



August 2020 Newsletter

***Please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends who might be interested in knowing about Five Cities Orchid Society and encourage them to subscribe at [www.fcos.org](http://www.fcos.org).***

### **A message from the President's potting bench.**

In this difficult time, we're all missing our FCOS Orchid Society events. We miss meeting with each other in person, sharing our time together, appreciating each others beautiful plants, learning new things, and enjoying the acquisition of new orchids. We are all waiting for the time that everything re-sets and our activities can return to normal. In the meantime, we still have orchids to grow, people to see and orchids to share. We can live in gratitude for what we have and adapt to our newest challenges.

So in this spirit and until we can meet in person, the FCOS has decided to have our first online general membership meeting using Zoom. Our first Zoom meeting will be August 13, 2020 from 7:00-8:30 pm. Eric Holanda will give a talk about Oncidiums for this first online meeting entitled "Eric's Dancing Ladies: The Seduction and Culture of the Oncidiums".

If you wish to participate in the Zoom meeting will need to download Zoom on your smartphone or computer in preparation for the email and click the link and you will be taken to the Zoom Room.

If you are new to FCOS then, go to Newsletter Subscription and sign up for our newsletter. You will be sent an email to verify that you wanted to sign up. You must Click on the link in that email to receive mailings from us.

If you are new to Zoom and don't have a smartphone, you can participate by dialing in. We hope you enjoy this chance to renew acquaintances and share our fascination with orchids. Once you download Zoom, create an account, sign in and then click on the link that will be emailed out to you. FCOS will generate an email to our newsletter listing with the Zoom invite by noon on August 13. After 6:45 pm August 13, open this email the link will take you to the FCOS zoom room.

Because we have missed our regular in-person meetings, the Board of Directors has decided that 2020 paid memberships will be automatically extended through 2021. This will also be the case for any new members, if join today and will we extend your membership through 2021, and those who live locally will receive a free orchid.

**For more information for FCOS Membership Benefits and to sign up for Membership.**

**We had a successful auction last month. We had 20 plants up for auction and some fierce bidding. If you didn't participate, you really missed out, but you'll have a second chance soon! Many of the plants were over-grown community pots and were really nice, mature plants. Thank you to everyone who donated orchids and participated in the Auction and Orchid Pick Up. It was fun to have a project, interact with your members and add some quality plants to my collection.**

**Our second Online Orchid Auction and Drive-by Orchid Pickup will be held Aug 15-22. If you have subscribed to our newsletter at Subscribe Newsletter, then you will receive an auction notice with a link to our gallery of plants. Additional information on the auction is listed further in this newsletter.**

**Please know that you are valued as a member of FCOS. Your Board is striving to maintain an exciting and safe environment wherein we can continue to operate and grow. Looking forward to seeing you at the virtual meeting on August 13!**

**Some of you might be interested in Orchid Identification and/or Native orchids of North America. Learn about the Go Orchid Program <http://goorchids.northamericanorchidcenter.org/>**

**Take good care of yourself. â€“ Jeff**



**The Five Cities Orchid Society is proud to present:**

**"Eric's Dancing Ladies: the Seduction and Culture of the Oncidiums" □**

**Our August 13th speaker for our first Zoom monthly meeting will be the world renowned traveler and master orchid grower Eric Holenda.**

**My intention will be to get people familiar with the ways and habits of Oncidiums, so they can have a positive growing experience with them. I plan on covering the basics: watering, temperature, potting mixes, repotting, using plants from my greenhouse as examples. -Eric Holenda**

**See Eric's™ new video update on his [Catasetums and Cattleyas](#)**

**Win Dancing Lady Oncidiums featured in our Online Auction and Drive by Pickup later this month.**



### **Blue Orchids in Music by Jeffery Parham**

When I go to antique stores, I have gotten into the habit of looking for something with orchids on it. I've found vintage pins, pill boxes, jewelry, plates and crystal pieces with orchids on them. So now that I am staying at home all the time and listening to old songs on YouTube, I found myself wondering about orchids in music. Wouldn't orchids be a good theme in music? Orchids make you think of beauty, romance and mystery. Orchids naturally accompany the finer things in life.

