



**October 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:*

Hello All,

October is here! The growing season is coming to an end, and the Fall transition is upon us. As the days get shorter and cooler, orchid growth slows and sometimes ceases altogether. For many orchids, it is this change of seasonal conditions that

initiates flower growth. Ed Lysek, our Vice President published an article regarding plants that need a dry winter rest. (It is posted on our website at [www.fcoss.org](http://www.fcoss.org)). While working to transition my orchids, I've been cleaning and reorganizing my greenhouse. I use diluted chlorine bleach (1:10) and/or Phytan to clean off any accumulated algae from plant trays. Then I'm grouping all dry winter resting plants together within the greenhouse. I'm looking forward to the new blooms ahead.

I encourage you to read the articles in this month's newsletter. Be sure to check out the Miranda Brazilian Cattleya video from the article on the Tiamiami Orchid Festival. It runs for 90 minutes and covers all of the Cattleya species in Brazil. It shows how native orchids grow in different Brazilian locations. It also explains why some do well in our area and some don't. If you have time, it is worth watching. You will see lots of Cattleyas that you've never seen before.

<https://www.tamiamiorchidfestival.com/tiof/public/classes>

Another must-see article and video is about an experiential visual fantasy created from thousands of orchids in Japan. It's called "Floating Flower Garden; Flowers and I are of the Same Root, the Garden and I are One."

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/teamlab-orchid-garden-tokyo/index.html>

I would like to encourage you to support the FCOS by becoming a member and staying current with your dues. If possible, you can also send in a donation. FCOS is a 401(c)3 non-profit and donations are tax-deductible. Your contributions assist us in growing our programs and scheduling speakers for our meetings.

We have excellent speakers and topics lined up through the end of the year. Be sure to keep up to date on the events section of our website for the latest information:

[www.FCOS.org/events](http://www.FCOS.org/events).

Happy Blooming!

Jeff



Five Cities Orchid Society Presents:

Halloween Special

“Gods and Monsters”

By Gary Meyers

Thursday, October 14th at 7 pm

Will the Great Pumpkin visit your orchid patch this Halloween? Join Gary Meyers of [Columbian Orchid Imports](#) for a fascinating talk about the demonic names of orchids in the genus *Dracula*.

Join [Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87016320614?pwd=YlFxMXZqVFA1V1BSazVvQmlzNnh4QT09>

Meeting ID: 870 1632 0614, Passcode: 613810

To find your local number go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87016320614?pwd=YlFxMXZqVFA1V1BSazVvQmlzNnh4QT09>

**Last month's meeting featured Ray Barkalow who spoke to us about growing orchids in semi-hydroponics.**



FCOS had the privilege of having Ray Barkalow of Ray's First Orchids ([www.firstrays.com](http://www.firstrays.com)) speak to the group via Zoom at the September meeting. His topic was Growing Orchids in Semi-Hydroponics conditions. Ray began growing orchids many years ago when he was attending Georgia Tech. In January 1999, his heater went out and he lost his 20-year-old collection. He went and bought a new heater and an alarm so he would be more prepared if his heater was to go out again. He has been operating First Rays's orchid supplies for about 27 years. He stated that all epiphytic orchids can be grown hydroponically. The cells in the roots regulate the uptake of

