September 2023

Volume LXIII Issue VIII

Newsletter

The First, Original Orchid Society in Connecticut

Affiliated with The American Orchid Society & Orchid Digest

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Next Meeting

September 13, 2023

Cheshire Senior Center
240 Maple Ave, Cheshire, CT

Doors open
at 6:30pm for socializing and the meeting starts at 7pm.

Featured Event

Edgar Stehli

Presentation: Angraecoids!

Speaker Bio

My interest in orchids began when I was just six or seven years old. I found a plant growing in the roadside ditch near our house in Northeast Ohio. When my father got home from work, I dragged him over to see my discovery. He said “Oh! That’s an orchid.”

My first orchid find was a Spiranthes (probably cernua). A few years later my family drove to Alaska and back. On that trip, I found a Calypso bulbosa in Wyoming and several other orchids in Alaska and Canada.

While in high school, I began growing some tropical orchids, and soon had a small collection. While in my final year at Case Western Reserve University, my orchid collection moved to Florida with my parents. Sadly, I never saw them again (the orchids that is!). Also in my last year, I met Kim Sante who was working at the Cleveland Garden Center, now known as the Cleveland Botanical Garden.

Eventually, Kim and I were married in Kenya Africa. Shortly after we were married, we built a sun room on the corner of our house. This of course allowed my orchid collection to get a little out of hand. Finally, in1999 we began selling our plants to area florists, then through the orchid shows. We called our new business – Windswept in Time Orchids. We now attend close to fifteen shows a year, where our plants and exhibits have won many awards

Meeting Topic: Angraecoids

In the orchid world, we often combine related genera of orchids into a larger grouping, called an alliance. In the case of Angraecum, Aerangis, Eurychone, and several other genera that group is often referred to as Angraecoid Orchids.

Angraecoids are predominantly found in Africa and Madagascar. The flowers tend to be white and fragrant at night. The presentation on Angraecoid Orchids goes over some of the distinctions between Angraecum and Aerangis. There are photos of many of the more commonly grown species.

Since we all want to become better growers, there is some cultural information in the presentation.

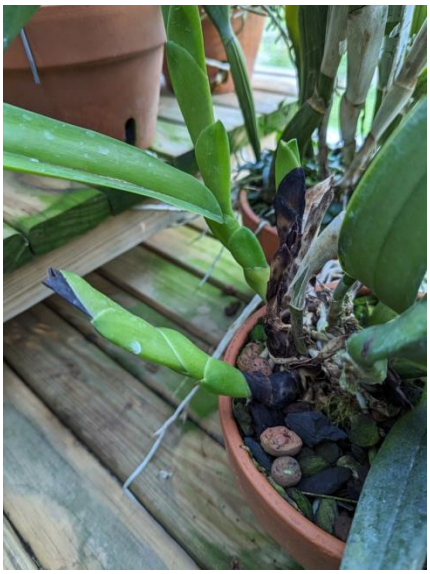
Don't forget to bring along your blooming plants for this month's show table. It's always exciting to see what's coming into bloom, looking forward to an awesome show table! See you there!

Aerangis fastuosa, a lovely compact plant that is well suited to a grower with limited space.
(photo courtesy of Christian Lesage)

Message from the Prez:

The summer has flown by in a hurry, what started out as a fairly dry season turned into a generally wet and cool summer overall. Hopefully everyone adapted their growing setups to the wet weather and managed to stave of root and crown rot. Many of my sympodial orchids are pushing strong new growths with fresh sheaths appearing as tantalizing promises of blooms to come. The urge to water is often hard to resist when the plants are in active growth, but caution is still prudent since the hot humid weather can lead to bacterial rot just as easily now as in the dead of winter. Proper timing of watering and air circulation is critical to ensure that the plants dry down quickly.

Last week I drenched my plants with a biofungicide and this week I used a systemic spray since I am starting to see signs of a few blackened new growths and rot between emerging leaf sheaths.



New growth succumbing to bacterial and fungal rot due to moisture trapped in the emerging sheaths.

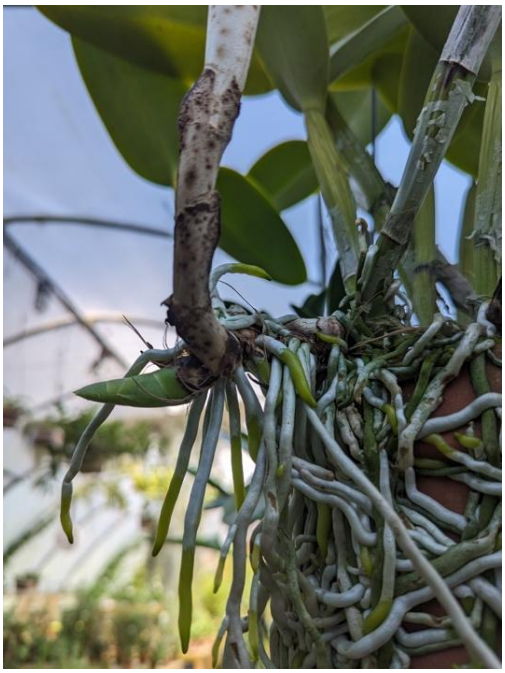
Our July Picnic at Black Rock State Park was well attended and what a spread we managed to put out. Hopefully, everyone enjoyed the presentation by our guest speaker Fred Clarke from Sunset Valley Orchids. He gave a fantastic talk on improving your cultural techniques and becoming an 80 Percentile Grower!

