



# Vero Beach Orchid Society

November 2017



## November Speaker

Our speaker for this month will be Shari Blissett-Clark. Shari will be talking about bats in your yard. She will explain how to attract and house the bats around your yard and how to keep them happy. She'll also explain the benefits of using bat guano on your plants.

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## VERO BEACH ORCHID SOCIETY BOARD MEETING MINUTE

October 2, 2017

Vice President Sherry Cauley called the meeting to order at 6:50pm. Board members present were: Treasurer Addison Marvin, Secretary Joan Kaser, Newsletter editor Carolyn Greene, Board members Doug Mew, Howard Kramer. Show Chairperson Carol Marvin was also present.

Treasurer's report: Addison presented the treasurer's report for the month of September. It was suggested that we bank on line, but that would require a computer and software. After some discussion, it was decided to keep the system we are using. We will review the suggestion next year. Doug moved and Carolyn seconded the report, it was accepted.

Secretary's report: Minutes of the last meeting were read. It was moved by Carolyn and seconded by Sherry and the minutes were approved.

Old Business: The Christmas part will be the same as last year, with the exception of dessert. Members will have to choose the entree, the dessert (two choices) and the dressing they would like on their salad. The luncheon will begin at 1:00pm

John donated 14 plants for the raffle table last month. We need to approach him to see if we can give him a check or a receipt to show it was a donation. Thank will be providing plants for this meeting.

We need to follow up with Joe Bryson, head judge, about guidelines for judging. He would like to have them in writing. The judges need to know what is required.

The speaker for this month will be Ben Nees and he will be speaking about landscaping and miniature displays.

New Business: We will have a potting party at Riverside Park on October 28<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00am; this will be in addition to our regular meeting. We will arrange for the pots and the plants. Vero Chemical has plastic cups with tops. The plant will be like a terrarium and we will be teaching about the greenhouse idea. We will encourage them to come back and tell us how they did. We expect about 60 people and we will provide hot dogs, chips and drinks. We will need to get a grill and paper goods. Carolyn has the blinds that can be used as labels and may have time to make the labels.

Elections are coming up with nominations at the October meeting, elections in November and the board will be sworn at the Christmas Party. We will approach John to see if he is willing to serve another term as he has done such a great job this year. The rest of the board agreed to stay on, but we will take nominations from the Society. Board member Doug Mew's three year term is up, Pat Mills has one year to go, and

Howard Kramer has 2 years to go. Board members are elected for a 3 year term with staggered terms. After the elections we will need to review the by-laws.

Show Business: The theme will be "Orchids on Parade" and Carol and Carolyn are looking into getting hats for the workers. Carolyn will be in charge of award plates for the show. We have a few left and we may be able to use those as well.

We will be looking into changing the food vendor for our show. We would like to get someone local but the size of the truck will need to be taken into consideration.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Kaser, Secretary

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## November in Your Orchid Collection



*Euanthe sanderiana*

### November Climate Data

Average high: 81.2      Average low: 67.5      Average mean: 74.4      Average rainfall: 3.43"

In November we can no longer afford to be dominated by the illusion, so easy here at the northern edge of the tropics, that summer will never end. Although Indian Summer persists for the whole winter in South Florida, November is the month to prepare our plants for those short sharp blasts of cold which are inevitably coming as each successive cold front pushes the overall temperature a little lower and a little lower. Each day is shorter too. The loss of daylight savings time should awake us to the fact that there are less hours of sunlight to save our plants from the chill of the night. Many genera are already anticipating this sea change and have completed their growths for the season. Some like *Catasetum*, *Cynoches*, *Calanthe* and the nobile dendrobiums are even beginning to shed their foliage in preparation for the cool, dry season. While the Himalayan *Dendrobium* species of the nobile and *Callista* types, *calanthes*, *cymbidiums* and a few others, actually relish temperatures down to near freezing, and most *cattleyas* and *Oncidium* alliance species and hybrids are not bothered by temperatures in the mid-thirties, the majority of the genera which we grow, *vandas*, evergreen dendrobiums, *Phalaenopsis* and others, benefit from being protected from the cold. Now, while the first breathes of cool air remind us that more and stronger cold is in the offing, is the time to start thinking about protecting our plants.