water, nutrients and the discharge of waste, plus allow gas to be exchanged both in and out of the roots. The movement is controlled by the concentration with some materials being moved by pumps in the cells. The roots are “tailor made” for the media they are grown in so if you completely change the media type when transplanting the old roots will probably not be able to adapt to the new media, but new roots will need to be produced. So, it is important to transplant when the new roots are starting to grow. Semi-hydroponics is a cultural technique where you grow in individual pots that are filled with an inert media. Root rot is not caused by water but by factors including suffocation, poisons (too much fertilizer), pathogens and excess stresses. Ray plants his orchids in plastic containers that have a hole or two about an inch or so above the bottom. The container is filled with LICA (Lightweight Expanded Clay Aggregate) also referred to as clay balls. This material allows the roots to have space between the clay balls to grow into plus allows there to be both moisture and air in the media. He suggests not using a mixture that contains small and large sized media nor a mixture of media sizes so the spaces between the larger media are not “filled up” with smaller sized media. This inorganic media will not break down and he stated that root rot is virtually eliminated. Repotting is generally simple and less stressful on the orchid because in most instances the many roots in the pot will hold the LICA together when you pull it out of the container So you just need to place the LICA and roots into a larger container and add more LICA. With little root disturbance you can repot more or less year-round when you have time. He states it is near impossible to over water. He has found that he gets better growth when he waters his orchids daily. He generally fills the container up with his fertilizer solution and the excess drains out of the holes near the bottom of the container. He fertilizes with K-Lite fertilizer at a rate of 25-100 ppm of nitrogen (he targets the amount so that his orchids get 100 ppm nitrogen/week). So, if he waters twice per week, he targets to have his fertilizer solution to be 50 ppm nitrogen. His website has lots of free information including a calculator of how much of your fertilizer to add/gallon of water to get your desired fertilizer solution. Ray stated that you should not use K-Lite fertilizer with hard water. He also uses (and sells) Kelp Max seaweed concentrate once per month (1 Tbs/gallon of water) and Quantum-Total once per month (1 ounce/gallon) on all his orchids. Ray also suggests a solution of 1 Tbs/gallon of Kelp Max during the first 2 to 3 times you water newly transplanted orchids. The Quantum-Total contains a bacterial culture capable of enhancing your plants photosynthesis and other bacterial components that can fix nitrogen and improve mineral availability.

If you want to try growing in semi-hydroponics media it is best to do the transplanting when new roots are just beginning to grow so they will grow into the new media. He also suggested that you soak new LICA in freshwater to remove any dust. You can add Epsom salt or Superthrive during the soaking process. He likes to place the recently transplanted pots onto a heating grow mat to help stimulate quicker root growth. A

10° by 20°F heat mat with digital temperature controller is about \$22 to \$26 on Amazon.

A Special Invitation from our friends at the [Conejo Orchid Society](#) to join them this Monday, October 11th at 7 PM

*Scott McGregor Will Present Orchid Species that Grow Well Outdoors in Southern California*

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84243681636?pwd=UXAyTjlpbDZ6KzFyK0VJOFhTNTdHQT09>

Scott has been growing orchids since he was 12, when a neighbor gave him a plant. Although that orchid had a short life, young Scott was hooked! Growing up in St. Louis he found books and sources for orchid species to expand his passion. His personal orchid collection morphed over time as he lived in different locations around the world, but it always centered on the more unusual species.

He grows all his plants outdoors, without a greenhouse, just “subtracting some sunlight and adding some water” to what nature provides in Southern California. He has over 500 different species and rarely uses chemical insecticides or fungicides, preferring fresh air and relying on beneficial insects and our native tree frogs for pest control.

Scott retired from the corporate world a few years ago, and stays active on corporate boards and works with non-profit groups that promote science education for kids. He resides with his family in San Juan Capistrano, California.

*We’ve returned the favor and invited members of the Conejo Society to join us for our Thursday evening presentation by Gary Meyers “Gods and Demons”.*

### **What’s Blooming Now - a few photos from our members and friends.**

For those of you who submitted photos of yourself with your ‘favorite’ orchid (and sometimes matching fashion), our random drawing for a free plant goes to all 4 of you! Jeff Parham will be in touch with you shortly to discuss your FCOS complimentary orchid and make delivery or pick up arrangements. Happy Halloween!

