows the most immaculate plants and we will all benefit from learning more of her secrets. Suzanne grows on racks mounted on casters in the pool lanai so plants can be easily moved around for more or less sun and rain and then she rolls them into a portable greenhouse in winter. Her growing conditions are applicable to probably 90% of our members who will be most reassured that you can grow great plants without a greenhouse. Don't miss this hands on program full of nifty ideas on how best to grow orchids during the warm growing months and winter resting season along with lessons learned. Members are invited to bring plants to sell.



Keiki Clubs Scheduled for 2017

January 15:

Venue: Charles and Kathy Young's Home

160 West Genung Street, St. Aug 32086

Topic 1: Staking Your Orchids

Moderator: Terry Bottom

Topic 2: Orchid Toolbox

Moderator: Mary Colee

February 19:

Venue: Janis Croft and Alan Winer's Home

8311 County Road 208

St. Augustine 32092

Topic 1: A Winterizable Shade Structure

Moderator: Janis Croft

Topic 2: Designing a Rain Barrel System

Moderator: Linda Stewart

March 12: Potting Mixes & Repotting

Moderator: Sue Bottom

Venue: Terry and Sue Bottom's Home

6916 Cypress Lake Court, St. Aug 32086

April 23: Picnic and Orchid Swap

Venue: Memorial Lutheran Church

3375 US 1 South, St. Aug 32086

May 21: Growing Paphs and Phrags

Moderator: Susan Smith

Venue: Susan and Doug Smith's Home

148 Sarah Elizabeth Drive, St. Johns 32259

June through August

Summer Hiatus

September 17: Getting Ready for Winter

Moderator: Bob Schimmel

Venue: Bob and Yvonne Schimmel's Home

702 Wilkes Court, St. Aug 32086

October Field Trips

Venue: Orctoberfest at EFG Orchids

4265 Marsh Rd, DeLand 32724

Venue: Gainesville OS Show at Kanapaha

4700 SW 58th Dr, Gainesville 32608

November and December

Winter Hiatus

No Get Togethers Scheduled



CLUB NEWS

Programs Scheduled for 2017



January 3: Growing Orchids in Palm Coast

Suzanne Susko,
St. Augustine Orchid Society

February 7: Natural and Unusual Mounts

Tom Kuligowski,
The Angraecum Blog



March 7: Growing Orchids in Cypress Mulch

Steve Arthur,
Steve Arthur Orchids



May 2: Mounting Orchids

Glenn Gross,
Gross Orchids



June 6: Decoding Dendrobiums

Mark Reineke,
Marble Branch Farms



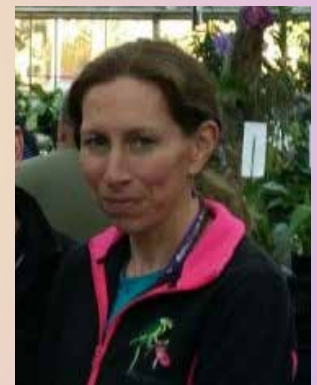
July 6: What's Wrong with My Orchid?

Courtney Hackney & Sue Bottom,



September 5: Basics of Orchid Hybridizing

Courtney Hackney,
Hackneau Art & Orchids



November 1: Epidendrums, Encyclias & Prostheceas

Vern Bloch,
Orchid Hobbyist & Grower



August 1: Orchid Growing Basics

George Hausermann,
EFG Orchids



October 3: Japanese Orchids

Dr. Kristen Uthus,
New World Orchids



December 5: Christmas Orchid Auction

St. Augustine
Orchid Society



CULTIVATION



Orchid Questions & Answers

by Sue Bottom,
sbottom15@hotmail.com

Q1. Would you know what is happening to my Den. spectabile? This has been extremely healthy until now.



A1. That is the evil sunburn. The changing light in the spring and fall can cause previously happy orchids to be exposed to much higher light levels. The white scar on the leaf means the chlorophyll was bleached out, but not quite burned badly enough to turn black. All growers sunburn an orchid or two each year, despite their best efforts.

Q2. When I bought this Den. chrysocrepis they told me to dip it in water twice a week. I sprayed it with peroxide for bacterial brown spot but it looks worse every day. Why are the leaves turning yellow?



