



Fascination of Orchids, inc. A 501 (C) (3) Non Profit Organization

Fascination of Orchids Newsletter

Fascination of Orchids is organized to raise public interest in, and provide funding for educational programs related to orchids and ornamental horticulture. www.fascinationoforchids.com

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Santa Ana Zoo at Prentice Park
1801 E. Chestnut Drive. Santa Ana, CA 92701

President

Theo Johnson

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Newsletter

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Newsletter deadline is the
25th of the month prior to
the month of issue.

Meeting: June 1, 2024 at 9:45 AM

Oncidium: Concern, Confusion and Culture (mostly culture)

Webinar with Russ Vernon

Russ is a noted breeder and AOS Judge and Trustee. He is past President of the Mid-America Orchid Congress, the International Phalaenopsis Alliance, and is a graduate of Ohio State University. He is very active at Ball State University's Wheeler Thanhauser Orchid Collection and Species Bank and has worked on conservation of orchids for many years. He and his wife Anita, own New Vision Orchids, dealing primarily with Oncidinae and intergenerics.



President's Message

This time of year, in Southern California, we experience a phenomenon called "May gray" or "June gloom," where the mornings are characterized by overcast skies and cooler temperatures and sunny afternoons and cooler nights (high 50s and low 60s). There may be times when there is a fair amount of moisture in the air due to the marine layer, which may produce heavy mist and/or rain. Be on the lookout for crown rot and or botrytis (bacteria) which shows up as brown spots on the flowers. These two issues can occur when there is enough moisture to produce a lot of dew on the plants and flowers and the temperature is below 60 degrees, with little or no air movement.

Potting, potting, potting! It just seems to never end but it gets me out of the house and I know the orchids appreciate it. I am glad I bought enough potting media for the season because I have heard there is no bark around to buy at both Orange County Farm Supply and Yamadas. I spoke to Ruben of Sunset Valley Orchids and he said Fred would be receiving the new shipment of bark in June. If you need bark, #2 small or #3 medium, let's put or order together and see if we can get a discount like last time. Let me know.

In between repotting orchids and cleaning up, I planted my vegetable garden. Tomatoes, zucchini, squash, peppers and cucumbers. Mixing all that soil almost killed me!

Next month is when we usually have our summer BBQ in place of our regularly scheduled meeting. I will not be able to BBQ for you as I am having knee replacement surgery on June 20. Let me know at the June meeting what you all want to do. In any event, someone will need to get the plant table if there is a meeting, or organize the BBQ. You can borrow my grills if you decide to cook.

Save the dates for the **Fascination of Orchids International Festival of Orchids & Exotic Plants, September 20-22, 2024 at the Santa Ana Zoo.**

I will be asking for suggestions for future talks/demonstrations. Let me know if you have suggestions. See you Saturday 9:30 AM at the Zoo.

Theo

Editor's Notes



May gray/June gloom may not be cheerful, but it is perfect orchid weather. Nights are warm enough that even most warmer-growing orchids can go outside, days are cool enough to not worry about toasting anything, and they love the humidity of the morning marine layer. Most of my *Catasetinae* are in active growth, and have moved outside to benefit from the brighter light and the breezes. A few aren't quite yet ready for water, but they will be soon. The deciduous and semi-deciduous *Denrobiums* from northern India, southwest China, and the higher elevations of southeast Asia are starting to bud and bloom. There will be a lot more next month. I don't dry them out during the winter, other than reducing water as I do for everything else. I know that's counter to the conventional wisdom, but southern California "dry" is a lot drier than Himalayan "dry" - I killed a few nobile-type *Dendrobiums* before I figured that out. I also note that Andy Phillips (Andy's Orchids) keeps those *Dendrobiums* in with the general population based on temperature needs. They get watered, and bloom anyway. But they ARE in shadehouses that go down to ambient tempera-

tures. I am firmly convinced that the winter chill is the trigger, rather than lack of water, that tells these plants to bloom.

While the peak of *Cymbidium* season has passed, there are still some that are blooming, and a few more that will go into July. I will have only a month or two that are *Cymbidium*-less.

Here is a *Cymbidium lowianum concolor*, that bloomed



Cym, lowianum
f. concolor

for the first time in quite a few years. I was delighted to see it.

Cym. Blue River 'Thunder' is a classic.