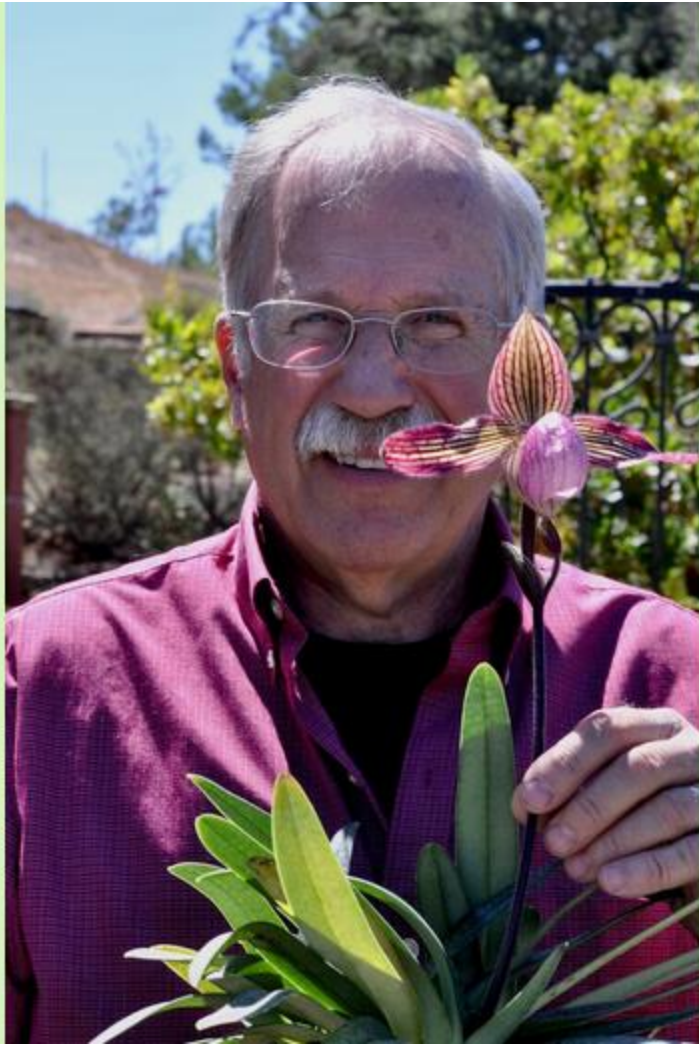


*Odcdm.* Catatarite "Pumpkin Patch". Grown outside watered once a week.

Grown by Alan Durham



*Paph. Gloria Naugle* - grown in my greenhouse in shade and kept moderately moist. Purchased from Royale Orchids of Carpenteria in 2017 and finally bloomed this month with a second flower spike just beginning to develop. Grown by Ed Lysek





Joan Graham is ready for  
October with her *Oncidium*  
*Witch's Jewels 'Ivory Lips'*.

Kristie Wells has done an amazing job of matching her sweater color to SVO 7512, 'SVO' Pot. Al Thanhauser 'Best One' x Pot. Rubescence



O.K. so she's not an FCOS member, but it is the month of Halloween and she is dressed as an orchid. Maybe we should consider an orchid costume party for next Halloween?

Amazing the photos you can find on the web.



*Miltonia Belvedere* "George  
McMahon"™ a *division*  
obtained from Joe and Kathy  
Parker, Pacifica, CA who grow it  
to perfection. Is it me, or do you  
think this was the inspiration for  
the Halloween costume above?  
-grown by Ed Lysek

Eric Holenda promises a selfie with one of his orchids next month. Until then, here is his *Catasetum expansum* – the species varies in color, some clones with more intense reddish-orange and even spots, and some a pale icy green.



*Catasetum expansum*

*Miltonia Kibet* "Belleglade"™  
from Carter and Holmes orchids  
in 2013. Consistent bloomer in  
late Summer with multiple flower  
spikes. Takes hot summers and  
cool winters. Grown in a slatted  
wooden basket with a small  
amount of bark in my  
greenhouse. Misted every  
morning in Spring and Summer,  
much drier in Fall/Winter. -  
Grown by Ed Lysek





*Renanthera* "Red Dragon"<sup>™</sup> likes warmer temperatures and lots of filtered sunlight. This is a tall grower (this one is almost 5 ft tall) but is sprouting new growths from the base. Grown like a Vanda with roots suspended in a clay pot to provide extra humidity. Grown by Ed Lysek

Cat. Jalapa "Orchid Eros"<sup>™</sup> X *B. nodosa* grown by Ron Hardy of Gig Harbor, WA - a frequent participant in our monthly Zoom meetings.





*Caulocattleya Ethel*™s  
*Paradise*™ Hawaii™ Grown  
by Ron and Virginia Hardy in  
Gig Harbor, WA

*Brassovola*™ Moonlight  
*Perfume*™ a cross between  
*Brassovola nodosa* and  
*Rhyncholaelia glauca*. (Also on  
the web as *Rhynchovola*). You  
can smell the night-time perfume  
all the way from Gig Harbor.  
-Virginia and Ron Hardy

