



# Connecticut Orchid Society

## Newsletter Dec 2014

*55 Years & Growing*

*The First, Original Orchid Society in Connecticut*

*Affiliated with the American Orchid Society and Orchid Digest*

### Next Meeting

**Wednesday, Dec 10, 2014, 6:00 pm**  
**Farmington Senior Center**  
321 New Britain Ave., Cheshire, CT  
(See last pg. 7 for map & directions)

#### Holiday Party!!

Everyone, please bring your favorite holiday finger-foods, casseroles, desserts, etc. to share. Dottie Kern is coordinating the menu.

6:00 pm.: Doors open. Socializing begins. **Finger foods served**

6:30 pm: **Main dishes served**

(For notice of last-minute or inclement weather cancellation, visit our website [www.ctorchids.org](http://www.ctorchids.org).)



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### President's Message



Cheryl Mizak

Hi Everyone,

Sitting by the fire; turkey in the oven and a light snow falling—yes the holiday season has begun. Over the next month we will all be busy with the season's festivities. Do not forget to take care of your orchids.

Bill & Sherry Pendleton will be setting up for the Cape & Island show in January. They could use some help with either set up or take down. The Cape in January is beautiful and no tourists. Any suggestions on how to build an orchid bridge and the use of blooming plants will be appreciated.

This month we gather at the Farmington Senior Center, bring your favorite holiday dish for a pot luck dinner. Dottie Kern our special event food coordinator will be calling — so be ready to tell her what you will be bringing. Doors open at 6:00 for finger foods and mingling. Main dishes will be served at 6:30. A fun evening with the buffet tables bulging with goodies to eat and lots of Orchid talk.

See you soon  
Cheryl

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Note meeting time change :  
holiday party starts at 6:00 pm!

### Connecticut Orchid Society Mission Statement

The Connecticut Orchid Society is an incorporated, non-profit association for the preservation and extension of knowledge concerning the conservation, ecology, science, cultivation, hybridization, appreciation and uses of orchids; and to carry on such activities as may be necessary or desirable to effectuate such purposes.

## 2014 Connecticut Orchid Society Officers & Posts

PRESIDENT	Cheryl Mizak	(203) 264-6096
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TREASURER	Judy Arth	(860) 633-2876
DIRECTOR -AT- LARGE	Ben Esselink	(203) 222-1694
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CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	Sharon SmithDelisle	(203) 744-1849
EDITOR, LIBRARIAN/HISTORIAN	Sharon SmithDelisle	
AOS REPRESENTATIVE	Sam Hinckley	(860) 688-0943
CONSERVATION CHAIRPERSON	Vacant	—
SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR	Cheryl Mizak	(203) 264-6096
REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE	Vacant	—

**Membership Policy** Membership is open to anyone interested in orchids. Members join the Society by payment of annual dues. Memberships may be individual, student, family, life or honorary. Honorary membership is for life and is made by nomination of the Board of Directors and majority vote of the membership present at a regular meeting. The newsletter is published each month except July and August. Annual membership includes subscription to the newsletter — electronic or paper copy as determined by member preference.

### Mentor List



The following COS members are available to answer your culture questions and help you with any orchid growing problems you may have:

**Judy Becker** [judybecker40@att.net](mailto:judybecker40@att.net) (860) 435-2263 (8:00--8:00 pm) Greenhouse growing methods: Wide variety of species & hybrids

**Sam Hinckley** [samuelhinckley@comcast.net](mailto:samuelhinckley@comcast.net) (860) 688-0943 (After 7:30 pm) Windowsill growing methods: Species & hybrids

**Jeffrey Richards** [jeffrey.richards@snet.net](mailto:jeffrey.richards@snet.net) (Contact anytime). Greenhouse growing methods: Specializing in Paphiopedilums.

**Sharon SmithDelisle** [editor@ctorchids.org](mailto:editor@ctorchids.org) (203) 744-1849 (Contact anytime) Under lights & windowsill growing methods: Bulbophylums, Cymbidiums, Dendrobiums, Paphiopedilums, Miltoniopsis & mixed genera.

**David Tognalli** [dtog54@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dtog54@sbcglobal.net) (860) 521-7249 (Contact evenings & weekends) Windowsill & outdoor growing methods: Warm growers, Cattleyas, Dendrobiums & mixed genera.

**COS Membership Information :** \$20/yr. Individual \$25/yr. Family \$200 Individual or \$250 Family Lifetime Membership (never pay dues again!)