Following the theme of 'Blue Orchid' I found these offerings from different musical genres; such as Big Band, jazz, folk, techno and heavy metal. I present them to you, along with my reviews, for your consideration and entertainment.

**Song #1: Blue Orchids by Glenn Miller. <https://youtu.be/l58tAhd-bil>**

This is a quintessential song from the Big Band era. The music is steeped in familiarity and tradition, while still sounding relevant. It is a smooth listen and the lyrics are quite poetic. Everyone loves Glenn Miller.

**Sample Lyric: [https://youtu.be/hMI7t\\_2K9hs](https://youtu.be/hMI7t_2K9hs)**

I dreamed of two blue orchids/Two beautiful blue orchids/One night while in my lonely room

I dreamed of two blue orchids/So rare and full of light/That I wanted to possess each tender bloom

Then my dream took wings/And through a thousand springs/Blue orchids seemed in a world apart

But when I met you/Something pale and blue/Came stealing from the meadows of my heart

I saw my two blue orchids/My beautiful blue orchids/Last night and what a sweet surprise

When you looked at me/It was plain to see/Blue orchids only bloom in your eyes

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**Song #2: Orchid Blue by the Ellis Marsalis Trio. <https://youtu.be/5ZSRp90iE>**

Jazz fans enjoy the heart that Ellis Marsalis brings to his craft. In my opinion, this offering is a bit uneven. Sections of the tune are lovely, but other sections are more along the lines of interpretive/spontaneous jazz. Not my favorite listen, but I do hear the romance and respect the expertise of the artists.

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**Song #3: Orchid by Zennyboi & BLUEHBEARZ. <https://youtu.be/d3PflCcg2l8>**

This is a technopoppy little song. It has a beginning akin to metallic chopsticks before building to a fuller tune. I found it a bit repetitive, but I didn't want to judge it prematurely. So I closed my eyes and took a deep breath to see what images the melody invoked in my mind's eye. I envisioned morphing fractals, patterns and colors. As the song progressed and I let myself relax into it, I realized that I was swaying like an orchid in a cool breeze.

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**Song #4: Blue Orchid by the White Stripes. <https://youtu.be/iW8UIrtcEac>**

This is a hard rock offering; a head banging and catchy tune. The lyrics are not easy to understand, but I soon recognized the band was expressing their frustration about altering the natural order. Their symbolism regarded white orchids that have been artificially dyed blue. I think they are referring to the blue-dyed orchids you see in grocery stores. Although these are popular, they are also disturbing to those of us who appreciate the colors that orchids can offer on their own. The band appears unhappy about how unnatural these dyed-blue orchids look. In my opinion, their indignation is righteous.

**Sample Lyric: <https://genius.com/The-white-stripes-blue-orchid-lyrics>**

You got a reaction/ You got a reaction, didn't you/You took a white orchid/ You took a white orchid turned it blue

How dare you/How old are you now, anyway?/ How dare you/How old are you now, anyway?

You're given a flower/But I guess there's just no pleasing you/ Your lip tastes sour/But you think that it's just me teasing you

You got a reaction/ You got a reaction, didn't you/You took a white orchid/You took a white orchid turned it blue

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**Song #5: Blue Orchid by Sun Kil Moon. <https://youtu.be/C24cXKqZw2o>**

This is a folk song, which is my preferred genre. The lyrics are rich, meaningful and compelling. The tune is beautiful, although the song contains some moments of off-putting musical irony. Still, this song moved me considerably. I listened to it more than once.

**Sample lyric: <http://www.songlyrics.com/sun-kil-moon/blue-orchids-lyrics/>**

The ancient streets so crowded and narrow/ The winding stairs climb up, up high/

The air tonight hangs sour and heavy/ I'm dying up here love, lie with me lie  
The view electrical and sprawling/ The city lights move out and on and on/ Out  
there in the halo of the skyline/ My guardian angel looks down upon me/Fall  
tonight sweet Paris Rain

Soft light pours into the room/ Fingers glide over my face/ A voice speaks, a  
figure moves/How could I walk these old dim halls again/ How could I leave this  
room all alone

When she comes by every morning/ Brings back pink and pale blue orchids/When  
she comes by every afternoon/Piano music weeps quietly/ As May melts into  
June/When she comes by every evening/ Lays down beside me softly breathing

## **FCOS Plant Auction August 15th-22 and Drive By Pickup Aug 29th**

Watch for an email on August 15th detailing how you can bid on orchids donated by FCOS members. Our June sale was so successful that we decided to give everyone another chance to buy orchids.

