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**

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

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

Meeting: December 5, 2026 at 9:45 AM

Topic: "How to Take Orchid Photographs"

Webinar by Wes Newton

Award-winning AOS photographer Wes Newton shares orchid photography tips, phone techniques, and insights from his collection of over 2,400 AOS photographs.

President's Message

Hope you all had a nice Thanksgiving Day. As I write this, the sun is finally out after what seems like a week of intermittent rain and overcast weather. My plants and yard are still wet from the rains! The daytime temperatures range in the mid-60s to mid-70s and the nights were in the low to mid-50s or even high 40s. I am trying to time my watering to coincide with the 70s temperature during the day to try to give the plants time to dry out a bit before the cool night time temperatures. Good weather for repotting?

With the evening temperatures now dipping consistently below 60 degrees, be more careful when you water. You want your plants to be able to dry out a bit before nightfall when the temperatures are below 60 degrees or lower. The low night temperatures can promote fungus and bacterial infections. I saw some botrytis on some of the outdoor flowers after the heavy rain period last week.

This time of year, I am on the lookout for plants in need of repotting or plants with active root growth. I generally don't like to repot in the winter months, but if the plant needs repotting (e.g., looks like it's dehydrated or having root problems), I do a fresh bark repot.

I'll wait until spring to repot most Cymbidiums and Cattleyas. You can always mount or remount plants but it is best to mount plants just as the roots are starting to push out from the plant. This way the roots have a good chance to latch onto the mount. Be careful though; the roots are tender and can be damaged easily.

The flowering season should be starting soon for Cymbidiums and some Cattleyas. Generally, plants are not pushing out new roots, but if they are, and are over the edge of the pot, it may be time to cut off a division and pot it up. Paphs and Phales don't care, so repot to your heart's content. I have other orchids that are deciding to flower now, like my L. anceps, which normally don't bloom until the end of Dec. or Jan. The weather must be confusing to them.

Early fall culture. November/December are good months for pest prevention, as the bugs (aphids, thrips, mealybugs, scale, slugs and snails) are starting to go into winter slowdown. I will not be using fertilizer until the spring as most of my plants are not actively growing. In the spring I will start placing the Nutricote 270 (13-11-11), time-release fertilizer for the remainder of the year (270 = days). Water early and less often.

I have also continued to clean up the growing area, removing grass, fallen leaves and staging the plants to repot when spring arrives. Give priority to those plants that have waited the longest. Get you supplies ready too. I planned ahead and covered all my bark totes so they didn't fill with water.

Speaking of supplies, Yamadas had Nutricote 270 (limited amounts) and perlite (#3 and 4) (as of 11/18). Call first to make sure they have your supplies. They also have some bark of various types. Orange County Farm Supply (OCFS) has soluble fertilizer, like Grow More® 20-20-20 or 30-10-10, and bark. I use Pathway Decorator Bark (Small) for my Catts. and Sequoia Decorator Bark (Medium) for the large rooted Catts and to put as a spacer in the bottom of the pots for drainage. You an also get pumice at OCFS for drainage.

Remember to bring some finger food to snack on at the meeting. 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

Nights finally feel like fall. A few have gone as low as 44 degrees F., decidedly chilly. Most of what I grow outside is fine with the change, and the plants love the rain. But all of the Catasetinae, even if they haven't started to go dormant, have been moved into my little greenhouse. It'll be on the crowded side until the rest lose their leaves, but that's OK. They don't like nights below 55 deg F, and even worse when wet. But they're going dormant fairly quickly. When Fredclarkeara Gemstones opened, it had a full set of leaves. By the time the flowers faded about a week ago, it was down to one last leaf. No more water until spring.

For scale… this is in an 8 inch bulb pan.



Fdk. Gemstones







Fredclarkeara After Dark ‘Sunset Valley Orchids’ is a beast. This is a 2-gallon Cymbidium pot, and it is stuffed. It may stay in the pot one more year and then will have to be divided…can’t go bigger or I will not be able to lift it. Tallest pseudobulb is about 12 inches. 4 spikes. The grex is highly variable. This cultivar has dark burgundy spots over a cream background and cream border on the lip. ‘Black Pearl’ (getting ready to bloom, for next month) is nearly black. Same parents.





At the other end of the size spectrum, here is Dendrochillum cobbianum. It is in a 10 inch bulb pan. The inflorescences look to me like strings of pearls.





Dendrochilum saccolabium also comes from the Philippines, above 1200 m.



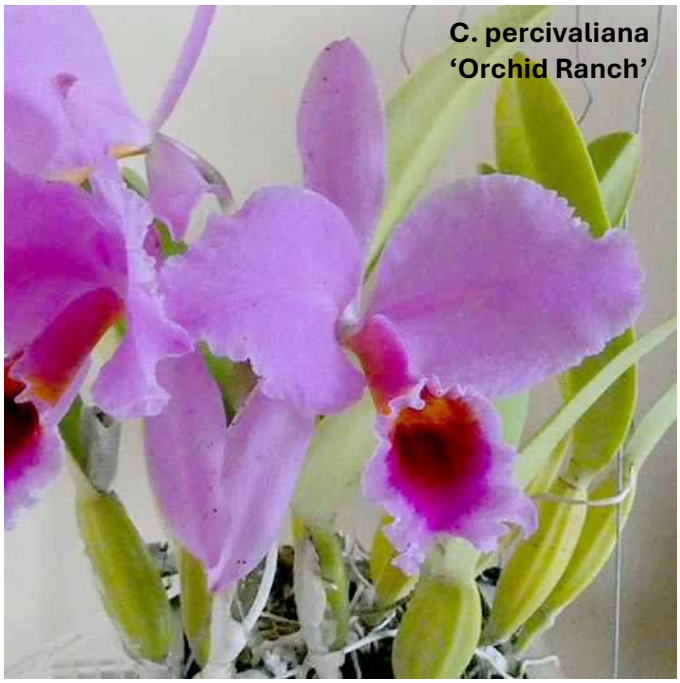


Dendrochilums, native to much of Asia, are going crazy. I will show you several, all very different. Dendrochilum cootesii comes from the Philippines, elevation 1000-2000 m. Flowers are large for the genus, and charming. In a 4 inch pot.