In nature nearly all the tender tropical epiphytic orchids native to South Florida are found nestled in the bosom of deep hammocks where they are well protected from the wind. This observation leads us to think of protecting our orchids from the north and northwest winds. Creating or utilizing already existing wind breaks to the north and west of our orchids will limit the ability of the wind to steal the warmth out of our plants. The critical factor is not the low temperature that the air reaches but rather the temperature to which the plant tissue is chilled and for how long. This is why limiting the movement of cold air over our plants is essential. In still air, plant tissue (mostly water but with some dissolved salts) retains heat for a long time and is aided by the plants' metabolism. The very goings on of life generate heat, therefore considerable exposure to still air is needed to chill a plant to the temperature of the surrounding environment. Not so if wind enters the picture. Wind can quickly rob the plant's surfaces of heat, chilling the plants tissue deeper and deeper. When the plant's temperature tolerance is reached, at best growth ceases or worse yet damage ensues. Slowing the cooling process and limiting the hours of exposure to sub-optimal temperature is the best gift we can give our plants for the holidays.

Protecting our tender plants from exposure to wind must be our primary concern in preparing them for winter. Buildings, walls and even thick hedges can be very effective windbreaks slowing or stopping chill air. Choose places in your garden that offer this sort of protection to your orchid plants wherever possible. The geography of Florida plays into the equation as well. Because the Florida peninsular juts decidedly to the Southeast (Naples is due south of Jacksonville), protection from the Northwest wind is even more crucial than protection from the North wind on the east coast of Florida. Northwest winds are blowing out of the cold heart of the landmass while true North winds have in most locales usually blown over more warm water and less cold land. Regardless of the degree of north, safeguarding our collections from the wind is critical to their healthy maintenance. Not until the air circulating clockwise around the cold high pressure system shifts to the Northeast to blow over the warm Gulfstream can we relax our guard.

Orchids that are grown in shade houses, in patios or pool enclosures can be protected by installing plastic film on the north and west walls of the structure. This can be attached with staples or other devices that allow the plastic to be furled in warm weather and only lowered for those few nights when it is needed. Easiest to come by (Home Depot, or any hardware store) and cheapest, is 6mil clear polyethylene (don't use 4mil; it rarely lasts the winter being exposed to Florida's bright ultraviolet light). One hundred feet by ten costs about \$20. Stored in a dark place, this stock will last the average grower several years and be a very small investment that will yield greatly improved orchids. Handled with care in furling and unfurling, 6 mil plastic usually will get the grower through the winter. If unobtrusive,

it may be simply left in place till March. White polypropylene, similar to nursery ground cloth, is used by many nurseries for winterizing. More expensive than polyethylene, it is very durable and will last many more years. Some growers have it cut to size, taped and grommeted for easy up and down installation and storing. Universal Supply (1-800-432-3009) has it. Given the dimensions and enough lead time they can customize it for you.

Getting our growing area ready for winter is one half of the equation. We must also get the plants themselves ready. Healthy, well-nourished plants withstand cold better as do plants that are harder and not too lushly in growth. Because both light and temperature are lower in November and most orchids have slowed their growth, they need less fertilizer. In cooler weather ammoniacal nitrogen is less available to our plants because it needs the assistance of bacterial action to ease its absorption by the plants. Nitrate nitrogen is more desirable therefore in cooler weather, because it is more quickly and readily absorbed by the orchids. Check the label on your fertilizer and try to choose one with a higher ration of nitrate nitrogen to ammoniacal nitrogen for winter use. The very best source for nitrate nitrogen is potassium nitrate(KNO<sub>3</sub>). It has the formula 13-0-44. The lower level of the desirable nitrate form of nitrogen is well suited to the continuing but diminished nutritional needs of our orchids in cool weather. The level of potassium is thought to contribute to the 'hardening' of the plants. Try to obtain the soluble or 'Spray' grade. If only Prills (small beads like tapioca) are available they will need to be dissolved with boiling water, a tedious task.

Potassium nitrate is superlative also because it contains no phosphorus which, in combination with our hard, alkaline water interferes with the plants' absorption of trace elements. Trace element nutrition is especially important to maintain healthy orchids in cool weather: above all, magnesium, the 'major' minor element. The reddening of orchid foliage which is usually attributed to cold is in fact the symptom of magnesium and potassium deficiency. Cold is only the efficient cause of this reddening; the material cause is lack of magnesium.

Epsom salts at 1tbs. per gal plus potassium nitrate at the same rate will quickly bring back the green. This regimen can be alternated with a general trace element mixture(follow the package rate) plus potassium nitrate. Indeed, following the recommendations of the Michigan State University study published in the July 2003 issue of Orchids, symptoms of magnesium or potassium deficiency might be a warning that we should have been following something closer to this "winter" fertilizer regimen all year. We now recommend alternating applications of 1TBS each of Epsom salts and potassium nitrate with a balance fertilizer such as 20-20-20 or 18-18-18 year round not just in the Fall. Best of all is a 15-5-15 with additional calcium and magnesium. Peters markets one as Excel.