Visit [www.ctorchids.org](http://www.ctorchids.org) to apply for/renew membership. We accept Paypal. Contact Membership Chairperson Mary Rampone at [www.COSMembership@earthlink.net](mailto:www.COSMembership@earthlink.net) for more details.

Connecticut Orchid Society (COS) is an incorporated non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1959. Please consider making a charitable contribution to COS. Most donations made to COS are tax deductible

## Upcoming Events



Dec. 10 COS Holiday Party, 6:00 pm, Farmington Senior Center, 321 New Britain Ave., Unionville, CT. Pot luck supper. Please

bring your favorite holiday food — enough to share with others.

Jan. 14 COS Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm, TBA, Cheshire Senior Center, 240 Maple Ave., Cheshire, CT.

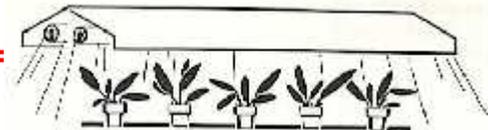
Jan. 17 AOS Judging, Northeast Judging Center, Barlett Arboretum and Gardens, Silver Educational Center, 151 Brookdale Rd., Stamford, CT, 12:00 pm. Chair John Sullivan 201-835-0113 or [johndsullivan@optonline.net](mailto:johndsullivan@optonline.net)

Jan. 24-25 Cape & Islands Orchid Society 26th Annual Show, "Orchid Bridges". Visit [www.caios.org](http://www.caios.org) for more details.

Feb. 11 COS Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm, TBA, Farmington Senior Center, 321 New Britain Ave., Unionville, CT



**A warm, safe & happy holiday from COS to you and yours!**



## November Show Table

<u>Genus/Parentage</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Culture</u>
<i>Aerangis luteo-alba</i> v. <i>rhodosticta</i>	C. Mizak	i,g
<i>Aerides lawrenceae</i>	Monty	w,g
<i>Aliceara</i> Tahoma Glacier 'Green' HCC/AOS ( <i>Brat.</i> Cartagena x <i>Onc.</i> Alaskan Sunset) Syn. <i>Bllra</i>	J. Becker	i,g
<i>Brassavola cordata</i>	D. Tognalli	i,g
<i>Cattleya labiata</i> var. <i>rubra</i>	D. Tognalli	i,w
<i>Clowesetum</i> Black Jade 'Cadrona' HCC/AOS ( <i>Clowesia russelliana</i> x <i>Catesetum expansum</i> )	C. Mizak	i,g
<i>Cycnoches</i> Golden Showers 'HOF#1' ( <i>herrenhausanum</i> x <i>chlorochilon</i> )	B. Pendleton	i,w

*Dendrobium tobaense*  
D. Tognalli i,w



*Dimerandra stenopetala*

D. Tognalli w,g

*Gomesa* Moon Shadow 'Tiger Tail' AM?AOS  
(Hornet x Big Bee) Syn. *Oncidium*

J. Becker i,g



*Maxillaria fractiflexa*

C. Mizak i,g



*Miltoniopsis* hybridum ign.  
Monty i,g



(Show Table con't next page)

Nov.

## Meeting Minutes



Carla Koch  
Recording Secretary

COS MEETING 11-12-14

### Jason Fischer, "Native Orchids of Japan."

Mr. Fischer is from Minnesota, where he runs Orchids Limited with his dad, Jerry. The well-known *Phrag.* Jason Fischer is named for him. His mother is Japanese, and Jason spent time in Japan, where orchids are accorded the same respect as bonsai. He showed lovely shrines, gardens and landscapes, along with characteristic orchids. *Cyms. sinense* and the native green *goeringii* are much favored, displayed in special tall pots with 3 pumice layers at the base. Confucius mentioned these plants. ("Shunran.") There is a tiny, leafless cymbidium, *macrorhizon*. Native *calanthes* are widely grown, especially *Takane*, a primary hybrid of *sieboldii* and *discolor*. Other notable garden plants shown were 1,400 year old cypresses, red camellias, rhododendrons, and the interesting leaves of asarum (wild ginger.)

