



Vero Beach Orchid Society



February 2016

February Speaker

Our speaker for February will be our own **Sherry Cauley**. Sherry has had a varied career going from nursing to motherhood to orchid flaker. She is also our away team chairperson and helps tremendously around the Society as a board member, by providing refreshments when needed, giving orchid training sessions to outside organizations and working with our show.

Sherry is going to be talking to us about orchids throughout history and the history of orchids. It sounds (from what I've seen and heard) like it should be a very interesting and enlightening discussion.

We will have a raffle table, but since Sherry is not a vendor, there will be open tables for member sales if anybody has anything they'd like to sell.

Presidential Request

This month Judy has requested that we all bring in our contest plants so we can have a judging. It doesn't matter how good or bad it looks, bring it in. If there is something wrong with it, she'll try to diagnose it for you and tell you how to fix it. We're going to have 2 categories, one for the more experienced growers and those more novice growers. And we'll let you be the judge of your growing expertise to determine into which category you fall. Since nobody has let us know that their plants are dead, we expect to see a table full of plants in both categories.

February in Your Orchid Collection



February Climate Data

Average high: 77.7 Average low: 60.7 Average mean: 69.1 Average rainfall: 2.07"

Despite the bloom on the avocados and the burgeoning new leaves on the live oaks, February is not spring in South Florida. Danger of freeze continues past mid month and frost can occur still into March. Even if the weather is balmy, it's too early to let down our guard or take down any protection we have mounted against the cold. The trend however is toward the positive as each lengthening day brings extra hours of warming sunshine to begin waking our plants from their long winter's rest.

February characteristically brings a wide swing of day to night temperatures, ideal for spiking ascocendas and vandas but also wringing from the air heavy dews and dense fog. Whilst these add a romantic atmosphere to the South Florida landscape, *Wuthering Heights* is singularly devoid of snails and slugs (much less *Botrytis*). The silvery carpet of dew provides a silky path to our orchids for snails and slugs which can range far, under these favorable conditions. They are eager to make a nice meal of your *Phalaenopsis* leaves or the soft crowns of your vandas before they retire during the dry months of March and April only to dream of the fresh shoots of the sympodial orchids brought forth by the first rains of May. Now is the time to give them a rude awakening. Remember that snail bait is most effectively applied lightly (scatter the pellets every few feet) and frequently (every 7 to 10 days). Two or three applications should do the job.

The heavy fog which can cause condensation on leaves even under cover can also bring trouble. *Botrytis* is a fungus disease that can disfigure flowers with small black spots. Particularly apparent and annoying on white *Phalaenopsis*, *Botrytis* can ruin other flowers as well. Control is typically achieved in commercial greenhouses with fungicide in aerosol forms and by running fans to prevent condensation on the flowers. The latter option is also available to collectors. A small fan turned on the spiking and opened flowers at night will greatly alleviate the pressure of *Botrytis*. So will, to a degree, the application of soap which we suggested in January to control mites. Bicarbonate of soda, ordinary baking soda, at 1 tbsp per gal will help as well. Quaternary ammonium compounds (Physon, RD40, Consan, pool algicide) also give some control. Maintaining long lasting flowers like *Phalaenopsis*, dendrobiums and bi-foliolate cattleyas in more perfect condition is well worth the effort. Having waited so long for the flowers we want to enjoy them as long as possible and they do all last longer in cool weather.

The lower overall temperatures of February call for less frequent and lighter applications of fertilizer as was the practice in January. If any reddening of the foliage persists, another application of Epsom salts (1 tbsp per gal), preferably in combination with potassium nitrate, is called for. Nitrate nitrogen is more available to the plants under cooler conditions than ammoniacal nitrogen. If your resolve holds steady not to water (or above all) fertilize those Himalayan dendrobiums, your reward may shortly become evident in bursting flower spikes.

Like the avocados and the live oaks, many cattleyas and other sympodial orchids have bloomed and are just commencing new growth in February. Right after flowering is usually an excellent time for repotting from the plant's perspective and the cool day time temperatures in the greenhouse are hospitable to the orchid grower as well. It's still a bit early to re-basket vandas, but an early start on the cattleyas will allow plenty of time and energy for those spring chores which are right around the corner. With that thought setting out to secure a good supply of pots in anticipation of the potting season ahead is on February's agenda.

Tasks for February

Spread snail bait lightly. Spread again lightly in two weeks

Spray for *Botrytis* using Florida recommended fungicides or Bicarbonate of soda

Begin Spring potting
Watch for mites.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A big thanks to John Odom for his talk on the best of 2014. So many beautiful flowers that any of us would be proud to have in our garden. Thanks John.

The Tamiami Bus Trip was a great success for those who went. Unfortunately, we only had about a half of the bus filled. The show was huge as usual, and so many vendors that we don't normally see at our local shows.

We're moving into spring show season and even though the weather hasn't been typical, it's time to start getting those babies ready for displays. Stake the spikes that need to be, and watch that the cold weather doesn't do damage to the foliage. Both of the upcoming shows are 3 day affairs so setup will be on Thursday March 3rd for Martin County and March 18th for Port St Lucie. Of course teardown is on Sunday afternoon starting at the close of the shows. The first show is only one month away, so we'll be asking for helpers and plants to borrow. We can pick up any plants you'd like to loan us if you're unable to come to the setup, and then deliver the little gems back home.

