



JUNE 2021 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

I hope you are all well. The last couple of months have been some of the best flowering times for my orchids, both in the greenhouse area and outside.

In my greenhouse, I use fans, humidifiers, heating mats and lights to create the microclimates my plants want. Right now, I have lots of Phaleanopsis and Potinaras in bloom and also some cooler growing orchids like Masdevalias, Oncidiums and Phragmipedium.

Outside, it seems I'm constantly moving my orchids, seeking optimum conditions for each plant's growth and flowering. I have plants that bloom at different times of the year: Cymbidiums in February/March, Dendrobiums in April/May. I am looking forward to August when the Sobrailias bloom. I've never enjoyed my orchids more.

I've also had the recent opportunity to help out some of our new members. Many new growers have been texting me questions as they build their collections and knowledge. These days, I find myself reminiscing about all the orchid friends that I've known along the way. I'm so glad to that we continue to enjoy our time together, celebrating our shared love of these wonderful little gems we call orchids.

Speaking of new members, I received this essay from Joan, and wanted to share her enthusiasm with you. I think we can all relate to Joan's excitement as she gets to know the wide assortment of orchids available to home growers. She seems to be truly enjoying her efforts to grow and flower new additions to her collection. See below.

Happy Blooming!

Jeff

#### **My Whirlwind Launch into Growing Orchids Joan Graham**

I have a lovely east facing, fenced & shade cloth covered patio at my home in Los Osos. I'm just off the Bay, literally on the sand dunes. I've been wanting to create

more of a habitat in my space and have always wanted to grow orchids but my lifestyle kept getting in the way. I recently made some inquiries about growing and was put in contact with Jeff on April 22 and by April 24, I was the proud owner of three *Dendrobiums*, a *Sarcochilus hartmanii* and a *Sc. 'Ra Beau'*, thanks to the auction. I also picked up a *Cymbidium* when I got my plants at Asbell's. (Note to self: inadvertently bidding from two different email addresses may cause you to bid against yourself without realizing.

Jeff is an encyclopedia of information and resources and in the short time I've known him, I am now in possession of - or have ordered - a multitude of growing media, fertilizers, probiotics, kelp, an r/o system, a Sensor Push, grow lights (as I've also decided to expand indoors), you name it and I've probably ordered it. I have thirteen orchids on the way from [Ecuagenera](#). I found their website to be most informative because I could search by climate type and humidity and they had a huge inventory along with a good sale. Since I hope to grow mainly outdoors, I looked for orchids in the intermediate-cool range and found quite a few that appealed to me. I'm drawn to the more delicate flowers but also to color. Oranges, yellows, reds are especially appealing, although I like all the colors. This led me to order a *Brassia*, some *Draculas*, *Epidendrums*, *Masdevallias*, *Oncidiums*, a couple *Phragmipediums* and another *Sarcochilus hartmanii*. One of the well-known online vendors recommends concentrating on a single variety for several years to become expert on that variety before branching out. I guess I like the 'shotgun' approach because I want to see lots of variety and learn what grows best in my space.

I'm looking forward to meeting more members, but I don't go to night meetings. I've looked on the FCOS FB group for more general discussion, which would be helpful for noobs like me. I understand there are some great field trips coming up which I am looking forward to when the time is right. In the meantime, between Jeff's multitude of suggestions for plants and my own research, I'm having a great time! - Joan



Joan and Cooper among her rapidly growing orchid collection



*Coelogyne* Janine Banks 'Snow White' growing outdoors in a protected area in Jeff's backyard in Los Osos.



Sunset Valley Orchids SVO 7466 *Eplc.* Magic Wand. This is a seedling planted out from a flask in 2018. Spicy fragrance on a small plant with vibrant flowers. Growing under supplemental LED lights in Jeff's backyard greenhouse.