A2. First, water rather than dip your plants. Bacterial brown spot usually starts as a small sunken spot that later expands and can be surrounded by a yellow halo. I suspect there is neither a bacterial nor a fungal problem, it may just be losing its leaves in anticipation of a coolish dryish winter. I am not familiar with this plant so I looked it up. It must be pretty rare cause it's not listed in Lavarack's book on dendrobiums. The Baker's culture advice in OrchidWiz suggest it is a fairly high elevation plant that likes cooler nights, not a good sign for us here! The Bakers talk of it doing well mounted, with lots of water in the spring and summer and then a cooler drier winter. I have no idea if it goes dormant or semi-dormant in winter or whether it normally drops its leaves. Given the little bit of info I can find out about it, perhaps you should contact the vendor you bought it from and see if they can give you any advice.

Q3. I noticed some brown streaks on the underside of my orchid. It is the only leaf that has it right now. Could it be getting burnt on the bottom? Or is it mold?



A3. That plant looks very very happy, don't change a thing! I'm guessing the spotting is just pigmentation, perhaps the changing sun angle means it was getting a little more light on that portion of the leaf and the pigmentation is sort of like a suntan. The plant looks very healthy, and looks like it should be in bloom in a couple of months!





Orchid Root Detective Courtney's Orchid Growing Tips

The growth of plants is directly tied to a root system that delivers enough water and nutrients to accommodate the plant's needs. While your orchids may not consciously decide to grow additional roots because they need more water, the same effect occurs through plant

hormones. What this means to the orchid grower is that the degree to which your orchids allocate energy for root or leaf growth depends on what they have in least supply relative to how much they require.

This is actually an old concept developed by a German soil scientist, called "Liebig's Law". If an orchid is being grown and has less water available than it needs, it will grow additional roots. Conversely, if a plant has an adequate water supply in the presence of lots of light and nutrients more leaves will be added by the plant.

In "the wild", the proportion of roots to shoots reflects what is limiting plant growth. More roots than shoots suggest water or nutrient limitations. Some desert plants have a 20 to 1 ratio of roots to shoots, while under almost ideal conditions in rain forests; this ratio can be almost 1 to 1. What is the ratio of roots to shoots on your orchids?

Most cultivated orchids are epiphytes, that is, they grow attached to trees or rocks and do not have access to soils where water and nutrients are stored in nature. Epiphytes in general are especially adapted to resisting water and nutrient loss and holding on to what they have, but still reflect a root to shoot ratio more than 1. One additional trick orchids use is to grow slowly to lessen their need for nutrients and water.

Cultivating epiphytic orchids requires us to be sensitive to the balance each plant maintains. Only when that balance is maintained will the plant favor us with exceptional blooms.

The orchids in my greenhouse came from many different growers that grow in all kinds of media, so there has been plenty of opportunity to observe both the quantity and quality of roots and the approximate root to shoot ratio. Phals have been especially noteworthy as a means of comparing roots because they are among the fastest growing cultivated orchids.

One commercial grower was noted for beautifully large, well-flowered phals grown in Pro-Mix. However, his phals had few roots when repotted and had a root to shoot ratio below 1 to 1. Obviously, he had mastered the "art"



of maximizing nutrients and water availability. His plants did not require additional roots to obtain either water or nutrients, and so spent their available energy on growing more leaves and flowering. Most amazing was that this was done in a dense medium without suffocating the roots. Most hobbyists have difficulty obtaining this kind of growth without killing roots.

Hydroponic growers accomplish the same thing, i.e., a low root to shoot ratio, by constantly bathing their plants in water and nutrients in an oxygen rich environment. Remember that roots need oxygen to grow. Phal growers using sphagnum moss also obtain rapid growth and also do so by growing fewer roots. However, their roots are very thick and fleshy because phal roots grown in a constant supply of moisture take on a different form. If repotted in a more open mix, these roots will die.

Grow phals mounted, in lava rock or other coarse medium, and there will be more roots than shoots, reminiscent of their natural state. These roots will be hard and flattened for life attached to a tree. Repotting a phal that is adapted for such conditions will lead to the loss of most roots during and immediately after repotting. The result is usually fewer and smaller flowers the following year. The more growing time between repotting and flowering, the better the flowers will be. This is the reason most commercial growers repot after their plants have flowered. Growers that consistently get AOS awards have mastered Liebig's Law.