The upcoming Auction will have a variety of offerings. It will feature several spiking *Oncidium*s to compliment Eric Holenda's lecture: "Eric and His Dancing Ladies".

We have a *Oncidium* Gower Ramsay, *Oncidium* Speckled Spire 'Shorty' and *Oncidium* Heaven Scent 'Sweet Baby'

Additionally, there will also be several large-flowering *Epidendrum*s; they come in brilliant colors and like a nighttime cool temperature to flower. These are from a new breeding line only available from Carmella Orchids.

Ed Lysek is making room in his greenhouse and has put some attractive and well grown orchids in the auction.

It is easy: just email your bid, plant number, name and contact info to [JSP1440@aol.com](mailto:JSP1440@aol.com) by noon on Saturday August 22, 2020. You can pay by check or use cash. The Drive-By Orchid Pickup will be held the weekend of August 29, 2020 at Asbell's orchids, or by special arrangement in Los Osos or Santa Maria. To maintain safety, when picking up orchids, it will be required that you wear a mask and maintain social distancing recommendations.

The following cultural information about watering your orchids and root rot was provided by First Ray's in his most recent newsletter. You can sign up for his FREE newsletter and get lots of info from his website at <https://firststrays.com/>. First Ray's™s give a discount on product orders from his website for anyone that is a newsletter subscriber.

Water does not cause root rot!

Many new orchid growers fall into the common beginner trap of thinking that over-watering causes root rot. It doesn't - not directly, anyway. Let me explain:

Unlike terrestrial plants, the vast majority of orchids do much of their gas exchange through their roots, rather than their leaves. That gives us the challenge of 1) providing enough water, while 2) still allowing plenty of air to the roots so that gas exchange isn't stifled.

When we water an orchid, most of the liquid just pours right through the potting medium. Some of it is immediately absorbed by the roots and the medium, but some - called "bridging water" - is held in-between the particles by surface tension, and that's the issue.

If the mix is too fine, either due to small particles or because it is old and becoming too compact, that "bridging" water clogs up too much of the airflow, so the roots suffocate and die. In effect, the issue isn't really "over-watering" as much as it is "under-airing". This, by the way, is the origin of the myth that "orchid must dry out between waterings." If you have a poor potting medium that traps a lot of water and risks suffocating the roots, letting it dry opens up those gas-exchange pathways so the roots can "breathe" again. While watering and waiting for the medium to dry *can* work, it really isn't the best for the plant, so let me offer a better alternative: use a coarser potting medium and water it heavily and often. Big potting medium particles means there will be bigger spaces between them, so less bridging water.