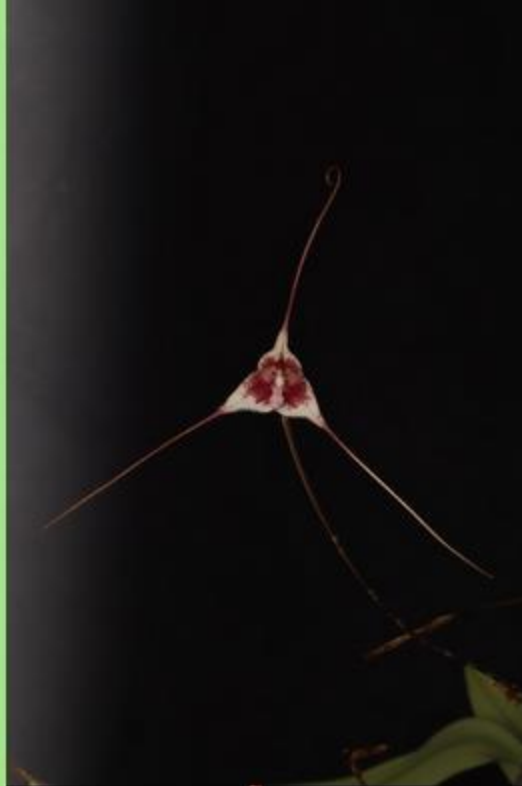




*Dracula morleyi*. A cool grower that grows natively in northwestern Ecuador in wet primary forests at elevations of 1900 meters. Is this a face only a mother would love? Grown in a plastic mesh pot filled with sphagnum moss in a cool greenhouse. Grown by Chris Ehrler.



*Dracula ripleyana*. A cool growing epiphyte that is thought to be native to Costa Rica. Grown by Chris Ehrlar in a plastic mesh pot filled with sphagnum moss in a cool greenhouse.



*Dracula ripleyana* closeup.





*Dendrochilum magnum*. A cool growing epiphyte growing natively in the Philippines in mossy forests at elevations of 1600 to 2000 meters. Grown in a bark and lava rock mixture in a cool greenhouse. Grown by Chris Ehrler.



*Dendrochilum magnum* closeup of spike. Spots on the flowers are due to recent watering of this orchid.



*Dendrochilum magnum* closeup of flowers.



*Cochleanthes aromatica* - lives up to its name with a powerful vanilla fragrance. Grown in a net pot with LICA media, in a saucer kept constantly filled with rainwater. Without knowing it Iâ€™ve been growing this orchid with semi-hydroponics. Thanks to Ray Barkalowâ€™s talk, now I know! -Ed L.

*Autumn has arrived and here is a suggestion to add to your reading list for those rainy days (hopefully) in our future.*



If you are looking for a collection of orchid articles to help you advance your growing skills, look no further than the website for Sue Bottom of the St. Augustine, FL orchid society. Sue is a frequent contributor to orchid magazines and this website offers over one hundred of her articles ranging from “Beginner’s Guide to Orchids” to advanced topics on pest, fungus and virus control. [Click to see the articles by Sue Bottom.](#)



Congratulations to Joan Graham from Los Osos for her very first bloom on a plant that she obtained last February from Sunset Valley Orchids. SVO 7738 (Pot Martha Clark "Outstanding"™ x Pot Burana Angel #1 Best HCC/AOS).

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October 2015 Volume 84 Number 10

TOM'S MONTHLY CHECKLIST

Reprint

## October: The Month of Insanity by Thomas Mirenda

Gearing up for a Season of Indoor Growing

Those of you who have the luxury of living in a climate where tropical orchids can remain outside through the winter cannot imagine the brow-furrowing vexations endured by those of us who have to sequester our orchid collections to safety before the winter season. Not only is every square inch of windowsill or greenhouse bench space already spoken for, many orchid nurseries choose this time of year to advertise lower prices and bargains. After all, many of them need to pack up for the winter too. I learned long ago that I cannot resist an orchid sale so my windowsills and benches will always be filled beyond capacity through the inclement weather.

This is the kind of obsession that many of us share. Some would call it passion, others pathology. However, due to our fascination with the outrageous diversity displayed in the tens of thousands of orchid species and the never-ending array of spectacular and easy to grow hybrids, we must resign ourselves to slavishly devoting hours of our personal time, and dedicating vast amounts of space and financial resources to our collections. Are we insane? Well, if so, we are in good company. Some extremely respectable individuals (not I, of course) are secret orchid growers. You would never know it if you saw them at work or on the street. They seem normal enough, with respectable careers, devoted spouses and above-average children. But we know that we are living on the edge, seized by an uncontrollable mania that immerses us in that beautiful and mesmerizing world of orchids. If you have not yet reached capacity, what are you waiting for?