Our June monthly meeting will feature a speaker from the San Francisco area, Ana Satara. You can subscribe to her newsletter at [An Essence of Orchids](#) to receive information on orchid culture and see some amazing orchid photographs. Be sure to read her excellent article "[Details of my fertilizer program for different genera](#)"



Ana Satara of An Essence of Orchids will discuss an important aspect of how we grow our orchids:

### **Finding the right light: growing areas and the art of orchid placement**

What is the right light?

More light is better?

Location: latitude & light intensity

Duration + Light Intensity = Growth

Light spectrum

Bringing it all together: orchid placement

**Thurs June 10th at 7 pm**

Join [Zoom Meeting](#)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87016320614?pwd=YlFxMXZqVFA1V1BSa  
zVvQmlzNnh4QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87016320614?pwd=YlFxMXZqVFA1V1BSa<br/>zVvQmlzNnh4QT09)

**Meeting ID: 870 1632 0614, Passcode: 613810**

To find your local number go to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcNqzKNn34>

## Huntington Orchid Collection -San Marino, CA



Last Month Brandon Tam, Orchid Collection Specialist gave us on a virtual tour of the Huntington Gardens Orchid Collection and provided an overview of the history of the Huntington. If you've never visited this amazing Art Museum, Rare Book Collection, Tea

Room, Gardens and Orchid conservatory here's a second chance to take a virtual tour. The following link to a recording of his presentation will only be available for a short time, so don't delay in taking this virtual tour.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/0wqfYrx9YfXslebpH4Tds-n1khVkCdiwK-RtBON8EaPSHjxsaniINvlfVT1H9Sw6.j2G3ATK6YzmHEcbj> Passcode: T1f%X9R&

**And since a photo is worth a thousand words, here are highlights of Brandon's presentation to entice you to view the entire presentation.**



The Huntington's orchid collection is housed in several greenhouses. Blooming plants are staged in the visitor's conservatory and the displays are continuously updated.

Take a closer look at the Huntington's orchid collection through an interactive database at [www.huntington.org/orchid-collection](http://www.huntington.org/orchid-collection)





Just a few of the 10,000 orchid plants growing at the Huntington

Paphiopedilums comprise a major group of the Huntington's orchid collection.



**The following are some additional notes from Brandon's presentation.**

Brandon Tam, the Huntington Gardens Orchid Collection Specialist, was the guest speaker at the FCOS May meeting. He has been in that position for about 12 years. The Gardens is about 100 years old, and currently has a diverse orchid collection of about 3,600 varieties which has increased in size mainly over the last 10-15 years. The Huntington consists of a library, art collection, museum and botanical collection. It was founded in 1903 by Henry Huntington who was an American railroad magnate. His wife Arabella had the best orchid collection of her time, but only liked white colored flowers. But due to the market crash in 1930s, the collection was sold to generate money to keep the facility a float. They began to acquire orchids again in 1980.

Currently the collection consists of about 10,000 orchids consisting of 240 genera, 1,484 species and 2,200 hybrids. They also maintain an orchid herbarium specimen collection. The Gardens has 27,400 sq ft of growing space for tropicals and orchids. They acquired a large number of orchids in 2011 and 2012 due to the efforts of a number of orchid growers including Ernest Hetherington, George Hatfield, and Norman Fang to name a few. The current conservatory was built in 2005 to duplicate

the original lath house that had been built earlier. They have 3 laboratories on site and now have about 40 orchid volunteers that help with the various chores. Each volunteer spends about 3-4 hours /weeks working with the orchids. Due to the diversity of the collection, all the orchids are hand watered with most being watered with Reverse Osmosis (RO) water, except for the *Paphiopedilum* which are watered with city supplied water. They have hosted a large number of orchid related events. They also have maintained a rare book collection, archives or orchid grower's notes/books and a botanical art collection. Their tissue culture lab is targeting high priority, rare and endangered species seed production. They either grow out the seeds there or at an outside lab. They also have transferred some of their orchid seeds to their cryogenic lab for holding. They try to increase the genetic diversity of their seed production by making crosses between different individuals. They are working towards acquiring all species of each genus and currently have most species of the genus *Stanhopea*.

