



Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

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Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter is published monthly. Subscription is through membership in the Society.

Membership is \$15/person and \$25/couple. Please visit our home page for Membership form and mailing address.

CIOS Officers for 2016

- Joanne Miller, President
- Linda Bailey, Vice Pres. /Secretary
- Terry Moore and Linda Bial, Show & Sale co-chairs
- Mark Williams, Treasurer
- Mitzi Williams, Editor, Newsletter & Webpage

From the President:

Thanks to everyone who joined us on our Orchid trip to United Central Orchids in Minooka, and especially to the drivers who drove us to there. It was an adventure long to be remembered! After having such a lovely trip to UCO, whose main emphasis is on Phalaenopsis, I decided to find out why they are the world's most popular Orchid sold in the US today. There are over 30,000 Phalaenopsis hybrids registered with the Royal Horticultural Society and the new breeding is focused on improving the number of flowers, length of the inflorescence, and flower size and color pattern of flowers. It's not hard to understand why Phals are such remarkable and popular plants!

Phals got their name in the 1800's but have been around even longer than that. They can sometimes live for decades, reblooming once a year. Phals are called moth orchids and got their name from the New Latin word "phal" meaning moth and "opsis" meaning appearance. Carl Ludwig Blume, responsible for the name, allegedly thought the flowers looked like moths in flight. This is why we call them the moth orchid.

Orchid Island is a volcanic island off Taiwan's coast. Originally called the "Red-headed Island", Orchid Island was renamed after the Phalaenopsis orchids that grow in that region.

One last bit of trivia: Did you know Phalaenopsis plants are effective in removing xylene (chemical emissions from adhesives, computer VDU screens, paints, photo copiers, stains and varnishes) from the atmosphere? So put one in your computer room! Aren't you glad I told you?

Hope you will join us for our Re-potting Party, Monday, June 13 at our normal meeting time of 6:30, at Mitzi & Mark Williams' house. Details are found in the Next Meeting section. Refreshments will be served after we're done.

Wishing you many blooms,
Joanne Miller, CIOS President

Next meeting:

- Our next meeting is a members only re-potting "party" at Mark and Mitzi's house, 3208 S. First St, Champaign. Everyone can bring one plant to repot, and the Society will supply medium size bark mix for it. If you would like to repot more or ask for advice, you are welcome to bring them but please supply your own bark mix for them. It will be best to bring your own tools and a new pot if necessary. The Society has pots for sale in many different sizes and types, and bags of bark mix (medium) will also be available for sale.
- Mark your calendar for our Annual Pot Luck picnic for Sunday, July 10 at 4 p.m. Linda Bailey graciously offered her house for this event. Spouses/significant other are welcome. Details will be forthcoming.

Events in the area:

- June 17, 7 p.m. Hampton Inn, 2300 Chuckwagon Drive, Springfield IL. Prairie State Orchid Society regular meeting will feature Sam Tsui, an internationally known Paphiopedilum hybridist and nursery owner. There will be many plants for sale.
- Aug. 27, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Prairie State Orchid Society Annual Speaker's Day Seminar, Rochester Public Library, Rochester, IL. The speaker this year is Peter Lin, owner of Diamond Orchids. Peter specializes in miniature orchids, both species and hybrids, and has received numerous AOS awards. He will provide a full-day lecture and will bring a diverse selection of plants for sale.

Cost is \$20/person and will include a light continental breakfast and lunch. The registration information will be forthcoming in August. This may be another car pool event for CIOS members. Contact Mitzi if interested.