**CLEAN UP YOUR ACT** Your collection grew well this summer thanks to all the excellent care you gave it after reading about the plants in *Orchids*. Those that summered outside received plenty of rainwater, excellent light and air movement. Many have put on large new pseudobulbs.

Cattleyas are forming sheaths, phalaenopsis are hardening their newest growths and dendrobiums are producing terminal leaves on their long canes, basically finishing their vegetative growth for the year. Now is the time to prepare the winter growing space, be it a windowsill, light room or greenhouse. If you have not already done so, take the time to clear out debris from last year, clean and sterilize the surfaces with a disinfectant and plan your strategy for getting all your orchids safely inside for the winter.

**NO HIDDEN PASSENGERS** With many of your warmer-growing plants, such as vandas and angraecoids, about to come in for the winter before the first cold snaps, September may be your last chance to check your orchids for hitchhiking critters. Any number of undesirable winter residents may have invaded orchids that are outside. Sucking insects, such as mites, scale or mealybugs, are often decimated by the beneficial insects that live in our yards or washed away by rains, but sometimes, small enclaves of these pests survive. Take the time now to look over plants carefully and treat any pests accordingly. Even though they may not be

visible on the leaves, colonies of ants sometimes invade the porous interstices of orchid mix. These cannot be tolerated and could cause you a lot of grief if allowed in the greenhouse. Once discovered, the ants must be evicted either by drowning or drenching with an insecticide. It is always a good idea to repot such plants in fresh medium as the old mix is likely to be seriously broken down or badly acidified by the formic acid released by ant habitation.

**FLOWER POWER** Many hobbyists anticipate the approaching blooming season for many orchids, including cymbidium, phalaenopsis and dendrobiums, by fertilizing plants less frequently and with a lower concentration. In particular, the use of high-nitrogen fertilizers this time of year can inhibit blooming by encouraging plants to continue growing foliage. For orchids that you are expecting to spike in the autumn, switching to a blossom booster fertilizer now can give plants the extra boost they need to flower extravagantly.

**THE LITTLE DEATH** A few orchids: deciduous dendrobiums, lycastes, many terrestrials (*Habenaria*, *Cynorkis*) and some members of the Catasetinae are showing brown-tipped or yellowing leaves now. Do not be alarmed. Usually shortly after the autumn equinox, as day length starts to shorten, many orchids adjust and slough off leaves in preparation for dormancy. Most of these are benefiting from the cooler night temperatures after enduring the summer heat and are genetically programmed to shut down their metabolisms. Respond by letting these plants dry out and holding back plant fertilizer. Overwatering now can lead to rot problems later in the autumn.

**JUST ONE MORE** It is so tempting to load up on new orchids during those ubiquitous autumn sales. I certainly cannot preach to anyone about the virtues of restraint when it comes to orchid acquisition, so I hereby release you from any guilt you may be feeling about crowding your collection too much this winter. It may be irresponsible of me to tell you this, but we are what we are. I believe the correct word is 'œenthusiasts'. So go for it. Order a few new sale plants from orchid nurseries. And have fun.

*Tom Mirenda has been working professionally with orchids for over three decades and is the past chair of the AOS Conservation Committee. He is an AOS accredited judge in the Hawaii*