The Epsom salts are as near as your medicine cabinet. The potassium nitrate is more difficult to find but a trip to the nearest Farm supply store is worth the effort. You'll save a bundle on fertilizer and have plenty of potassium nitrate left over to grow the biggest bunch of bananas in the neighborhood.

If you have the energy, November is also a great time for starting to pot those sympodial orchids (cattleyas, oncidiums, et al) that have finished blooming. You'll have a leg up on the Spring potting and will glow with virtue in expectation of the rewards of the Holidays. Be especially careful at this season that the newly transplanted orchids are well secured in their containers. It may be many weeks till they have broken growth and can anchor themselves with their own roots. If the plants are allowed any wiggle room the newly emerging roots will be chaffed off, sending the plant into a slow and difficult to reverse decline.

### **Tasks for November**

- Prepare for cold
  - Reduce fertilizer
  - Apply extra Potassium and Magnesium
  - Segregate dormant genera in bright dry area
  - Repot plants after flowering
  - Groom plants and flower spikes for holiday display.
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### **Editors Notes:**

We want to thank Ben Nees for his interesting discussion on miniatures and landscaping with orchids.

This weekend is the Ft Pierce Orchid Society Show. I encourage each of you to visit to help support our neighboring society. If you're interested in helping with setup, come on down to the St Lucie County Shrine building in Ft Pierce at 4600 Oleander Ave. We'll begin about 8:30, and lunch will be provided for all who help when we finish the display.

Well, our elections are beginning again, We will take nominations from the floor at the November meeting one last time, and have elections. Our current officers and board members are: as President, John Odom; Vice President, Sherry Cauley, Treasurer, Addison Marvin, and as Secretary, Joan Kaser. The board consists of Doug Mew, Pat Mills, and Howard Kramer. The board meets on the first Monday of every month, unless that happens to be a holiday. If there are no nominations, the folks whose term has expired have agreed to stay on, but new nominations will be welcome also.

Our Christmas Party will be at Marsh Landing in Fellsmere on December 16<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00pm. The entree choices will be Honey Glazed Ham, Roast Turkey, Baked Chicken, or Fried Catfish. Along with your choice of entree, will be an appetizer tray, salad, and dessert. The choices for salad dressing are French, Thousand Island, Ranch, Blue Cheese, Honey Mustard, and Italian. For dessert you may select Key Lime or Peanut Butter Pie. Non alcoholic beverages are include and alcoholic beverages are available. Reservations will be accepted until December 6<sup>th</sup>. The cost will be \$20 for members and \$25 for non members. You may pay at the next meeting or mail your reservations to the society post office box (the address is on the last page). If you elect to send your payment in, please note on the check that it is for the party and add a slip of paper with your choices of entree, salad dressing, and

dessert.

We have a member who is looking for someone to “Plant Sit” for him. He has about 50 plants which need to be attended to while he is traveling. The dates he will need the sitter will be from April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 until May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018. He has only 3 vandas which will require daily watering and is willing to let you take them to your home to care for them so you won't have to visit his house every day. The schedule will not be difficult, they'll only need to be watered every third day (except the vandas which could be at your home). So, if you will be available and wouldn't mind helping out a fellow member, please let me know at [vbosnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:vbosnewsletter@hotmail.com), or you can contact him directly. His name is Hank Kalt, and his email is [hank.kalt@gmail.com](mailto:hank.kalt@gmail.com). There may be some judgment as to whether everything needs to be watered on the 3 day schedule, depending on our weather at that time. So if you can help, please drop him a line.

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**VERO BEACH ORCHID SOCIETY OFFICERS**

President – John Odom

Vice President – Sherry Cauley

Secretary – Joan Kaser

Treasurer – Addison Marvin

**Board of Directors**

Doug Mew

Howard Kramer

Pat Mills

**Committees**

Membership –

Hospitality – Joyce Jackman

Sunshine – Louise Martin

Show Chairman – Carol Marvin

Vero Beach Orchid Society

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VBOS Website: [www.verobeachorchidsociety.org](http://www.verobeachorchidsociety.org)

DUES FOR 2017:

SINGLE MEMBER DUES \$15.00

FAMILY DUES: \$20.00

**OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE NOVEMBER 16TH, AT 7:00 PM AT THE GARDEN CLUB OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, 2526 17TH AVENUE VERO BEACH, FLORIDA 32960. THE MEETING WILL START AT 7:00 PM**