



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 2017

- 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:

It's May and the thought always comes to me "Do I need more Orchids?" The answer is NO! But that doesn't stop me from looking at a new variety or what's in bloom at orchid nurseries. I'm also getting excited to see what we will have at our Lincoln Square sale this year to purchase because there is an incredible diversity from which to select.

The days are longer now this month and hopefully our temperatures will be getting warmer soon. These two conditions generally cause our orchids to put on new growth. That also means that this time of year is the perfect time to repot the orchids that need it. New roots should be appearing and they would like new potting medium for bigger and better flowers in their blooming season. Be sure you have a well-draining mix. Your orchids will need more moisture than in the winter to keep the pseudobulbs plump.

Fertilizer is another important factor to get your plants ready to bloom at their peak. I've read that Calcium and magnesium are essential nutrients for your orchids so make sure they are listed on the fertilizer you use.

Humidity is also appreciated by your orchids, ideally between 40 – 60%. you can always mist the plants in the mornings or put some long fiber sphagnum moss to retain some moisture. Pebble trays with a little water under the pebbles work too. Keep the air in your orchid room circulating, preferable by a fan or by opening the window an inch or so as orchids hate stale air!

I hope by reminding you of these few tips, your orchids will flourish and bloom like crazy for you. Please come see us at the Lincoln Square Plant sale on Saturday, May 13. If you signed up to work for a few hours, I will email you to confirm it. It should be a fun day and there will be all kinds of various plants to browse through. Hope to see you there!

Happy growing,

Joanne Miller CIOS President

Next meeting:

- The May meeting is substituted by the Plant Sale at Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana on May 13th from 8 am to 1 pm. The Sale is hosted by the Grand Prairie Friends and the Herb Society and includes several other plant groups like CIOS. Joanne Miller and Mitzi Williams will be in charge of this sale. We will have gorgeous tropical orchids as usual, and several pots of native slipper orchids in both yellow and pink.
- Our next meeting is on Monday, June 12, at 6:30 p.m. Information about the program and meeting location will be e-mailed as well as added to our website.

Member profile: Heidi Von Gunden:

Since moving to St. Joseph in 1995, I've always had at least one orchid (a Phalaenopsis) in my house. I love Asian design and aesthetic, and am fortunate to have inherited several Japanese antiques that seemed to be asking for orchids! Also, having a sunroom facing east became an ideal place for growing orchids.



Heidi with her repotted Cattleya

I can't remember my first orchid, but I do remember when they became available at Schnucks. Now I have 88 orchids, and my longest kept is probably five or six-years-old. It is only since I joined CIOS that I have begun collecting orchids. My favorites are Miltoniopsis (I now have four, three purchased this year and one from last year that has not bloomed but is still alive!), Cattleyas (the big one from last year that I'm holding in the picture and didn't bloom this year), and I can't resist those gorgeous Phals. Since I'm a newcomer to CIOS, the only shows I've attended are the local ones. I did enjoy our trip to the commercial grower near Chicago last year. What would I like to grow in the future? That would be a Paphiopedilum. I have several young ones and hope they flower next year. Recently I've become a U-tube watcher and follow Miss Orchid Girl, Roger Frampton, Ed's Orchids, and of course our TD Moore. I'm experimenting with inorganic medium with my orchids using Seramis* and hydroton** clay pebbles. They receive MSU fertilizer and RO water. In addition to the Asian interior of my house and sunroom, I think my orchids appreciate that I'm a musician and like to hear me play Bach and Mozart.



* Seramis: <http://www.gardenhealth.com/product/seramis-orchid-potting-mix>

**Hydroton: https://www.ebay.com/p/?iid=132164332725&lpid=82&ul_noapp=true&chn=ps&var=431501638404

American Orchid Society:

- 2017 Dillon/Peterson Essay Contest:

The contest is open to members and non-members alike. The theme for 2017 is "Species or hybrids: Which do you prefer and why?" Do you grow hybrids because of their cultural adaptability and reliable blooming (sometimes more than once a year), or do you grow species because of the challenge and diversity?

