



Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

February 2018

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Contact us at:

www.ciorchidsociety.org

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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 2018

- Joanne Miller, President
- Terry Moore, Vice President & Show Chair
- Linda Bailey, Sale Chair
- Linda Bial, Secretary

- Mark Williams, Treasurer
- Mitzi Williams, Editor, Newsletter & Webpage

From the President:

I hope you're starting to get excited about our Orchid Show and Sale coming up next month, **March 3**. We have no idea how the weather will be on that date since this time of year is unpredictable, so I wanted to give you some helpful hints about transporting your orchids to our show. A shock of cold, dry air can quickly damage and even blast an orchid bud or bloom. Taking a little bit of precaution against potential cold damage can prevent a lot of disappointment later on.

Here are a few ways to minimize disaster en route to an orchid society meeting or our show. Cardboard boxes lined with newspaper will help retain heat around the plant. Plastic bags like dry cleaning bags supported by wire hoops or stakes can help protect larger plants and stop tall inflorescence from freezing or drying out. Plastic storage containers of various sizes and shapes are also useful which might fit several orchids together in them. If you don't think this is enough protection for your plants you can use shredded paper, Styrofoam peanuts or polyester batting to protect your plants inside the box.

Another consideration is staking your plant's flower stems. This will improve the overall appearance of your plant blooms, and also keep the spike and flowers stationary and less susceptible to injury during transportation. The proper time to stake your plants flower stem is when the flowers are beginning to develop. Try to keep the stakes as thin as possible, to avoid distracting attention from the blooms themselves.

Finally, if the temperature is low, warm up your vehicle in advance of transporting your plants. Plan your trip so the plants will spend the shortest possible time in transit, and never leave orchids sitting in a hot or cold car.

Hope to see you all at our next meeting Monday, February 12. Not only will we talk about the show, but Melissa Edwards will give us a travelogue on her recent trip to Australia. Can't wait!

Joanne Miller, CIOS President

Next meeting:

- Our next meeting is on Monday, February 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hessel Park Church.
- The T-shirts will be available for pick up at this meeting. The price is \$16. If you have not paid the 2018 membership dues, please do so as well.
- The Annual Show and Sale is on **Saturday March 3, 10 am-3pm** at the Hessel Park Church. We need help from set up (8 am) to take down (3pm). Please contact the Chairs (Linda Bailey, Sale, and Terry Moore, Show) to offer your help. Our poster is attached to this issue. Thanks to Melissa for the fabulous design. Please feel free to print out and distribute to your friends, family, and businesses that you know. Members can purchase plants before the event opens. If you can bring 'lunchy munchies', that'll be great.

Events in the area:

- Feb. 3 - March 25, 2018. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily. Missouri Botanical Garden Orchid Show. During the period, a beautifully illustrated book by James Bateman entitled The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala, published in 1837, will be on display at the Garden. Admission to the Orchid Show is \$5, in addition to the Garden entrance fee of \$12. For details, see: www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/things-to-do/events/signature-events/orchid-show.aspx
- Feb. 3 - 4, 2018. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Orchid Society of Greater St. Louis is also having a show and sale at the garden. Admission to this event is free. Many great vendors will be present at this event. For details, see: <http://www.osogsl.org/>
- Feb. 3 - 4, 2018. Madison Orchid Grower's Guild "Orchid Quest", Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI. For details, contact Terri Jozwiac, lodijoz@charter.net
- Feb. 10-11, Noon - 4pm* Prairie State Orchid Society Show and Sale. Washington Park Botanical Gardens, 1740 W. Fayette, Springfield IL. Orchid supplies, repotting service, raffles. *Sale ends at 3pm on Sunday. For details, see Prairiestateorchids.org.
- Feb. 17-18, 2018. Chicago Suburban Orchid Show, sponsored by Batavia Orchid Society, DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Rd., Wheaton, IL. 10 am-5pm (Sat.) and 9am-4pm (Sun.) Details, see: bataviaorchidsociety.org/BOS%20Show%202015.pdf
- Feb. 23-25, and March 2-4. 9 am - 5:30 pm. Hausermann's Annual Open House Show and Sale. 10% off on plants and supplies. 2N134 Addison Road, Villa Park, IL.
- March 10-11, 2018. Plant Biology Conservatory and Greenhouses Spring Fling and Orchid Sale. 10 am-2pm (Sat) and 1pm-3pm (Sun). 1201 S. Dorner Dr., Urbana IL.



orchids, pots, bark and other growing supplies
help with repotting* raffle prize drawings on Sunday

*Experienced growers will be on hand to answer questions.
Handouts on orchid culture and care will be available.*

Notes and tips:

- The following article is not just about *Habenaria*, but a story of orchid growing evolution that we all go through. The author, Sue Bottom, serves on the AOS Publication Committee as well as being a member of St. Augustine (FL) Orchid Society. The article was first published in the January 2016 Orchids.

WHY DO YOU GROW THE ORCHIDS YOU GROW: Now It's *Habenarias*

By Sue Bottom

HAS YOUR TASTE in orchids changed over time? When you first start growing orchids, you buy everything in sight; all you know is that you need more, more! Cattleyas are my enduring favorite, the incredible flowers, the fragrance; perhaps that's why most of my benches and overhead poles are filled with them. But then you go to an orchid show and see something that you simply can't live without.