## What's Blooming Now - a few photos from our members and friends

*Dendrobium amabilis* - Grows in Monsoon areas of the Himalaya Mountains of India. Lots of water and fertilizer in the warm summer months, a dry rest from November to February. Grown by Ed Lysek.



Close up of one of the three flower spikes of *D. amabilis*. Plant purchased in spike from Asbell Orchids in Arroyo Grande. Now happily growing in Ed Lysek's Templeton greenhouse.





*Arpophyllum spicatum giganteum* growing at Asbell Orchids, Arroyo Grande.

Bob and Dan Asbell plan to divide their several plants of *Arpophyllum* this summer. Divisions may be available for purchase in a few months. Could one of these be listed on our FCOS August BetterWorld on-line auction? Check future newsletters for updates.



*Paphiopedilum Julius*. Grown by Jeffrey Thompson in Santa Barbara.

*Masdevallia coccinea alba* 'Blanca'. Grown by Jeffrey Thompson outside in Santa Barbara.





Masdevallia coccinea '#171 SBOE'. Grown by Jeffrey Thompson outside in Santa Barbara.

Masdevallia coccinea 'Bull's Blood'. Grown by Jeffrey Thompson outside in Santa Barbara.





*Epi. parkinsonianum* from Larry Vierheilig's collection now being expertly cared for by Anne Bachmann.

*Myrmecophila tribicinis* 'Kiana' blooms regularly in Judy and Chuck's greenhouse. We had the honor of naming it after our granddaughter when it was awarded by AOS. If you look over my right shoulder you can see a spike from another basket. The flower spikes are 6 to 8 feet long!





A close up of 'Kiana'. Quite a spectacular flower!



It's *Maxillaria tenuifolia* blooming time. Strong scent of coconut and chocolate. An easy to grow orchid which likes plenty of moisture and bright light. Grown by Judy Scheithauer.

Sometimes called the coconut pie orchid -  
who doesn't like the scent of coconut.



*Dendrobium* Gatton Sunray is glorious this  
year. Note the furry lip. It spends its time  
on the north-east side of our greenhouse.  
Grown by Judy Scheithauer.

It is interesting how it blooms on year-old canes that have shed their leaves. Grown by Judy Scheithauer.





How's this for color? It has clusters of vibrant fuchsia-colored flowers on long leafless year-old canes. Grown by Judy Scheithauer.



*Cymbidium devonianum*. In nature are found on trees or mossy rocks in highland montane cloud forests from Assam India, eastern Himalayas, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Plant acquired from India via Dan Newman at Hanging Gardens in Pacifica. Grown by Chris Ehrler.



Closeup of *Cymbidium devonianum* flower.



*Sarchochilus hartmannii*. Grows natively in eastern Australian. Grown outside in a bark and lava rock mixture by Chris Ehrler.



Closeup of *Sarchochilus hartmannii* flower.

*Sarchochilus* Kirra Lea. All these plants are from a single flask from seeds produced from a selfing of a *S. Kirra Lea* done by Dan Asbell in 2012. All these plants were attached to the piece of cork oak in May 2014. Grown outside and misted most every day. The following series of photos show some of the variation in the flower coloration due to the individual genetic variation of each plant. Grown by Chris Ehrler.

I mounted 1/2 of the plants from Dan's flask onto this piece of cork oak and gave the rest away as raffle plants. Does anyone want to let the group know if their orchids from this flask are still alive and blooming?



Flower color variation from *Sarchochilus*  
Kirra Lea. selfing.



Flower color variation from *Sarchochilus*  
Kirra Lea. selfing.



Flower color variation from *Sarchochilus*  
Kirra Lea. selfing.



Flower color variation from *Sarcochilus*  
Kirra Lea. selfing.



Flower color variation from *Sarcochilus*  
Kirra Lea. selfing.