Some odd little natives also include *Goodyera* species (some *Goodyeras* are also in Connecticut), *Thrixspermum japonicum*, and *Gastrochilus matsuran*, whose green and red buds open after waiting a year! *Dendrobium moniliforme* is known as the "long life orchid," ranging in color from pink to white. Fragrant *Sedirea japonica*, formerly *Aerides*, occurs as well in Japan. However, the most valued are the *Neofinetia falcata* (now *Vanda*) varieties, which are classified even by root color and leaf tip, and can sell for tens of thousands of dollars. "Fukiran," their given name, means wind orchid. They are grown in tall plastic pots that are placed inside lovely ceramic cachepots, and sphagnum moss is tenderly wrapped around their delicate roots. Feeding occurs every third watering. Jason says they need 55-60 degrees at night, and 70 to 90 during the day, but can tolerate 40 in the winter. Medium light will do.

\_\_\_ Carla Koch



*Oncidium* hybridum ign. Gower Ramsey type Monty i,g  
*Oncidiopsis* Nelly Isler 'Swiss Beauty' B. Pendleton i,w  
 (*Oip.* Stefan Isler x *Mtps.* Kensington) Syn. *Burr.*  
*Phal.* Sogo Lit-Sunny 'Sogo' T. Russell i,l  
 (Sogo Lit-Angel x Timothy Christopher)

**News, Notes & Happenings**



← *Phal.* Taida Pearl 'OT71' W. Wilson i,l

*Phragmipedium schlimii* D. Tognalli i,w

*Psychopsis* Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/AOS J. Becker i,g  
 (Butterfly x *papilio*) →



*Rhynchobrasseyia* Dosa Lemon 'Cariad's Cooler' T. Russell i,l  
 (*Rlc.* Lemon Tree x *Brassavola nodosa*) Syn. *Pot.*

*Rhyncattleanthe* Titan's Fire

J. Becker i,g  
 (*Rth.* Sakurahime x C. Tiny Titan)

*Zygoneria* Sweet Jade 'Sweet Cheyenne'

J. Becker i,g  
 (*Zga.* Pine Road x *Z.* Artur Elle)

*Zygolum* Louisendorf 'Rhein Clown'

J. Becker i,g  
 (*Zygosepalum labiosum* x *Z.* Artur Elle)

*Zygolum* Miva Monique Bourdon

J. Becker i,g  
 (*Zglm.* Louisendorf x *Z.* Artur Elle)



← *Zygotepalum* Advance Australia 'HOF' AM/AOS (Titanic x Helen Ku) J. Becker i,g

? J. Becker i,g  
 (*Zygoneria* Adelaide Meadows x *Zygotabstia* Blue Bird)

**Speaker Jason Fischer of Orchids Limited**

entertained members at the Nov. meeting. He discussed many varieties of Japanese orchids and their culture.



**December meeting is our holiday party**



Note meeting time change : party starts at 6:00 pm!

Join us Wed. evening, Dec. 10th at the Farmington Senior Center for our annual holiday party. This is a pot-luck supper with food provided by the membership. Finger foods will be served starting at 6:00 pm, followed by main dishes at 6:30 pm. Dottie Kern is our holiday party coordinator. She will be contacting you in the next few days to see what favorite food dishes you plan to prepare and bring to the party.

This is a fun, casual event that we all look forward to each year. Why not bring a friend?

The monthly Show Table list is researched and prepared by AOS Accredited Judge and COS Honorary Life Member Judy Becker. Any photos included with the Show Table plants were taken by the editor.



Judy Becker

**Culture is as noted:** c – cool i – intermediate w – warm g – greenhouse  
 ws – windowsill l – lights

The solution to last month's puzzle was: **CRANBERRY**

There were numerous ways each block of nine letters could be arranged but each row, column and block should have contained all nine letters for the word "cranberry". **Congratulations to everyone who solved the puzzle correctly!**



Beginner's Corner



Larry Kuekes

Left: Bc. Lois McNeil 'Ace', a "blue" orchid. Or is it? Photo by Larry Kuekes.

Right: *Thelymitra crinita*, one of the few true-blue orchids. Photo by SeanMack on Wikimedia Commons.

**Blue Genes**

In the orchid world, blue or "coerulea" varieties of orchids are prized and highly sought after, and we admire their beautiful blue color. But, like the story "The Emperor's New Clothes", there's something amiss. In the story, it took a little child to declare the truth, "The Emperor is naked!" Well, the truth is, "Blue orchids aren't blue!" They're never the true, deep, sky-blue that "coerulea" (from the Latin word for blue or sky) implies. At best, they're bluish purple, or violet, or indigo. We call them blue because these colors are the closest to blue that orchids can get.