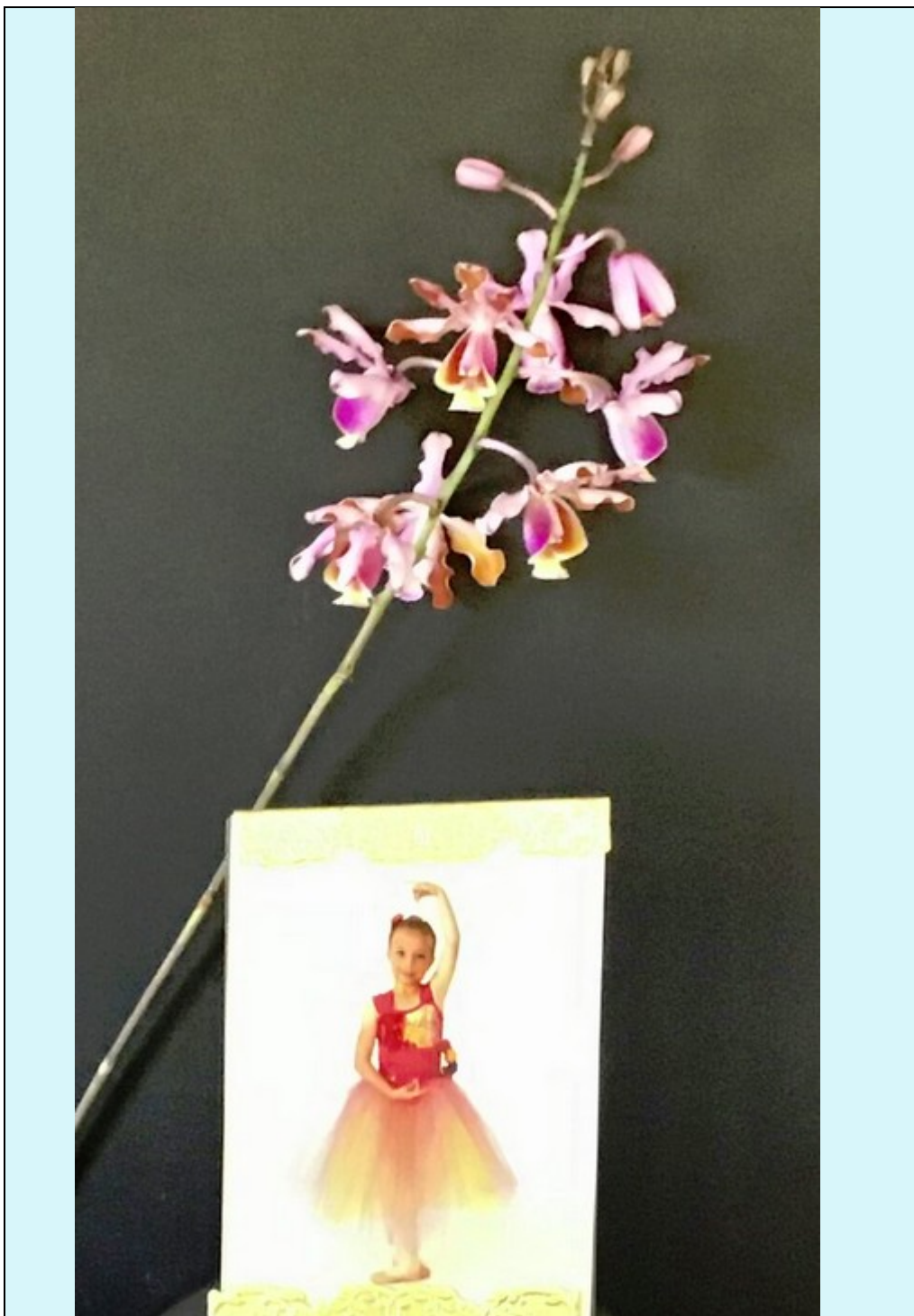
A tip for preparing coarse media (especially bark): Before using it, put some in a colander or other freely-draining container and pour boiling (or at least very hot) water over it, wetting it completely. Wait 15 minutes or so, and do so again. The hot water causes the bark structure to soften and "open up" a bit, allowing it to absorb more water. That second wetting moves that process farther along and really saturates the bark. Once it is cool enough to handle, it's ready to use.

If you did not do this in advance, and have newly-potted plants to deal with, try this instead: put the plant in the sink and really flood the potting medium with lukewarm water. Wait 15 minutes or so and repeat. Water again before the bark fully dries. If you do that for two or three waterings, the bark will have opened up enough to retain more water.

## **What's Blooming Now**

**Here are a range of great submissions from our members. Remember to send your photos for next month's newsletter to Ed Lysek at [EdLysek@me.com](mailto:EdLysek@me.com). We had really great participation by members for this newsletter - keep them coming for the next newsletter!**





***Myrmecophila tibicinis* 'Kiana'**. This plant was awarded by AOS In May, 2012. I named it after my sweet granddaughter. I bet you can see why. Judy Scheithauer



***Cattleya leopoldii* x Blc. Long Life Spot: Good color and flower count. - Grown by Eric Holenda**



***Paph.* Lorraine's Pride: Vinicolod. - Grown by Eric Holenda**



***Oncidium* Sweet Sugar 'Lemon Drop':** The big attraction is that the flower color is solid yellow, complete lack of any spots or markings. The plant is also a vigorous grower. - Grown by Eric Holenda



***Dendrobium moschatum***: This plant surprised me. I put all my cool dry winter rest type Dendrobiums out side the greenhouse last Fall, and typically they all bloom early or late Spring. Well, the *D. moschatum* just sat there for months, and finally pushed out buds a few weeks ago. Interesting. - Grown by Eric Holenda.