*Sarcochilus* Kulnura Sweetie 'Em Style' x *S.*  
(Cherrie Dawn x Kulnura Ripple) 'Tipped'.  
Acquired a few years ago from Sunset  
Valley Orchids at the 2018 FCOS show.  
Grown outside in a mixture of bark and  
lava rock. Grown by Chris Ehrler.



*Masdevallia xanthina* ssp. *pallida*. Plant acquired from Ecuagenera. Grown in a clay pot with sphagnum moss in a cool greenhouse. Grown by Chris Ehrlar.

Side view of *Masdevallia xanthina* ssp. *pallida*.

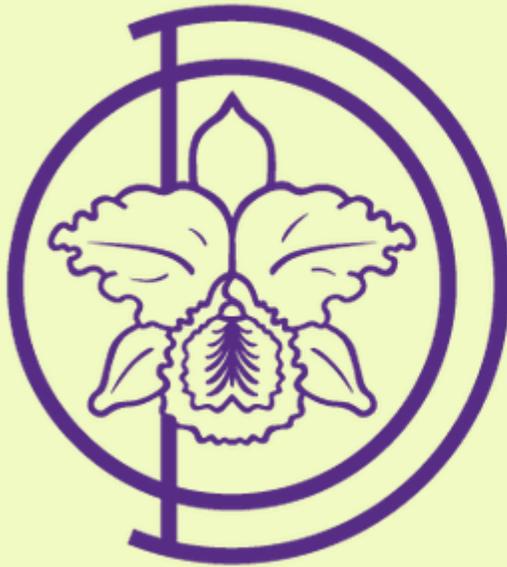




*Masdevallia* Sunset Jaguar. Grown in a clay pot with sphagnum moss in a cool greenhouse. Grown by Chris Ehler.

Side view of *Masdevallia* Sunset Jaguar.





# Orchid Digest

If you haven't visited [Orchid Digest magazine's website](#) in a while, it's been updated with gallery photos, a blog, members section and more. They are considering a "letters to the editor" section in the magazine where you can comment on recent articles, ask questions and suggest topics for future articles. **PLUS**, you can fill out a form on their website and download a FREE sample of Issue 84-1.

Receiving comments from readers is a valuable way for editors to know what is of interest to readers and helps keep publications (and this newsletter) interesting to read. Please send your comments to [Info@OrchidDigest.org](mailto:Info@OrchidDigest.org).

## FCOS Lifetime Membership

A New FCOS Lifetime Membership is available for a donation of \$500. The FCOS Board is looking for creative ways to insure the long-term financial health of FCOS. For those of you who are able to consider this generous donation your lifetime membership will help FCOS maintain its quality speaker programs and prepare for the resumption of our Spring Show. [Click here for donation details.](#)

Become a Life Member of FCOS for a \$500 donation!



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Here's a better way to air your dirty (or clean) laundry. Got a complaint, suggestion or just want to express your opinion, send an email to our editors, [Jeff Parham](#), [Chris Ehrler](#) or [Ed Lysek](#). (photo courtesy of Gary Yong Gee).

*Question:* I'm interested in growing air plants (Tillandsia species and hybrids) along with my orchids. Do you have any recommendations for good sources of air plants?

*Answer:* One of the best sources of locally grown air plants is Air Plant Alchemy located in Carpinteria. You can call to arrange for a visit or use their on-line store to purchase air plants. [www.airplantalchemy.com](http://www.airplantalchemy.com) The photographs are stunning and owner Brian takes pride in his artistic displays in his retail showroom.

*Tillandsia capitata* peach available from Air Plant Alchemy in Carpinteria.

#### FCOS Garage Sale

Send an email to [Jeff Parham](#), [Chris Ehrler](#) or [Ed Lysek](#) and include an image of your item, a description, price, and your contact info. We'll include your info in our next monthly newsletter if there is space. FCOS assumes no responsibility for payment, taxes, etc. We ask the items be orchid or plant related. FCOS is not taking a commission or participating in any other way.

#### Five Cities Orchid Society 2021 Board of Directors

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Orchids are really great!

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