Note: Dr. 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 December 2007.



CULTIVATION

Gifts for the Orchid Obsessed

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

Looking for a gift for an orchid fanatic? You may think your orchid lover has one of everything, but rest assured, there is still something that person desperately needs or wants. Here are some ideas for you to ponder, or just leave this article somewhere where your benefactor will see it!

Another Orchid? The easiest gift is another orchid. Your local nurseries and big box stores often have orchids for sale so you can pick out one you particularly like. These outlets typically offer the easier to grow orchids that tend to have longer bloom periods, exactly the reasons that the big box stores carry them. Once your orchid lover has grown orchids for a while, he or she has likely already mastered the art of growing these commonly available orchids and may be ready to try something more exotic.



Lc. Acker's Spotlight 'Pink Jewel' HCC/AOS

This monthly selection from the Orchid a Month package offered by Orchids by Hausemann in Chicago was gifted to me many moons ago by my wonderful Stepmom. Thank you Kathy!

There are many commercial orchid growers that are just waiting for your phone call or email. Thumb through *Orchids* magazine and check out the advertisers. These growers all have a large selection of a variety of different orchids, and they are more than happy to help you select an orchid (or three!). Your orchid lover may have a special affection for orchids from this or that commercial grower. Stroll through their orchid growing area admiring the view and surreptitiously look at the plant tags to see which orchid growers your fanatic prefers (but be careful about removing the tags lest they are brittle and break or get put back in the wrong pot). Most of the commercial growers will gladly sell you a gift certificate so your orchid lover has the pleasure of scrolling through their paper or online catalogue and deciding which orchid is 'the one'. For those enjoying

surprises, some growers offer an Orchid of the Month club where an orchid in bloom or bud will be delivered to the orchidist's doorstep each month.

Fertilizers, Chemicals and Supplies. The orchid grower's budget doesn't just cover new additions to the collection. There is also a need for pots, potting media, wire products, baskets, and more. Some of these products are heavy and expensive to ship, so it is best if you find a local source, perhaps there is a local orchid grower or supplies vendor, perhaps a nursery supply store or hydroponic store. Gift certificates work. And if your orchid grower wants clay orchid pots, the real ones with the deep slots, good luck finding them because they are basically not offered in commerce. Keep an eye on Craig's List or something similar, and if you see a listing for the shallow slatted clay pots, buy them quick.



So many different chemicals!

Fertilizer. Your orchid grower probably hears all kinds of suggestions about what is the best fertilizer for them to use. You can give them a present that contains the answer. First, get a sample of the irrigation water and send it off to JR Peters and ask them to analyze it and give you a fertilizer recommendation. Get the recommended fertilizer from JR Peters or in smaller quantities from an online source. Wrap up the results of the water analysis along with the fertilizer, and your orchid grower will be ready for the growing season.

Chemicals. There are lots of chemicals, some very specialized, that your orchid grower may want but not feel comfortable buying because some can be quite expensive. Enter the gift certificate, get one from Peststrong.com or DoYourOwnPestControl.com and let them select their poison guilt free. Just in case your orchid grower is cavalier about personal protection, here's another gift package idea. Buy an organic vapor respirator, nitrile gloves and chemical repellent coveralls and wrap them up with the gift certificate. Make sure your orchid grower is protected whenever the urge to spray strikes.

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Gadgets. For the techies, there are a lot of gizmos that orchid growers can use to quantify different aspects of their growing conditions. All growers need thermometers to tell if the growing area gets either too hot or too cold. Light meters indicate whether their orchids are receiving enough of the right kind of light. For the right grower, water quality testing equipment can help ensure how much of what substance is present in or absent from the irrigation water.