The only exceptions are a handful of rare terrestrial orchids from Australia, such as *Thelymitra crinita* (see photo). I've never seen a live one, just pictures, and they're not available for sale. So for practical purposes, I'm excluding them from this discussion, and when I refer to "orchids", I really mean "orchids except those unavailable blue Australian species".

A "blue" or "coerulea" orchid that's available for you to grow might look more like Bc. Lois McNeil 'Ace' (see photo). It's beautiful, but I would call its color light violet, not blue.

But true-blue flowers do exist, such as delphiniums, hydrangeas, and morning glory Heavenly Blue. So why are these flowers true-blue, while orchids aren't? The answer is in the pigments that the plants are able to manufacture.

Plants make four types of pigments. Chlorophyll gives the green color to leaves. Carotenoids are red, orange, or yellow. Examples are orange carrots and red tomatoes. Betalains are red or yellow. Example: red beets. Finally, anthocyanins can range from red to purple to blue. Here the plot thickens.

Anthocyanin pigments change color depending on pH (acidity). The particular anthocyanin pigment that makes true-blue flowers blue is called delphinidin. In an alkaline environment, it's blue. In an acidic environment, it's red. But it's not that simple. Hydrangeas, which contain delphinidin, turn blue in acid soil and pink in alkaline soil, the opposite of what you'd expect. Why? They absorb more aluminum from acid soil, and aluminum reacts inside the petals to make them *less* acid, therefore blue.

Orchids can't make delphinidin, but they make other anthocyanin pigments that create the bluish-purple, violet, and indigo colors that pass for "blue" in the orchid world.

In theory, it should be possible to make blue orchids through genetic engineering, by introducing genes into orchids to make delphinidin, but this is easier said than done. A Japanese company, Suntory, actually tried doing this for roses. Like orchids, roses can't make delphinidin, which is why there are no blue roses. Suntory's "Applause" rose was genetically engineered in an elaborate process that involved inserting a delphinidin-making gene from a pansy, plus modifying two other genes to suppress other pigments. After all that work, it didn't turn out as planned. Remember that delphinidin color depends on pH in a tricky way. Apparently the rose petals weren't alkaline enough, so the color turned out to be a washed-out mauve instead of blue (see photo). (Con't next page at top, left)

(Blue Genes con't from pg.6)

Well, there's more than one way to skin a Catt. There are actually blue orchids on the market now. How did they do it? By taking white Phalaenopsis and dyeing them blue (see photo). To me, the flowers look grotesque, and of course the color is totally fake, but they are blue.

Larry Kuekes



Above: Suntory's "Applause" rose was genetically engineered to be blue. Whoops!



You can buy blue Phalaenopsis. But there's a catch. Photo by bunnygoth on flickr.com.



## December: The Month of Unbridled Joy

Gifting Your Friends with Orchids and the Joys of Growing Them

Tom's Monthly Checklist

By Thomas Miranda

I'm not ashamed to say that of all the people who've come and gone through my life, I miss my mother, Patti, the most. This might make me a sentimental mama's boy to some, but I don't care. Mothers throughout history have always gone to heroic lengths to bring happiness to their progeny. I'll never forget one holiday season when I was eight or nine. I was an avid collector of rare seashells (I still am) and mom took me to meet a famous local collector she read about in the newspaper to encourage my interest. There was a fascinating shell in that collection that was rare and probably one of a kind. After all these years, I've never seen another. It was beyond my imagination that I would find this rare creature inside a box under the Christmas tree that year. I don't think I can recall ever again being as ecstatic. I'll never know what she had to do nor how much it must have cost, but that is what love is. And that year I knew I was loved.

We all have the power to create such unbridled joy. With our orchid friends, in this day of orchid propagation, such tasks are easy. Most adults won't indulge in that rare orchid for themselves, but you know what brings your orchid friends joy. With all the strife, division and despair we're feeling around the world, the gift of a young seedling or clone of that orchid your friend so desperately wants should go a long way to spreading much needed happiness and good will. This holiday season, I encourage you to spread that unbridled joy of orchid growing. You might be surprised at how good it makes you feel when full-grown adults jump up and down and run screaming around the room like beloved, happy children.