In the beginning it was *Phalaenopsis*. When we were living in Houston, the Houston Orchid Society was a *Phalaenopsis* club thanks in part to Bill Tippitt's breeding of multifloral phals. It was an exciting time for *Phalaenopsis*, the hybridizing for yellows was in its heyday and the harlequin phals had just been introduced. How can you not love phals with their long-lived graceful blooms?

Then one day Stephen Moffitt gave a presentation to the Galveston club about *catasetums*, so naturally I started growing them. What is easier than a plant that requires no winter care during its dormancy but grows like mad in the summer? Add Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids into the mix with all his beautiful and fascinating hybrids and there are new wows to tempt you every year.

Next there was the vanda phase; so many colors, sizes and shapes! After that it was the ephemeral *stanhopeas*. That addiction started with a *Stanhopea grandiflora* that bloomed eight times in one year. Can you spell hooked? It took a bit of observing how others succeeded with theirs and some trial and error until I could reliably rebloom them and by then I had almost two dozen different varieties. After that came the African *angraecoids* in their white and green glory, the *dendrochilums* with their chains of miniature flowers and... well, you get the idea.

Roy Tokunaga of H&R Nurseries had some *Habenaria medusa* seedlings for sale when he came to talk to our club and I had seen pictures of this oddity and thought, why not? When it bloomed, it was love at first sight and the hunt was on for more. There have been many enablers along the way, including Thanh Nguyen of Springwater Orchids on the East Coast and Peter T. Lin of Diamond Orchids on the West Coast and several in between. Before the year was over, there were about two dozen *habenarias* in the greenhouse, orchids that grow from tubers and require a dry dormant winter.

That's how I found myself outdoors on a cold January afternoon with all these dead-looking plants figuring out how I was going to repot them, so they'd come back to life in the spring. The trickiest part is keeping the tuber oriented, so the shoot end is pointing up and the root end is pointing down, easier said than done in that one end looks pretty much like the other. I think I made the wrong decision on one or two of them last year. For the similarly afflicted, this is what I have gleaned from reading about them and talking with other orchid growers.

POT SELECTION First, look for deeper standard size pots rather than the shallower azalea or bulb pots.

Don't use peanuts at the bottom of the pot because that's where the tubers will want to form. Use smallish pots; if you think you're slightly underpotting, you've probably chosen the right pot.

POTTING MIX Most growers suggest using either sphagnum moss or ProMix HP as your potting mix. I opted for a ProMix HP–sponge rock mix and top-dressed with a little sphagnum moss so the soilless mix wouldn't wash out of the pot. If you use sphagnum moss, make sure you have the AAA grade; otherwise find a good soilless mix. Next year I may try a few in straight sphagnum moss packed tightly enough that the plants will stand up without support.

WHEN TO REPOT After flowering, the vegetation starts to brown, and the plants begin to enter dormancy. The tubers are still growing and storing energy for next year's growth, so just limit your watering until the plant dies back completely. Don't be in any hurry to remove the dead top vegetation from the pot because that will help you orient the tubers properly during the repotting process.

TUBER ORIENTATION If you just knock the plant out of the pot and clean away the old potting mix like you would with other orchids, you'll find yourself saying oops, which end is up? The first-time repotting, I held the tubers in my hand, oriented top to bottom, from depotting through repotting, to make sure they didn't get turned around. Often you can tell there is a pointy end from which the shoot grows that should be oriented up when you repot. But if you can't tell which end should be up, hedge your bets and lay the tuber sideways.

THEN YOU WAIT Once your tuber is happily ensconced in its dry new home, put the pot someplace where it won't accidentally get watered. You have to wait until the tuber breaks dormancy and sends up a new shoot and then you can begin watering. If there is no new growth when all your other orchids have spring fever, you can give your *Habenaria* an occasional sip to encourage it to start growing. Once it has a few inches (several centimeters) of new growth, give it copious amounts of water and fertilizer during the growing season because, like your other winter dormant orchids, it has to cram 12 months of growing into seven or eight months or less. In the fall the bloom spikes will emerge from the center of the plant; get ready for the show!

Orchid growers go through all sorts of trials and tribulations learning how to grow one type of orchid and then when they finally figure it out, they decide to start growing a different type of orchid. It is probably natural that our taste in orchids evolves over time. After all, if you look back at your recipes from several years ago you realize your ingredients and techniques have morphed over time... though you must be careful not to admit to a Louisiana native that you are now adding beans to the gumbo!

Editor's Notes:

We are beginning the 11th year of this Newsletter now. Issues back to January 2014 are available on our society website. The older issues up to the most current are archived at the Champaign County Historical Archives in perpetuity. The Archives are located at the Urbana Free Library. I have enjoyed compiling/editing the newsletter since the beginning, but would love to have some article submissions from the members. Anything orchid related (even slightly) would be wonderful.

Correction: In the January 2018 Issue, Linda Baily was mistakenly listed as Vice President. Terry Moore is the Vice President as well as the Show Chair, and Linda Bailey is the Sale Chair.

Mitzi Williams

REPOTTING DEMOS

12:00 p.m.

2:00 p.m.



**Central Illinois
Orchid Society's Annual**

Orchid
SHOW & SALE

FREE ADMISSION!
Cash or check only

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Hessel Park Church
700 W. Kirby Ave.
Champaign

www.ciorchidsociety.org