Thermometers. Every orchid growing area needs a thermometer, perhaps more than one. They may not get looked at too often during the glorious spring and fall weather, but when it starts to turn cold in the fall, the orchid grower starts to worry about the night time lows, wondering if it's time to move plants to their protected spot or if that heater is keeping everything warm enough. When spring warms to summer, the daytime high temperatures can become worrisome indicating the need for increased shading and air movement. A min max thermometer is an easy to use and cheap solution costing less than \$25 that can be moved from place to place in the growing area to show how cold or how hot that location got. The old fashioned version is a U shaped thermometer with a continuous reservoir that records the minimum temp on one side of the "U" and the max temp on the other side of the "U", both reset to the current temperature with a magnet. Of course, there are also many digital variations, those with memories up to 28 days that will recall the max and min temperatures, ones having remote alarms, etc. If your orchid lover stresses out about the extremes of temperature, perhaps some well placed thermometers will give peace of mind.

Light Meter. As your orchid grower is well aware, different orchids enjoy different levels of light intensity, from the bright light loving vandas to the shade loving jewel orchids. A light meter can give instantaneous readings of light intensity so the orchid grower knows how variable the light is in a given location during different times of the day and different seasons of the year. Look for a meter that is accurate from about 500 to 10,000 foot candles if your orchid lover is growing in natural light, and 500 to 5000 foot candles if growing under lights. Extech sells several different high quality meters from \$100 to \$200 and above, though there are less expensive meters available.

Water Testing. If your orchid grower is technically minded, he or she may be interested in understanding what reactions are occurring between the irrigation water, potting medium and fertilizer. A meter that can measure the pH in the 4 to 8 units range can provide insights into how the fertilizer and degradation of organic matter can contribute to an increase in acidity. A Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) or Electrical Conductivity (EC) meter can tell the grower if potentially

toxic salts are concentrating around the roots. The Bluelab Combo Meter can provide this information, although it is a bit pricey at \$200, plus you'll need calibration and pH probe storage solutions. There are relatively cheap colorimetric tests that can be used but beware of the pool test kits that don't measure a pH below 6.8, not a wide enough range to provide meaningful results for the orchid grower.



There are lots of gadgets orchid growers use, like these water breakers, shears and Fogg-It Nozzles

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Orchid Toolbox. There are a lot of handy things all orchid growers will use, you can combine several into a tackle box that you can wrap up and tie with a bow or use them as stocking stuffers:

- Box of single edged razor blades (to remove damaged tissue)
- Spray bottles of isopropyl alcohol and hydrogen peroxide (to treat pests and disease)
- 10 Power loupe (to check for small insects like mites)
- Hemostats (for weed removal)
- Fogg-it nozzles (high volume, for spraying root of vandas and mounted plants)
- Cable ties (various lengths, for mounting orchids)

Magazines and Books. For the bibliophile, there are lots of choices. Membership in the American Orchid Society (\$65) includes the *Orchids* magazine delivered monthly and another \$39 buys the quarterly *Orchid Digest* magazine. Some of the basic orchid culture books have value for the beginner through the advanced grower, two suggestions for growers of all levels of experience are the classic *Home Orchid Growing* by Rebecca Northen and *Understanding Orchids* by William Cullina. If your orchid lover prefers a specific group of orchids, there are good books featuring lots of helpful cultural information about bulbophyllums (by Emly Siuegerist, Bill Thoms), catasetums (by Arthur Holst), cattleyas (by the Chadwicks, Courtney Hackney), cymbidiums (by Kobsukh Kaenratana), dendrobiums (by the Bakers, Bill Lararack, Robert Wood), phalaenopsis (by

Steven Frowine), slipper orchids (by Harold Koopowitz), and vandas (by David Grove, Martin Motes). There are good technical books too, like the readable *The Physiology of Tropical Orchids in Relation to the Industry* by Hew and Yong, or reference tomes like *Marschner's Mineral Nutrition of Higher Plants* and Arditti's *Fundamentals of Orchid Biology*, but these last two are not for the faint of heart.

OrchidWiz. The OrchidWiz program is expensive at \$300, but will get plenty of use by the serious orchid grower. The program contains the genealogy of each orchid hybrid registered since the mid 1800's, so your orchid grower can understand the family tree of each orchid. The Baker culture information is included in the program so the species grower can learn all about the best growing conditions. There are pictures galore. There is a My Journal feature where your orchid lover can add pictures and data about each orchid in the collection. Windows 10 users beware!!