The first big show for us is March 4th - 6th at Martin County Fairgrounds. For this display we'll be doing a tabletop display on an 8 foot table.

But the real bear of a display will be two weeks later at the Port St. Lucie show. We'll need to do a 10 x 10 square. We really will need lots of plants for that one, so get them ready and help us out. If anybody would like to volunteer to help too, please either call Sherry Cauley or Carolyn Greene. Sherry's number is 772-321-6614 and Carolyn's is 321-506-3909. You can also drop an email to the newsletter address is you'd like.

Next, we need some volunteers. We need a hospitality committee, and membership committee. None of the jobs in the society are difficult or very time consuming unless you're on the board. Even then, there's not that much extra time that you need to devote.

The hospitality committee duties are to arrange for others in the society to bring snacks to the meetings. As the chairperson or committee member you can solicit snack donations any way that works for you. In the past, we have passed around a sheet on a clipboard and asked people to sign up for a particular month. As chairperson or committee member, you'll make coffee for the meeting and clean up the leftovers, wipe down the counter, and take out the trash.

Membership committee consists of finding ways to recruit new members into the society. We do have some outside activities where applications for membership are handed out such as GardenFest and the Busy Bee Customer Appreciation day. At any speaking events to teach about orchids and their care, we make sure there are applications available to be distributed. Once you have an application, you'll collect their dues, and send the form and the monies to the treasurer. The newsletter editor makes the changes and additions to the society roster, so only the new members' information needs to be sent to the editor. An email will work for the editor, but the money and the application either need to be sent, or can be given to the treasurer at a meeting.

Finally, there's only about 2 ½ months until our show. Please be thinking of how you'd like to help to make our show a big success. There will be people needed to work on setup activities, the raffle tent, setting up the tablecloths in the show tent, helping provide goodies for hospitality on setup day, helping our visitors if anybody needs it, working with the judges (this is an interesting and educational job), security in the display tent during the day, and finally teardown on Sunday. This may not be all the jobs, but I'm sure that's most of them. We don't expect anybody to spend the entire time working the show, but a few hours from all of us will make a light load on everybody.

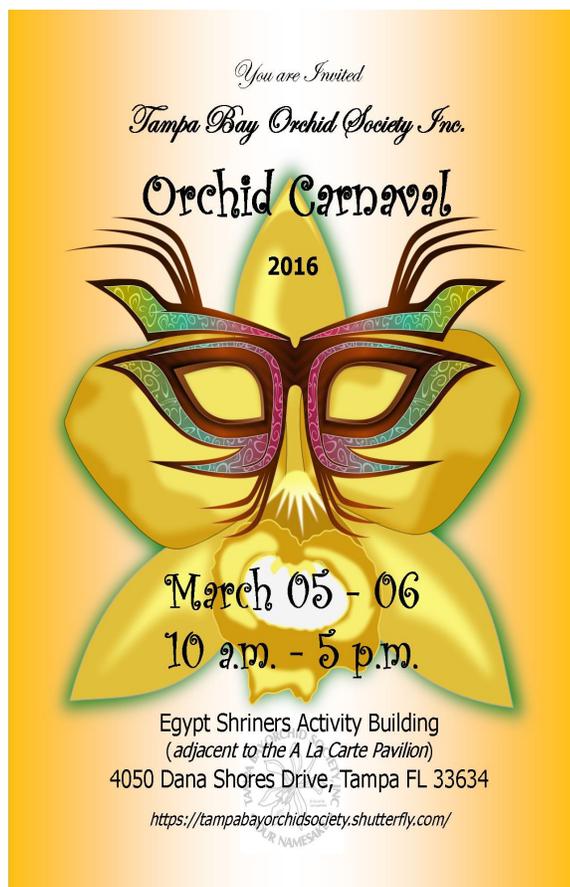
Also, we will be having the mini-niches on display also. These are fun little projects for displaying small flower arrangements of orchids. We will be passing around a sign up sheet within the next month or two for people who want to reserve a box for their display.

And of course, don't forget to shop your til your credit card drops. We have such great vendors all of whom put their hearts into providing beautiful, healthy plants for us to acquire for our collections.

You'll be hearing more on all the show details in the upcoming meetings.

One final note, at GardenFest we were given the following literature. It is a bus trip to the Winter Estates of Edison and Ford in Ft Myers on February 11th. There are over 20 acres of gardens and 9 historic buildings Edison's botanical Lab and the Edison Ford Museum. The cost is \$110 per person, which does not include the cost of lunch. If you're interested contact Patti & Vicky at 772-569-8372.

And here is a little something I received in my email. Hope some of you can attend.



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DUES FOR 2016: SINGLE MEMBER DUES \$15.00 FAMILY DUES: \$20.00

THIS MONTH REGULAR MEETING WILL BE FEBRUARY 18TH, 2016, AT GARDEN CLUB OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, 2526 17TH AVENUE VERO BEACH, FLORIDA 32960. THE MEETING WILL START AT 7:00 PM