Notes and tips:

- Rain water is good for orchids because it lacks any added chemicals and salts that city water contains. One of the Michigan State University Orchid fertilizers is made specifically for use with rain water. Many kinds of rain barrels are available through various companies but if you live in Champaign and Urbana, the cities, along with the Univ. of Illinois Extension, holds a rain barrel sale in early May every year. If you don't have many orchids, a bucket or two will do, but please cover them to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.
- Now that the night temperatures are staying at or above 60°F, it is safe to let your plants go outside, but remember that they are like humans and sunburn easily. First, place them under complete shade for about 3 days, and gradually bring them out where they receive early morning sun. Some plants such as Cattleyas and Oncidium hybrids do well in bright sun, but they should never receive mid-day sun. If you are unable to control the amount of sun the plants may receive, consider using a shade cloth above them. Greenhouse supply company called Greenhouse Mega Store (www.greenhousemegastore.com) sells shade cloths of different density by the foot. For orchids, at least 50% or higher density of shade cloth should be used.



- Now, that leads to the question: We know that Cattleyas and Oncidiums need "bright light" and Phalaenopsis and Paphiopedilums can grow well in "low light." But---

How bright is bright?

On a clear day, the outside brightness with no shade is about 10,000 foot candles(fc) in summer and 3,000 fc in winter. The brightness in front of a clear glass window inside drops to about 5,000 fc in summer, but the shaded area off to the side of the window goes way down to about 600 fc. For a clear day under shade, the brightness is about 2,000 fc for summer and 700 fc in winter. Human eye can adjust to the surrounding light conditions and can take in more light if necessary, but plants cannot. The following tables from various sources show light levels and requirements for orchids:

Low light 1,000 - 2,000 fc.

Medium light 2,000 - 3,000 fc.

High light 3,500 - 5,000 fc.

Need Low to Medium Light: Phalaenopsis, Paphiopedium, Miltonia

Need Medium to High Light: Cymbidium; Oncidium; Dendrobium; Maxillaria

Need Medium to High Light: Cattleya; Vanda;

Caution: some species such as Dendrobium comes from a wide variety of environments, so the light requirements may vary somewhat. It is best to research each species before selecting a location for it.

Several sources that give information about light intensity and plants are:

- www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/indoor/flowering/hgic1560.html;
- www.orchidplantcare.info/what-is-a-foot-candle/;
- www.aos.org/orchids/additional-resources/principles-of-light.aspx;
- http://extension.illinois.edu/houseplants/needs_light.cfm.

- Insects and other critters: your orchids rapidly show growth and vigor when taken outside, but they also face a multitude of enemies. Insects will find some orchids irresistible, and can infest your plants. Marathon can work well outdoors. Left: hard scale with ants; Center left: slug; Center Right: mealy bug; Right: red spider mites. For more information, see: <http://www.aos.org/orchids/orchid-pests-diseases.aspx>



If you keep your plants indoors, insecticidal soap or alcohol wipe can be used for partial control. Also be aware of life cycles--mealy bugs, for example, takes about 5 to 6 weeks of treatment to completely kill all stages of them. Spraying household insecticide on the potting mix surface and underneath the pot will often prevent ants from nesting inside the pot. Dunking the pot in a bucket of water (either plain or mixed with insecticide) for 20-30 minutes will also control ants.

Some of the pests are inside the potting mix, and repotting may be the only complete solution to the problem. In addition, occasional larger critters that mess with your plants outside are:

Birds--trying to make a nest or simply landing on them;

Squirrels--burying nuts and seeds;

Rabbits--chewing; they love all kinds of leaves! Raise the pots above where the bunnies cannot reach.

Orchids of the month: *Catasetum*

Catasetum is a fascinating plant. After flowering, it loses all its leaves and goes dormant, usually in late fall. At that point, water should be withheld totally. It is best to be left on a high shelf, and forgotten. The result is a pot with just the bulbs--dry, dry, and dry. This is an orchid only for the most patient. The plant below is *Catasetum* 'Frisly Doris' which has not been watered since the end of December. But you can see two little green bumps at the base of the largest two bulbs. These are new growths which just appeared in early May.



Fred Clarke, a well-known authority in *Catasetums*, says watering can begin when the new growth is about 8 inches high and the roots about 5 inches long! It is going to be a long, long wait, and were not for its extraordinary flower, it sends anyone over the cliff of patience.



Catasetums are known to expel pollen when approached by a pollinator. To see it in action, check out the following link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTvMV9LjMv0>