His comparison of our plant collections to art was like a light bulb going off. Why do we grow these plants if not for our enjoyment, thus we should be curating them as living art collections, which reflect the vision of the grower. I will be the first to admit I am guilty of some of the sins he mentioned, which distract from the enjoyment and aesthetics of the collection.

For example, if a plant isn't doing well or doesn't flower well get rid of it! I often find myself keeping every division of every plant, even the struggling pitiful plant that hasn't looked good in 7 years or the plant that I am always disappointed with when it blooms. There is genetic variation in a population, some plants aren't as vigorous or floriferous as other seedlings from the same pod.

Don't be afraid to exert some artificial selection in your collection to maximize your pleasure. Ask yourself some serious questions. Does the plant deliver aesthetic benefits that outweigh the painstaking care you provide? If not, chuck it in the compost and find a plant that does!

Another key takeaway for me was the reminder to only repot your plants when they are starting to initiate active root growth, not just new growth. It seems like such a simple idea, but I shudder when I think back to all the plants that I repotted as a beginner only to watch them struggle and shrivel away in a painful, slow death.



This cattleya is pushing new growth at the same time as a new pseudobulb.

This Laelia pseudobulb will mature and flower before pushing out new root growth.

Orchid roots are not generally forgiving of root disturbance, the roots are delicate and easily damaged, and repotting is a very stressful event. Regardless of how careful you are when dividing a plant many of the roots with ultimately perish when disturbed. This is because orchid roots don't like change, they usually fail if the environment changes dramatically. So, the transitional stage after a repotting event or change in watering habits is important, this is where the plant begins to grow new roots that are adapted to the new environment. Roots growing aerially out of a pot will most likely die if buried in a new pot. (repotting a plant growing aerially) The reverse is also true, roots growing in a sheltered moist environment will likely die if they are suddenly pulled out of a pot and exposed. (if you mount a potted plant)

Thus, when repotting the most important consideration is choosing to repot when the plant is initiating new root growth. As Fred pointed out there are generally two types of growth habits, those that put out new roots with new growth and those that put out new growth and then new roots sometime later.

I couldn't help but chuckle at his rather cynical joke about people who don't realize this, all they have in their collection is plants that put out roots at the same time as bud break because they have killed all the plants that don't follow this growth habit. So be an 80-percentile grower and be observant!

Our next meeting is coming up soon and I am looking forward to catching up with everyone at the September meeting and seeing what other people have in bloom! On that note make sure you put Wed. September 13th at 6:30 pm at the Cheshire Senior Center on the calendar. Our guest speaker will be Edgar Stehli from Windswept in Time Orchids who will be presenting on Angraecoids! It has been a few years since we have had a presentation on this topic, so you won't want to miss this one! These are a very special group of orchids that I am personally fond of as they usually come into bloom sometime in early spring when the ground is covered in snow. They somehow fit the season with their rich white flowers offset against glaucous green foliage. Some of them can be a bit fussy and slow-growing so definitely collectors' plants.

Our guest speaker will be bringing plants for sale, so be prepared to make some room for new additions to your collection, this will be a wonderful chance to pick up something special.

For the love of plants!

Christian Lesage

Looking Ahead

TBD

Notes From July Picnic Meeting

We had a very nice potluck picnic at Black Rock State Park and were able to have the speaker Fred Clark from Sunset Valley Orchids. He referred to himself as an 80% grower. He meant not a perfect grower, but mostly good culture. The important factors are watering, light, temperature, and repotting. Everything else is 20% of culture.

The epiphytes have been around for 20 million years. The orchid hobby has been active for 180 years. Since epiphytes grow on trees they are very well drained. Their medium needs to dry quickly. They also need good air circulation and prefer low nutrients. Roots on an orchid are spongy and will take up nutrients readily. When you do water, you should water heavily, wetting all of the root system. Orchids get 80% of their carbon from the air. He often waters two times, watering an hour after the first watering to flush out extra minerals. He uses a continuous liquid feed, 100 parts per million. This is about 1/2 a teaspoon per gallon. Hard water has a high pH, so he uses Cal mag 20- 20-20 and finds that that will actually improve the water. Ammoniacal nitrogen is better than urea nitrogen. If you use rainwater, you will require different fertilizers. Michigan State 15 5 15 is good if you have town water the town will tell you what is in your water. The ideal pH is 5.4 to 6.

Orchids generally prefer dappled sun and filtered sunlight. In California they get 10,000-foot candles in summer, and 7000 in the winter. They should actually have 2000 to 3000. Summer day length can be 15 hours, decreasing gradually to 12 hours in January. The equatorial climate has a 12-hour day year-round.