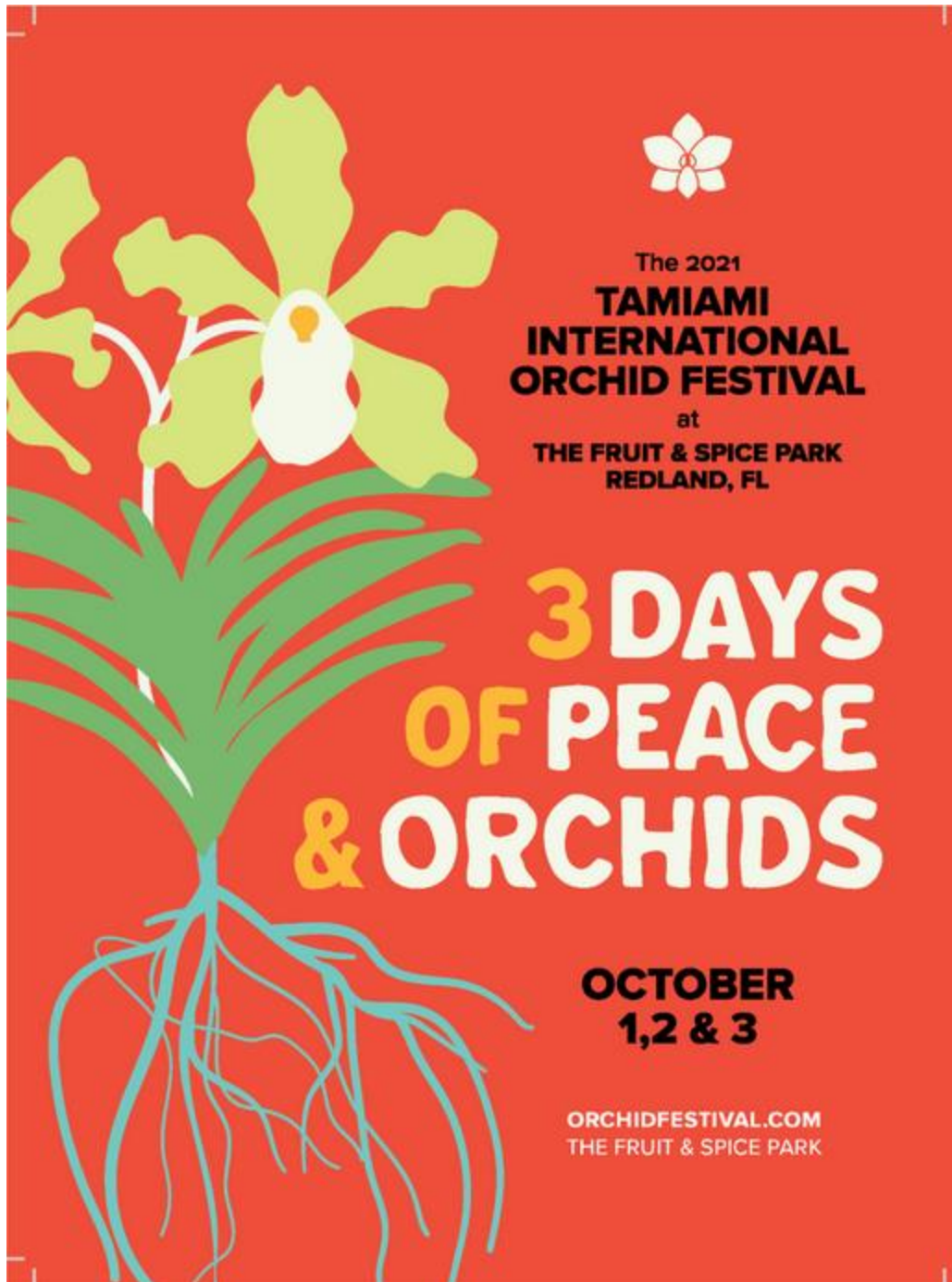


Center (email: [biophiliak@gmail.com](mailto:biophiliak@gmail.com))



**As Tom Mirenda says in the article above, *So go for it. Order a few new sale plants from orchid nurseries. And have fun.* There is always room for just one more!**

**(Dan Newman's fabulous greenhouse, Hanging Gardens, Pacifica, CA)**



Friend

We wanted to encourage you to take advantage of the classes offered in conjunction with our upcoming amazing orchid festival the 2021 Tamiami International Orchid Festival. Due to concerns over packing lecture halls with folks, we are offering all the classes via zoom. You can check out some of the previously recorded ones right now on demand. You can also sign up for tomorrow's classes right now.

[Click here to view on demand or sign up for live classes.](https://www.orchidfestival.com)

Of all the amazing classes we've had so far, I am most partial to Francisco Miranda's lecture on Brazilian Cattleya Species and David Off's class on the Orchid Buyers Club. Although both of these gentlemen are at the pinnacle of the orchid growing world, the lectures could not be more different. Yet I will guarantee that you will learn some amazing stuff in both.