***Phalaenopsis Jiubao Red Rose 'Monet'***: 'm generally not fond of breeding lines that enhance flower mutations (called feathering or pelorics), but I have to admit the breeding behind this flower has locked in these traits to be expressed in a pleasing and tasteful manner. - Grown by Eric Holenda



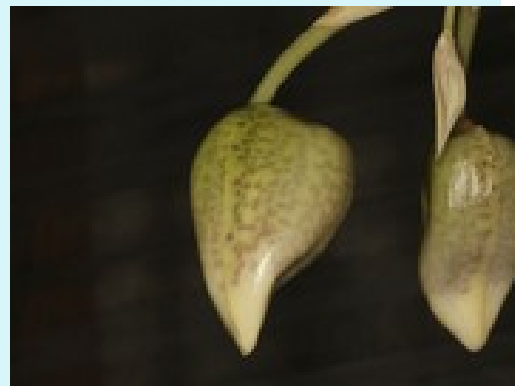
**Bic Keowee 'Mendenhall': Very narrow leaves and lip shape are from *Brassavola nodosa*, lip color and veining are from *Cattleya dowiana*. Cross made by Carter and Holmes around 1975. - Grown by Eric Holenda**



***Brassavola cucullata*: spidery cream colored flowers. The leaves are about 14 inches long and only 1/8 inch wide. - Grown by Eric Holenda**

And if you recall the July newsletter, we showed Chris Ehrler's and Ed Lysek's *Stanhopea* blooms ready to open - well, here they are fully opened. Pretty amazing flowers and a strong, spicy fragrance. Although the flowers last only a few days, older mature plants have multiple flower spikes, extending the flowering throughout the summer. A very worthwhile plant to grow - bright shade and different species and hybrids are available for most Central Coast climates.

These are the buds on Chris Ehrler's *Stanhopea* from last month's newsletter. It's a lot like waiting to open a present for the flowers to appear.



*Stanhopea oculata* was worth the wait. This plants had six spikes this year with 2 to 4 flowers per spike. Most if not all of the *Stanhopea* flowers have a very pleasing fragrance when open. Two things of note about this genus is that the flower spikes generally grown downwards so grow them in a mesh pot (with large holes) and the flowers only last for 5-7 days. - Grown by Chris Ehrler



***Stanhopea tigrina* in bud (Incorrectly listed as variety 'Predator' in last month's newsletter). This is *S. tigrina* select dark strain, my plant of 'predator' has yet to bloom - can't wait - maybe next year. Purchased a few years ago as small plants from Santa Barbara Orchid Estate's™ \$7 plant tables.**



***S. tigrina* flowers - Wow! Grown in bright shade. Keep constantly moist and well fertilized. - Grown by Ed Lysek**

**If you are interested in trying your hand at growing a *Stanhopea*, a great website for information is:**



**<http://stanhopeaculture.blogspot.com/2012/07/stanhopea-culturethe-beginning.html>**







***Cattleya* Sea Breeze 'Blue Ribbon' has been growing in my greenhouse for 9 years. Likes bright, warm conditions but if kept dry during winter it will survive and bloom mid-summer. Came close to killing it several times by over watering in winter.  
- Grown by Ed Lysek**

	<p><b><i>Restrepia bracypus</i> Red Stripe.</b> Both this photo and the one below are <i>Restrepia bracypus</i> with both being grown mounted on a piece of wood with a small amount of sphagnum moss on the roots. Moss and roots are sprayed with water most every day. Both do not like it if the temperature gets much above 85 F but can survive down to at least 40 F.</p>
<p>Labeled as <i>Restrepia striata</i> but according to <a href="http://www.Orchidspecies.com">www.Orchidspecies.com</a> this species name has been combined with <i>R. bracypus</i>. So this is a different clone than the other one above.</p>	

Orchids are really great and so are the people who grow and share them!  
*Stay safe and healthy and looking forward to getting back together as a society in the not too distant future.*

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