Benches and Structures. For handy men and women, here's your chance to earn a Get Out of Jail Free card. Build a new orchid growing area for your fanatic. It could be something fairly simple like a new hanging rack or bench to put orchids on. It could be a structure, a pergola, a greenhouse or a shade house to grow orchids. How about a potting shed with potting bench so your orchid grower has a handy place to store supplies as well as a shady area in which to repot orchids.

Terry is my Enabler-in-Chief. He has bought me all these gifts and built the structures to house my ever expanding population of orchids, never complaining. Of course, when he needs a new motor for the boat or a new lens for the camera, well fair is fair!



*Orchid Growing Complex, to the east, courtesy of Enabler-in-Chief Terry Bottom
My birthday present was a new slice of heaven, a shade center where stuff grows au natural, protected only by shade cloth.*



Reed Stem Epidendrums

by Jim Brydie, Ku-Ring-Ai Orchid Society



For many people, the title of this article will immediately conjure up an image of a sprawling untidy mess in someone's front garden, with grass and weeds growing through it. I hope it wasn't too many.

While it is true that that vision is common in Sydney, and that the plants in that vision are reed stem Epidendrums, they are not representative of the more modern compact hybrid reed stems. Furthermore, even those sprawling old fashioned garden plants can flower spectacularly if their culture is adjusted to appropriately, as you can see from images.

The genus *Epidendrum* was originally the largest in the orchid family. However, taxonomic review has gradually led to many sub-groups being split off into their own separate generic families. Still, even today, *Epidendrum* contains about 1000 species and is highly diverse in size and form. The term "reed stem" is descriptive of one plant form but *Epidendrum* species that fit this description occur in quite a number of the taxonomic sub groups within the genus. They are not necessarily a single, closely related entity, and it is hard to say just how many species might be regarded as "reed stems". My personal guess is somewhere between 100-200.

Of this huge pool, many are of little horticultural interest to orchid growers. Some are huge plants that have stems up to 3 metres tall, some are lowland tropics plants that require a



Epi. Sunset

hothouse to cultivate. What we need are plants with bright colours, a variety of colour, plants with stems only about 60cm (or less if we can get it), and ones we can grow as outdoor garden plants. I was going to add "I know that's a tall order" but tall is exactly what we don't want.

Tall reed stem plants usually grow among slightly taller scrub, and use their surrounding plants for support. Some of these have fantastic flowers and it's a pity we can't use them more, but in a horticultural situation, they invariably sprawl, even when grown in a small pot. It is very hard to make the plant look attractive. For example, I have a hybrid *Epi. Costa Rica* in my shadehouse growing in a 5 inch plastic pot, with arching canes over 2 metres tall. It has lovely blooms, and the flowers last for 6 months, but the plant is a terrible floppy sprawler and flowers way over my head. I shudder to think how tall it would be if I grew it better in better conditions.

The other key factors are cold tolerance and toughness. In my view, these strongly relate to the latitude and elevation at which the species are found in nature. For hybrids, it depends on where the species in their makeup are found. The elevation at which plants are found is a particularly important factor because it gives us a strong indicator of their tolerance for temperatures. In my experience, for tropical, plants from at least 1500-2000m or above will tolerate Sydney's winter temperatures quite well. It might not be their ideal temperature, but you will be able to grow them and flower them satisfactorily. As you move away from the tropics, even plants from lower elevations will have this temperature tolerance.

Luckily for this article, most reed stem Epidendrums are in the tough and tolerant category, but some of prettiest

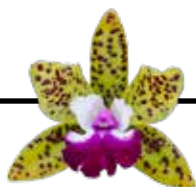


A tray of Epi. obrienianum hybrids



Epi. Ballerina 'Red'

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new compact hybrids from Hawaii really don't like it too cold. I guess the Hawaiians don't need to worry about breeding cold tolerance into their orchids, but some of these types will definitely need some protection in winter. If the temperatures go below 5°C where you live, they will be no use as garden bed plants. You would have to grow them in pots and be prepared to move the pots into bright protected areas before it gets too cold.