**BREAK THE ICE** The weather has taken a turn for the inclement with the winter season. It's bleak, barren and out outside, but warm, buoyant and full of life in the greenhouse. Spikes are everywhere this time of year, particularly on phalaenopsis and cymbidiums, but also on many others triggered by cooler night temperatures and short day lengths. Collecting ice and snow can be novel ways of supplying pure water for your orchids, although you would want to melt them and allow the water to reach room temperature before applying to your plants because cold water will shock them. Imagine someone sticking your foot in an ice bucket while you're sleeping.

**UP IN THE AIR** There is one thing that we all tend to lack in our air this month. If you wake up with a scratchy throat and a dry mouth in the morning, it's a sign your humidity has plummeted, often to levels lower than a cactus might need. In the greenhouse, misting systems and wetting down gravel and floors can help alleviate this problem, but on a windowsill this can be much more challenging. Pebble trays are one option, (con't next page)

### Home Remedies

Tips



Tricks

&

"Onions and garlic are rich sources of selenium. This element turns out to be toxic to many insects and "teas" made from onions and garlic are home remedies that actually work when it comes to keeping insects at bay. The recipe below is a good, general pesticide that's easy to make and works on most chewing or sucking pests (not slugs and snails unfortunately). Just remember that unlike our modern chemical arsenal, these remedies often have little residual activity so they have to be applied often but they aren't toxic to you or your pets either.

- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 small onion
- 1 small jalapeno pepper
- Warm water
- 1 tsp. Murphy's Oil Soap or
- 1 tsp. vegetable oil

Pulverize the garlic, onion and pepper in a blender. Let steep in a quart of warm water for two hours. Strain through cheesecloth or (old) panty hose. Dilute liquid to three parts of warm water. Add soap and vegetable oil. Spray every 10 days."

(Reprinted from AOS magazine Orchids, June 2014, pg. 333. www.AOS.org, © American Orchid Society, Inc. 2014)

but any humidity that rises a few inches above the surface dissipates quickly. (A pebble or humidity tray holds wet pebbles on which containers are placed; the increased surface area of all the stones creates extra humidity around the plants.) Grouping your plants can help create a humid microclimate. Frequent misting can be beneficial, but is labor intensive. Placing plants behind a partition or shower curtain can create that humid terrarium effect, but beware of low air circulation under such circumstances. I never cease to be amazed by the ingenious ways people solve these problems for their individual conditions. If you have a novel solution you'd like to share with our readership, please send it to me (email [mirendat@si.edu](mailto:mirendat@si.edu)).

**KEEN OBSERVATION** Because temperatures and day lengths have decreased dramatically over the last two months for most of us, it is more important than ever to monitor your watering, fertilizing and other proactive activities in your collection. Some frequently grown orchids, including cattleyas, phalaenopsis and most dendrobiums, need significantly less water now than they did three or four months ago. It's okay for most succulent orchids particularly those with large pseudobulbs to dry out more thoroughly at this time of year. Some plants should be barely watered at all. This is especially true for deciduous dormant plants, such as cataetums, *nobile*— and other deciduous-type dendrobiums, many terrestrials and seasonally dry forest plants, such as *Prosthechea citrine* and *Prosthechea mariae*, that will rot if watered heavily at this time of year. Aside from books, the best way to know these things is to observe your plants daily, and learn as much about individuals as you can. At that orchid club holiday party, ask those more experienced growers about the plants you're having trouble with or don't know much about. With few exceptions, orchid people tend to be uncommonly nice. Most are happy to help.

(Reprinted from AOS magazine *Orchids*, Dec. 2013, Vol. 82, No. 12, pg.716. [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org), © American Orchid Society, Inc. 2013)

— Thomas Mirenda is the orchid collection specialist at the Smithsonian Institution and an AOS Accredited Judge.

Save the date —

## CAIOS 26th Annual Orchid Show

January 24 & 25, 2015

“Orchid Bridges”

### Directions to Farmington Senior Center 321 New Britain Avenue, Unionville, CT

**From the North or East:** Take I-84 west from Hartford to exit 38 (Rt. 6). Proceed west. Turn right onto New Britain Ave. Farmington Senior Center is at 321 New Britain Avenue next to the police station.

**From the South:** Take Rt. 9 north to I-84 west. Proceed as above.

**From the West:** Take I-84 east to exit 37 (Fienemann Rd.). Turn left on Fienemann Rd., go over the highway, then turn left onto Rt. 6. Follow Rt. 6 west. Turn right onto New Britain Ave. Farmington Senior Center is at 321 New Britain Ave. next to the police station.

