



Vero Beach Orchid Society

November 2016



November Speaker Dave Murray

David Murray is a sixth generation Floridian born in Titusville. He is the first farmer in his family since the 1800's. Going straight from Rockledge High School into construction, the decision to look for a less stressful way to spend time was an easy one. Being one who loves everything outdoors, and at this point working on a ranch that would soon be known as the Disney Wilderness Preserve, he developed a passion for plants and started to dabble in aquaponics during the "free time". After quickly learning the advantages of straight hydroponics, he spent years trying to learn what more knowledgeable people were doing for hundreds of years before him. Just about the time it was getting easy, the Internet came along and then the work was just beginning again. Many chemistry and botany lessons later, growing plants has never been easier. Now after close to thirty years, the passion has turned to teaching the things learned to anyone who wants to listen. Whether it's the look on a child's face when he sees the seed sprouted overnight, or setting up farms for non profits, the goal has become to teach people how to grow healthy food in an environmentally friendly way. As the father of two young girls (2 & 7), commitment to a healthy lifestyle is at the top of the list. The ability to empower people to not only to grow their own high quality food, but give them peace of mind knowing where it came from could not be more satisfying. He is always grateful for a platform to share the knowledge the Lord has blessed him with. Give a man some vegetables and he will eat for a day, teach a man hydroponics and he can feed his whole family with a minimal amount of space.

There will be a raffle table and member sales will not be allowed.

Vero Beach Orchid Society Board Meeting October 3, 2016

President Judy Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:50pm. Board members present were Treasurer Addison Marvin, Secretary Joan Kaser, Newsletter Editor Carolyn Greene, Board Members Ronnie Meeks, Doug Mew, and Sherry Cauley.

The minutes of the last board meeting were read. Sherry moved and Doug seconded that the minutes be approved as read, motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Addison Marvin presented the Treasurer's Report for the month of September. Judy moved and Doug seconded to accept the report, motion passed.

Old Business: The cost of the plant for the raffle table was discussed and we are making a little profit on them.

The Christmas party as discussed. It will be held on December 17th at 1pm at Marsh Landing in Fellsmere. The choice of four dinners will be offered: Turkey, Ham, Catfish, and Chicken. The dinners will include appetizers, 2 sides, a salad, dessert and a beverage. The cost is \$20.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members. There will be a cash bar available. The plants for the party will be purchased from Odom's Orchids and Springwater Orchids.

We had a good response for volunteers for a tent at the Gardenfest, so we will proceed with this, but we will not be taking out an ad in their program.

A discussion was held on the liability insurance and we are very well covered.

New Business: The slate of officers that will be presented for election are: Jim Andre – President, Sherry Cauley – Vice President, Addison Marvin – Treasurer, Joan Kaser – Secretary, Carolyn Greene – Newsletter Editor, Board Member for 2 years – Pat Mills, and Board Member for the full 3 year term – John Odom. Doug's final year on his current term on the board will be next year.

Judy moved to adjourn, Doug seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

The next board meeting will be held on November 7th.

Respectively submitted by Joan Kaser, Secretary

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*, *Cycnoches*, *Calanthe* and the noble dendrobiums are even beginning to shed their foliage in preparation for the cool, dry season. While the Himalayan *Dendrobium* species of the noble 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 grommited 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(KNO₃). 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
 - Re-pot plants after flowering
 - Groom plants and flower spikes for holiday display.
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Editors Notes:

Thanks goodness the election ads are done. Now we can get on with our lives! However, our society elections are not yet over. We will still be opening up the floor to everyone who would like to oppose one of the current nominees. If there are no other volunteers, the slate will be Jim Andre for President, Sherry Cauley for Vice President, Addison Marvin for Treasurer, and Joan Kaser for Secretary. The board members will be John Odom, Pat Mills, and Doug Mew. Carolyn Greene will remain as the newsletter editor.

We are still taking reservations for the Christmas Party through December 3rd. There are some final arrangements that need to be made between the 3rd and the party, which will be on the 17th, so get your reservation in by the 3rd. It will be held at Marsh Landing in Fellsmere, the same location as last year. The time will be 1:00pm and the entree menu will include Roast Turkey, Honey Glazed Ham, Fried Catfish, and Herb Roasted Chicken. In addition to the entree, there will be an appetizer tray of cheeses, salad before the entree and 2 vegetables and hushpuppies with your entree. To wrap things up, we'll have a peach cobbler for dessert. The cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for guests. Each attending member will receive an orchid. You can pay for your reservation either at the next meeting or by sending it to the post office box address, listed below.

VERO BEACH ORCHID SOCIETY OFFICERS

President – Judy Wagner

Vice President –

Secretary – Joan Kaser

Treasurer – Addison Marvin

Board of Directors

Ronnie Meeks

Doug Mew

Sherry Cauley

Committees

Membership –

Hospitality –

Sunshine – Louise Martin

Show Chairman – Carol Marvin

Vero Beach Orchid Society

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Newsletter Editor – Carolyn Greene

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VBOS Website: www.veroachorchidsociety.org

DUES FOR 2016: SINGLE MEMBER DUES \$15.00

FAMILY DUES: \$20.00

OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE NOVEMBER 17TH, 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