Culture: Perhaps the single most important cultural requirement for these plants is light. These orchids are nearly all ground dwellers that grow in nearly full sun in nature. When I used the expression 'nearly', I mean that the on the grassy hillsides on which they grow, the grass provides some light shade to the base of the plant. Perhaps the odd nearby scrubby tree might also provide occasional broken shade. The geography in which they occur, meaning the sides of mountains, probably also stops them getting full basting sun all day but their woody upright stems push them up out of their surroundings and ensure they get the absolute maximum light available. The flower stem extends from the top of the reed stem growth, and gets the flowers even further clear, where they are readily seen and accessed by their pollinators, which are usually hummingbirds. Hence the bright coloured flowers.

Our backyard environments aren't as perfect as hills of the Andes so we have to make some adaptations. They want the full sun but it is hotter here and dryer, so perhaps full sun in the mornings and light dappled shade in the afternoons would be best. But make no mistake. These orchids aren't designed to grow under shade cloth all day. You just will not grow and flower them well if you try it.

Potting Mixes: The general advice from all quarters here is that they are not all that fussy about their medium, except that is, that it should be well drained but keep the roots moist. Note: that is "moist" and not "wet". If you stand them in a saucer of water the roots decline quickly. These are not bog plants. John Woolf, one of Australia's best nurserymen

advises any of the following: (a) 4 parts perlite, 1 part peat. (b) 4 parts small coir and 1 part coarse perlite, (c) 4 parts small bark and 1 part peat, or (d) any good Cymbidium mix. Some other experts suggest throwing in a proportion of a good quality potting mix to add a finer component.

Pests: Epidendrums suffer the same pests that all orchids suffer. Aphids, mealy bug, scale, etc, but as we grow them as outdoor plants, the common slug and snail are also a real menace. A slug can decimate a new flower head in one night so you need to be vigilant with the snail bait.

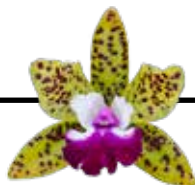
Water and Fertiliser: It shouldn't need to be said but all orchids need regular water and regular fertiliser. As reed stems grow in a finer mix and are kept moist, slow release fertilisers can be used in moderation but I still prefer regular application of soluble fertiliser. I at least then know they are getting it regularly.

Pruning: One last tip. Reed stems flower from the top of new growths but after the flowers are finished, the stem and leaves persist but do not flower again, unless you count flowers from a new side growth or keiki. One of my first orchid mentors tried to get me to grow reed stems when I was still a novice but I was put off by their straggly habit. He took me to one side of his house and showed me a couple of huge black pots, perhaps 45cm diameter, that were filled with reed stems. There were still a few flowers on them but they were nearly finished. He told me that next week he was going to chop every growing stem down to 6 inches off the ground and that by doing so, they would all sprout their new side growths at the same time and next season all the flowers would come together and be on short stems at the same height. In researching for this article, I came across almost the same advice again but I am ashamed to say that even after all these years, I have never tried it. Perhaps some of you will be braver than me.

Note: Jim Brydie is our Aussie pen-pal with whom we exchange newsletters and articles, check out his newsletter at [Ku-Ring-Ai Orchid Society](#).



Photo Courtesy of [The Flower Fields](#)



SHOW TABLE



Grower Sue Bottom
Dendrochilum cobbianum



Grower Joanne Stygles
Neofinetia falcata 'Rain-No-Hikari'



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Cym. Mem. Dick Swain



Grower Sue Bottom
Clo. Jumbo Circle 'Claire' AM/AOS



Grower Suzanne Susko
Phal. Kaoda Twinkle 'Chocolate Drops'



Grower Linda Stewart
Trichopilia (Trpla.) hennisiana



Grower Linda Stewart
Aergs. James G. Coyner



SHOW TABLE



Grower Courtney Hackney
Paph. kolopakingii



Grower Sue Bottom
L. purpurata* var. *carnea



Grower Suzanne Susko
***Tsubotaara* (Ctst.) *Melinda Marie* 'Blue Moon'**



Grower Harry & Celia McElroy
Paph. Magic Lantern



Grower Suzanne Susko
Blc. Prada Green Deluxe



Grower Courtney Hackney
***Lc. Blue Boy* 'Gainesborough' HCC/AOS**