And Dendrochilum javieriense, from similar habitat, shows another splash of color. Just a note, the genus Dendrochilum is now lumped into Coelogyne.



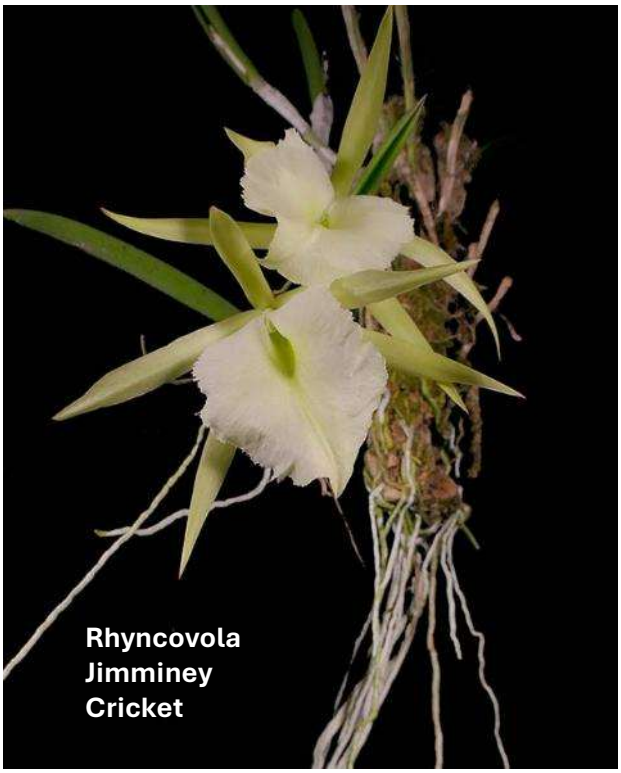
December is the time for Cattleya percivaliana. This magnificent species grows easily outdoors. This cultivar usually is the last of my C. percivalianas to bloom , normally late December or even early January. This year, it's the first. This is the largest of the bunch, 5-6 inches. Flowers are rather long lived, a month to 6 weeks.



I have lots of Laelia anceps spikes, and am starting to see flowers. This one is a pristine alba form, no red pigment at all. L. anceps grow very easily, having no problem with temperatures from about 30 to 110 deg. F, and also are quite drought-tolerant. They like nearly full sun. I have found that they do best in baskets with little medium, or mounted. They are native to Mexico.



Laelia rubescens is also from Mexico. This is the semi-alba form. There is also a lavender form, that has not opened for me yet. Alas, these flowers tend to last less than a week.



Rhyncovola Jimminey Cricket lives in the greenhouse. I have grown it outside for awhile, but I have found that it does better with a bit of warmth. It is Brassavola nodosa x Rhyncholaelia digbyana



Restrepias bloom on and off all year. Restrepia brachypus is native to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, 1500-2500 m. I was worried about this and my other Pleurothallids in the hot summer, but they seem to have handled it just fine.



Maxillaria eliator blooms several times a year, and each time produces flowers over a month or more. The flowers have waxy substance, and are long lasting. The plant is a climber, and it's doing well mounted.



Vanda (Chrisnetia) Green Light hung at the back of my growing area for years without blooming, and it seems to have responded to the hot summer. It is Christensoniana vietnamica (which is a warm grower) x Neofinetia falcata (cool grower of course). When I got it, I knew that one parent needed warmth, but expected the Neofinetia falcata to make it more cold tolerant. It grew well, just didn't bloom. So it probably did want more warmth. This year it got it.

Bulbophylum echinolabium lives in the greenhouse. It is so beautiful, I can forgive its "fragrance" … sweat socks? It blooms sequentially on the inflorescence, producing 13 inch flowers that each last only a few days, but then in a month or so, another appears. I have had as many as 8 flowers appear in sequence before the inflorescence is done.



Roberta Fox, Editor

ANNOUNCEMENTS

See the **Events Page** for further details

- **Andy's Winter Open House**
  December 11-13,2026; 10 AM – 4 PM
  734 Ocean View Ave., Encinitas
  Info: andysorchids.com

- **Orchids in the Park Show and Sale**
  January 30-31, 2027; Saturday Sales 10 AM – 5 PM, Exhibits 12 PM – 5 PM; Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
  Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park, San Diego
  Info: sdorchids.com

- **Santa Barbara International Orchid Show**
  March 12-14, 2027
  Earl Warren Showgrounds, Santa Barbara
  Info: sborchidshow.com

- **South Bay Orchid Show and Sale**
  April 3-4, 2027; 10 AM – 4 PM
  Palos Verdes Art Center, 5504 Crestridge Rd., Palos Verdes
  Info: southbayorchidsociety.com