Cym. Blue River 'Thunder'



Stanhopea tigrina
var. nigroviolacea
typical form

Cattleya mossiae lives under the polycarbonate cover, otherwise exposed to the weather. This is the semi-alba form. I had a "typical lavender" form bloom, but it got attacked by thrips before the buds opened and flowers were damaged. I HATE thrips!. This one does make up for the disappointment, I think. In its native Venezuela, its nickname is "Flor de Mayo", its bloom time is also in May there. (Remember, Venezuela is in the northern part of South America, still northern hemisphere.)

A very special treat this year was the first blooming (after several years) of Stanhopea tigrina var. nigroviolacea f. albescens. I think that most of are familiar with the typical form—one cultivar that we see a lot of is 'Predator' - with very dark markings. Mine usually blooms some time in July, I'm just seeing the beginning of new spikes. But this one bloomed more than a month earlier. It's not quite "alba" - there is red pigment, but it is in the form of very pale pink, almost ghostly. It is fragrant, but not as strong as the typical form (or maybe it's just a small, young plant.) The whole genus has, alas, very short-lived flowers (2-3 days). I am glad that I was able to catch this one at its prime. Just for reference, I also show an example of the



Stanhopea tigrina var.
nigroviolacea f. albescens

typical form from a prior year.



Cattleya mossiae
f. semi-alba

Leptotes is a genus in the Cattleya tribe. Leaves are succulent, and they tend to grow best mounted. All of these are from Brazil. Leptotes bicolor has some of the largest flowers of the genus, and can easily grow into a specimen. Mine is just growing on a stick, which is covered with roots, On a slab, with more room to spread out, it likely would be even more floriferous. I'm not complaining...



Leptotes bicolor

Leptotes unicolor comes in a range of colors from white to light pink to this very dark pink. But only one color for a given plant. Flowers somewhat smaller.



Leptotes unicolor

Here are some of those Dendrobiums that I mentioned before. Den. rindjandiense comes from a small mountainous area in the Lesser Sunda Islands of Indonesia. I love those bumpy canes. Note that it blooms on the older, leafless canes, and that it can bloom on a given cane for several years. A couple of years ago I got a few flowers on top of one growth, the next year I got a few more, and on two growths, this year it produced a magnificent show. Don't cut old those old canes until shriveled and light brown! They aren't dead!!



Dendrobium rindjaniense

Dendrobium jenkinsii is a smaller version of Den. lindleyi (aggregatum) but for me, blooms much more reliably. In fact, Den. aggregatum for me is Den. aggravatum... I have dried it, I have let it get wet, doesn't matter, it's just a shy bloomer. So



glad to have Den, jenkinsii, which blooms at the same time of year.



Dendrobium jenkinsii

ANNOUNCEMENTS

See the [Events page](#) for further details

- **Sunset Valley Orchids Open House**
June 1, 2024; 9 AM - 5 PM
1255 Navel Pl., Vista
Info: www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com or (760)310-0778
 - **Ecuagera CA Open House**
June 6-9, 2024; 9 AM–4 PM
7555 W Lilac Rd., Bonsall, CA
Info: www.ecuageraca.com
 - **Orchid Digest Speakers Day**
June 8, 2024; 1 PM–9 PM
Huntington Library, Art Galleries and Botanical Gardens, San Marino
Info and registration: www.orchiddigest.org/2024-speakers-day
 - **Orchid Society of Southern California Orchid Auction**
June 17, 2024; Doors open 12 PM, Auction 1-4 PM
First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 221 S. 6th St., Burbank
Info: www.orchidssc.org
 - **San Diego County Orchid Society Orchids in the Park**
July 27-28, 2024; Sat. 12:00 PM-6 PM, Sun. 10 AM-4 PM
Balboa Park's Casa del Prado Rm. 101 , San Diego
Info: sdorchids.com
 - **South Bay Orchid Society Fall Show and Sale**
September 7–8, 2024; 10 AM–4 PM
Palos Verdes Art Center, 5504 Crestridge Rd, Rancho Palos Verdes
Info: www.southbayorchidsociety.com/Show
 - **Fascination of Orchids Festival of Orchids and Exotic Plants**
September 20-22, 2024; 10 AM–4 PM
Santa Ana Zoo, 1801 E. Chestnut, Santa Ana
Info: www.ocorchidshow.com
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