This is a chance to show off some of your favorite orchids as you use them to illustrate your points! The essay must be no longer than 5,000 words, and must be original as well as unpublished. The deadline is Nov. 30, 2017, and the winning essay will be published in the June issue of Orchids the following year. For more information, visit: www.aos.org/about-us/article-submissions/essay-contest-winners.aspx.

Notes and tips:

- At the PSOS monthly meeting last month, we learned about another home-made insecticide using Dr. Bronner's 18-in-1 Hemp Peppermint Pure-Castile Soap. Mix 4 tablespoons of this soap with one gallon of water. The smell of peppermint beats other homemade insecticides that uses floor cleaners, etc.

A 32-fluid ounce of the soap costs about \$16 and is available at Target. The intended user of this soap is humans, but all sorts of small-print messages covering the entire bottle, which can be described only as 'interesting,' will keep you occupied for hours.

- As the weather gets warmer, you are wondering when to take the orchids outside. Just like humans, all indoor plants including orchids, cannot suddenly go out in the bright sunlight and not get burnt or beaten up.

1. An important rule of thumb is that the night temperatures should be stable at 60°F. In 2016, this occurred after May 25th, while in 2015, it was after June 7. If it is above 70°F during the daytime, the plants can be out during the day in the shade, but will need to be back in before evening.
2. They should first go out to a shaded area with no direct sunlight (such as under an overhang) and spend several days to get used to the outside environment. Remember, even in a shade, the light is much more intense than it is indoors.
3. If there is an occasional dip below 60°F, the plants can be covered with a light cloth or newspaper, but most orchids, once outside, can tolerate a night or two at 55°F.
4. Cymbidiums can tolerate cooler temperatures, so they can go out first, even when the night temperatures are near 40°F's.
5. After several days of acclimatizing, the plants can be brought out to where they stay for the summer. Most of them benefit from 4-5 hours of morning or late afternoon sun, but Vandas enjoy full day of sun except during noon to 2 pm when the sun is the hottest.
6. Those with soft leaves, such as Phalaenopsis, may be better off being kept indoors because the leaves get damaged easily.
7. Orchids benefit from natural rain, but make sure the rain water drains through the pot. If rain persists, check your plants for water accumulation in the center of the new growth. Without being drained off, it may lead to crown rot. Young Cymbidium growths often turn brown if the water stays at the center too long.
8. Be sure to keep the pots off the ground, and treat with insecticides once a month.
9. Outside living encourages plants to produce new growths and thrive, so watering frequencies and fertilization should be increased accordingly.

Orchid of the month: Maxillaria

Maxillaria seems to be a conflicted species of orchids--most everyone knows about, have seen, or may actually own one, most likely, *Maxillaria tenuifolia*, the coconut orchid. Beyond that, however, not many know of any other species or have them in their collection. Pronounced [max-ih-LARE-ee-uh](#), the name of this group of orchids derived from the Latin word Maxilla (jaw or jawbone) because of its lip and column resembling the jaws of insects.

Maxillaria is mainly found in humid areas from Florida through Central and South America including northern Argentina. The flower size varies from 1/2 to 6+ inches, with color range just as varied from white, yellow, red, Burgundy, to almost black. According to some orchid scholars, this genus consists of about 700 species, but knowing that several species have been discovered in this century, 700 may be a low estimate. Cultural requirements vary somewhat, depending on the original habitat such as in low ground or in cloud forests, but most species can be successfully grown in intermediate temperatures with bright, but no direct sunlight. Potting media include coconut husk in a basket, or any well-drained media for epiphytes.

Cindy Westfall has grown several species of Maxillarias, including *Max. tenuifolia* x *sanguia* and *Max. shunkeana*, and says they are relatively easy to grow. She recently added *Max. sophronitis*, *Max. reichenheimiana*, and *Max. hennesiana*. If you are interested in knowing more about Maxillarias, and want some advice, talk to Cindy.



Clockwise from top left: *Max. tenuifolia*; *Max. shunkeana*; *Max. estradae*, *Max. ringens* (photo by G. Allikas) and *Max. sophronitis* (grown and photographed by Cindy).