He prefers organic potting media. RF Orchids uses clay pellets with tree fern added. He uses 3 parts bark to 1 part perlite. Plants should be repotted right before they start growing roots, if possible. Not too big a pot is better. Most roots start growing after they flower. Try to leave the new green root tips alone. He likes to write the date that the root tip started to form on the tag. Underpot the plant if it is not doing well. And lastly, discard plants that don’t do well.

July Show Table

***Cattleya* Thuringen**

***Cattleya* Tinsywinsy**

Coelogyne pulverula

Dendrobium farmeri

Paphiopedilum Julius

Paphiopedilum stonei

Rhyncholaeliocattleya Lebenkreis x *Cattleya* Virginia Dickey

Cattleya Katherine Clarkson x *Cattleya* Jungle Gem	M. Sabolcik	i, g
Cattleya Thuringen	M. Sabolcik	i, g
Cattleya Tinsywinsy	M. Sabolcik	i, g
Coelogyne pulverula	M. Rampone	i, g
Dendrobium farmeri	R. Schwartz	i, w
Paphiopedilum Julius	J. Chang	i, w
Paphiopedilum stonei	J. Chang	i, w
Rhyncholaeliocattleya Lebenkreis x *Cattleya* Virginia Dickey	M. Sabolcik	i, g

* c = cool, i=intermediate, w=warm
g=greenhouse, l=lights, w=windowsill

Strange Orchid Facts

From Waldor Orchids

1. Orchids Have the Smallest Seeds: Orchids have some of the smallest seeds in the plant kingdom. These tiny seeds lack endosperm (the food supply found in most seeds), and they rely on fungi to germinate and provide nutrients for growth.

2. Deceptive Mimicry: Certain orchids have evolved to mimic the appearance and scent of insects. This helps attract specific pollinators that mistake the flower for a potential mate, leading to successful pollination.

3. Vanilla Comes from an Orchid: The vanilla flavor comes from the beans of the Vanilla orchid (Vanilla planifolia). The process of hand-pollinating the vanilla flowers is intricate and contributes to the high cost of natural vanilla.

4. Dancing Lady Orchids: The Oncidium orchid genus includes species often referred to as "Dancing Lady Orchids" due to the resemblance of their frilly lip to a woman's dancing skirt.

5. Sexual Deception for Pollination: Some orchids employ sexual deception to attract pollinators. For instance, the Australian Hammer Orchid (Drakaea) emits pheromones that mimic a female wasp, tricking male wasps into pollinating the flower.

6. Long-Lasting Blooms: While many flowers last for a few days, some orchid blooms can persist for several weeks or even months, making them an extraordinary sight in gardens and homes.

7. World's Smallest Orchid: The world's smallest orchid, Platystele jungermannioides, is only a few millimeters in size. It was discovered in 2009 in Ecuador.

8. Air Roots: Many orchids have air roots that help them absorb moisture and nutrients from the air. These roots often grow above the ground or dangle from trees.

9. Orchids and Ants: Some orchids have a symbiotic relationship with ants. The ants protect the orchid from herbivores, and in return, the orchid provides shelter and nectar for the ants.

10. Orchid Inflorescence: What appears to be a single orchid flower is actually a complex structure called an inflorescence. It's composed of multiple flowers arranged in a unique pattern.

11. Orchids in Space: Orchids have been sent to space for scientific research. NASA studied the effects of microgravity on orchid seed germination and growth.

12. Ghost Orchids: The Ghost Orchid (Dendrophylax lindenii) is a rare orchid native to Florida and Cuba. It has no leaves and is often seen growing on tree trunks, appearing almost ghostly in its appearance.

These strange and remarkable facts highlight the incredible diversity and adaptations of orchid plants in the natural world.

HAVE IDEAS?

If you have ideas about the direction of the future of the society, please consider joining the board!

Upcoming AOS News and Events

Click on this link below

https://www.aos.org/news-events.aspx

Orchids in the News!

Click the link to learn more about the Orchid/Fungi Fly Connection! Check it out!

https://phys.org/news/2023-08-fungi-eating-flies-team-reproduction.html

Mentor List

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

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

Glenn McGeough mcgeough7@gmail.com (203) 482-3973 Specializing in Cattleyas.

Jeffrey Richards jeffrey.richards@snet.net Greenhouse growing methods: Specializing in Paphiopedilums.

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

Rebecca Schwartz rebecca.r.schwartz@gmail.com Vivarium growing methods, windowsill Catasetums and species Phaleanopsis

Connecticut Orchid Society 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.

COS Membership Information

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. Annual membership includes electronic delivery of the newsletter. The newsletter is published each month except July and August.

COS Membership Dues: $20/yr. Individual $25/yr. Family

$200 Individual or $250 Family Lifetime Membership (never pay dues again!) Visit www.ctorchids.org to apply for/renew membership. We accept Paypal.

Contact Membership Chairperson Mary Rampone at COSMembership@earthlink.net for details.

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Contact Us

By Mail:

Connecticut Orchid Society, Inc.
Editorial Office
P.O. Box 198
Farmington, CT 06034-0198

By Email:

President
president@ctorchids.org
Editor Suzy Spinelli
ctorchidsociety@gmail.com

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.