Francisco takes you deep inside the botany of cattleya species, with insight after insight that will broaden and deepen your appreciation of these plants. For me, I always thought cattleyas were boring old lady corsages. Boy was I wrong! These things are wild!

And then you have David Off's deep dive in the mania of orchid festivals. David explains why there is nothing like the thrill of the hunt at an orchid festival, and reveals his deep dark not so secret: even though he's a pro, he's as helpless as the rest of us when he sees an amazing plant. Google searches and online shopping are fine, but you'll never replace the ability to walk past a booth and see a plant you've always wanted or one that you never knew you needed.

We hope you enjoy both lectures. [Check them out here.](#)

All we ask is that you please do one of several things to support the festival:

Easiest: buy tickets and come to the festival! [Click here.](#)

Still easy and also fun: get a VIPP pass and come early on Thursday, putting that Orchid Buyers Club knowledge to work. [Click here.](#)

Pretty easy and super comfy: get one of the amazing t-shirts with our great 2021 art on it (see below) in long or short sleeve. [Click here.](#)

A little harder but super helpful: spread the word about the festival and help us let others know about it. There's a competition and you can win prizes! [Click here.](#)

Even if you can't do any of those things, we still encourage you to join us in celebrating the wonderful world of orchids by checking out our free lectures.

Best wishes,

Motes Orchids

Hosts of your 2021 Tamiami International Orchid Festival



**ORCHID SPEAK: We All Have to Start Somewhere**

Let's talk about the language we learn when we join the orchid community. It's alphabet soup. Multi-syllable words. Words with more vowels than we know what to do with. Words we are not familiar with. All in the name of orchids. The American Orchid Society is here to help.

Under the [All About Orchids](#) tab on the AOS website there is a resource you will want to share with your society members. Orchids from A-Z is a definitive source for concise information on orchid genera. Full descriptions and culture requirements are provided by experts hand-picked for their knowledge of select genera. Photos of major species in each genus are shown with large pop-up photos. Culture requirements are presented in an easy to understand "recipe-style" format. Also included is a sound file for the proper pronunciation of each genus so you can sound like an expert. **Go ahead – test yourself!**

<https://www.aos.org/orchids/orchids-a-to-z.aspx>

**WHAT'S NEW? The Orchid Marketplace** Discover the top vendors in the orchid community and their special offers on all things orchid.

**Two-Year renewals, or new two-year members, receive a \$30 coupon for each ELITE Marketplace Partner. Marketplace Partner terms and conditions may apply.**

ALL AOS members save a minimum 5% on purchases from every vendor.

Additionally - **The Orchid DealWire** is an opt-in email-based service provided by the American Orchid Society, to inform DealWire subscribers of promotions, special events and sales related to orchids. Anyone may sign-up to receive these notices by entering their email address at the bottom of the Orchid Marketplace screen on the AOS website.

<https://marketplace.aos.org/>

**Digital Membership Cards**

How cool is this? Members can now find their membership cards in their account information on the drop-down menu after [signing on](#) to the AOS website. Print or download and save to your electronic device(s).

<https://secure.aos.org/login?ReturnUrl=http://www.aos.org>

Marni Turkel à€œMiniature Orchidsà€ Nov 11 at 7 PM on Zoom. Check your inbox on Nov. 1 for the FCOS newsletter with details and the Zoom link.



### FCOS Lifetime Membership

A New FCOS Lifetime Membership is available for a donation of \$500. The FCOS Board is looking for creative ways to ensure 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:*** *Is FCOS going to sponsor the annual Central Coast Orchid Show in 2022?*

***Answer:*** Eric Holenda will be holding a meeting to discuss this very topic in August. Interested persons are encouraged to [email Eric](#) for details. This is a great opportunity to work with fellow orchid lovers and network with other volunteers, vendors and meet and make new friends.

#### 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**

Jeff Parham, *President* [jsp1440@aol.com](mailto:jsp1440@aol.com)

Ed Lysek, *Vice President* [edlysek@me.com](mailto:edlysek@me.com)

Alan Durham, *Treasurer* [a.durham@sbcglobal.net](mailto:a.durham@sbcglobal.net)

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Eric Holenda, *Show Chairman*

Chris Ehrlar, *Past President* [ehrlar4@juno.com](mailto:ehrlar4@juno.com)

**Orchids are really great!**

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