

Alan's Bench

It's SHOWTIME!

What happens when you start in February to organize an orchid show in just twelve weeks? We started a bit late to get the participants together, and with the decision to move forward the traditional summer date to the first weekend in May. This greatly shortened the amount of preparation time and presented a lot of organization challenges.

But we are getting ready- all we need is your help, your plants for displays, flowers for arrangements, and to get the word out to the general public and orchid enthusiasts that THE place to be in the known universe is the Cocoa Expo Sports Arena for the show, May 1-3.

We have the location, American Orchid Society (AOS) judging, as many orchid dealers as last year, and the promise of many, many new flowers and plants for display and sale that bloom in our beautiful Florida springtime.

This is a great experiment to avoid the traditional time of our historic hurricane season show. With the change in school year a couple of years ago, our show conflicted with the last weekend before school started. The thoughts of parents were more on school supplies than orchid supplies. So now we have the perfect time- a week before Mother's Day. As you tell your family and friends about the show- also remind them orchid plants purchased at our show make the perfect Mother's Day gift.

We need your help. What can you do? Help set up, volunteer to be a judging clerk, come to the show and help at the hospitality table, and help remove the exhibits at closing on Sunday. Wear your nametag, offer to answer questions, invite prospective orchid buyers to become members of the club. Call me at 536-2896 or co-chair Glenda Titler at 637-0948 for information or to help.

So, onto the show, orchids, orchid knowledge, and the camaraderie of friends interested in our hobby and study.

Alan



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Rhizome n., a creeping stem lying, usually horizontally, at or under the surface of the soil...

The Rhizome

PCOS Exhibit at the Central Florida Orchid Show

PCOS entered a table top display at the Central Florida Orchid Show on the first weekend in April. We placed a respectable third place award, considering both the host club and Volusia Orchid Society put in much larger displays.

Thanks to Charlie Bishop and Dave Riches who loaned flowering plants for the display. And special thanks to Glenda Titler, Alan Gettleman, and Jim and Betty Adamson who put in the display as well as bringing plants. Jim and Betty also provided background greenery. One of our plants was pulled for possible AOS judging, but did not make the cut.

This was a great experience and a lot of fun for me as it showed the logistics and dynamics of displaying at a different society.

Phaius tankervilleae (Banks) Blume 1852 and It's Progeny- Easy to Propagate

Phaius is a widespread genus through Southeast Asia. *Phaius tankervilleae* (Banks) Blume 1852 is the one of the best know and popular terrestrial orchids. This is in part due to easy culture and also *Phaius* could occasionally be grown from seed without the laborious flasking process. South Florida orchid growers would indicate seed blown onto wooden plant benches or the surrounding ground would often yield seedlings. *Phaius tankervilleae* also has been reported to have naturalized in swampy areas of Hardee County. Occasionally you will see the plant for sale at garden centers and big box hardware stores. So it is not surprising this species has been known to be in continuous cultivation for over 250 years.

Several PCOS members bought *Phaius* Dan Rosenberg "Tropical Ice" in bloom at our plant sale in April. The plant is correctly *Gastrophaius* Dan Rosenberg "Tropical Ice" HCC/AOS, awarded at the Miami Orchid Show in 2007. The young plants we bought already had a long spike and 5-7 flowers open at one time and many buds. The awarded plant had 43 flowers and 88 buds on five inflorescences! It is a primary intergeneric cross of *P. tankervilleae* and *Gastrorchis tuberculosa* (Thours) Schltr. The cross was made, not surprisingly, by EFG Orchids in Deland which has hybridized several *tankervilleae* hybrids, including the spectacular *Phaiocalanthe* Kryptonite (*Calanthe* Rozel x *Phaius tankervilleae*).

Phaius is one of small number of orchids that can be propagated from the spent flowering stem. As soon as the last flower fades, cut the stem into pieces with one node (eye) per cutting with a very sharp knife or razor blade. Treat with a Rootone® type fungicide/root stimulator and place stem onto a flat of damp sphagnum. Various sources recommend enclosing the flat in plastic to retain moisture. Put the flat in a shady warm place and in a couple of months plantlets form. Some recommend removing the triangular covering (sheath) that covers the eye.

Culture for the species is simple. The plant is completely hardy in our climate and can be grown in pots or outdoors in the garden. Grow in moderate light and ample water and fertilize heavily (for an orchid that is) during the growing season and decrease watering in the fall when the growths mature.

One of the nodes on my plant already has a swelling eye so I am hoping for some additional plants. I hope you will also try this technique and let me know the results.



Phaius tankervilleae



Swelling node of *Phaius tankervilleae*