

Platinum Coast Orchid Society

The Rhyzome January 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HAPPY NEW YEAR: First a big thank you to Tammi and Anna (shown below) for all their work and effort organizing a very enjoyable Christmas party for P.C.O.S. It was great to see so many members that we had missed seeing for the past year. Again this year the society presented each member present at the party with an orchid. The January meeting is the installation of officers. It seems that masks are back in style for inside gatherings, a small price to help keep us safe. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the January meeting. As always thank you for your support of P.C.O.S.

Ed

JoAnn was thrilled with her 'party favor'. The wide variety of colors and beauty were stunning.



CALENDAR

January 12th, 6pm Board Meeting

January 12th, 7pm Business Meeting

Dues will be collected for 2022

**February 9th - We will welcome
Chadwick Orchids from Virginia.**



[All About Orchids \(aos.org\)](http://aos.org)

New to Orchid Growing? Check out the AOS website for Short Easy to Read Articles on Orchid Basics

Starting in June 2009, AOS published a monthly newsletter for beginners. The series continued for nearly three years and was intended to educate people with a casual interest in orchids. Subscription was open to all and by the time the last issue was sent there were ten thousand subscribers. They are archived on the AOS website. Here is a timely example of the content.

Here are a few suggestions to keep your orchids healthy this winter.

If you are a windowsill grower, the light will be entirely different at this time of year. Assess it carefully and make any necessary adjustments.

Cont. on p 2 in green



GREAT PLACES FOR MEMBERS TO FIND INFORMATION ON ORCHIDS:

1. Programs—Take notes—someday they will make sense.
2. AOS Magazine articles. “Orchids” is available at every meeting for check out.
3. Members— Ask longtime members about orchids, but realize that your yard and potting choices are key. We all use trial and error to succeed.
4. Internet sites—**www.aos.org**—This AOS site has the answer to almost any question.
5. Rambles at members’ homes to help you identify how others in your area grow their orchids.

PCOS is an affiliate of the **American Orchid Society (AOS)**. There’s an abundance of information on the AOS website. Please visit www.aos.org for articles, advice on growing orchids, and lots of free information.

Ask Betty Adamson for an application if you’re interested in joining.

For all current members, remember that your renewal notice will arrive in the Orchid Magazine prior to your month of renewal.

www.aos.org

FOR AOS MEMBERS: The AOS also has a presence on Facebook. There is a [group](#) with close to 65,000 members, and a [page](#). Each allows you to post photographs and ask questions about your orchids. The group is the most active of the two, and group members usually respond quickly to posts. The page is parallel to the AOS Instagram account. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/52597049839> <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOrchidSociety>

UPCOMING SHOWS AND EXPOS

Jan 8-9 Sarasota Orchid Society’s “Orchids in Paradise” at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 Tamiami Trail, Sarasota

Jan 21-23 Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society’s “Orchids Rock”, at the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Broward City Convention Center.

Jan. 29-30 Florida West Coast Orchid Society’s “Orchids Unmasked” at the City of Seminole Recreation Center, 9100 113th Street North, Seminole



AOS HIGHLIGHTS OUR OWN BREVARD COUNTY ZOO

In the most recent edition of AOS magazine, “Orchids”, our own Brevard Zoo and their project to include orchids in their exhibits was highlighted. If you missed it in your edition, be sure to go back and look for it. The magazine is available for loan at the next meeting, if you would like to read it. Some of you may be interested in getting involved at the zoo in this program.

Cont. from p 1

A south window may be brighter due to bare trees and the sun being lower in the sky. Watch for sunburn and move plants back from the window or add a sheer curtain to cut down the **light**.

- Shorter days and gloomy weather in many parts of the country can cause plants to produce soft growths that are more susceptible to pests and disease. Some orchids will not flower if they do not receive enough light. If necessary, use a grow light on a timer to provide additional light in winter.
- Orchids grow more slowly in winter and will need less water and fertilizer. Most growers cut their fertilizer back to twice a month at half strength. Monitor orchids to keep them at their proper moisture level for their type. Generally, orchids will need about half as much water in winter as they do in summer. Some orchids must have a dry winter rest in order to flower.

Cont. on p 6

2021 PCOS OFFICERS & CHAIRMEN

BE PART OF THE TEAM!

PRESIDENT

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Bert Forbush (2020-2021)

Kathy Jacobson (2021-2022)

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Why Do You Grow the Orchids You Grow?

By Sue Bottom/Photographs by Terry Bottom (Photos can be viewed in *ORCHIDS*, January 2016, pages 26 through 29)

Now It's Habenarias

Has your taste in orchids changed over time? When you first start growing orchids, you buy everything in sight, all you know is that you need more, more! Cattleyas are my enduring favorite, the incredible flowers, the fragrance, perhaps that's why most of the benches and overhead poles are filled with them. But then you go to an orchid show and see something that you simply can't live without.

In the beginning it was phalaenopsis. When we were living in Houston, the Houston Orchid Society was a phalaenopsis club thanks in part to Bill Tippitt's breeding of multifloral phals. It was an exciting time for phalaenopsis, the hybridizing for yellows was in its heyday and the harlequin phals had just been introduced. How can you not love phals with their long lived graceful blooms?

Then one day Stephen Moffitt gave a presentation to the Galveston club about catasetums, so naturally I started growing them. What is easier than a plant that requires no winter care during its dormancy but grows like mad in the summer? Add Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids into the mix with all his beautiful and fascinating hybrids and there are new wows to tempt you every year.

Next there was the vanda phase, so many colors, sizes and shapes! After that it was the ephemeral stanhopeas. That addiction started with a *Stanhopea grandiflora* that bloomed 8 times in one year, can you spell hooked? It took a bit of observing how others succeeded with theirs and some trial and error until I could reliably rebloom them and by then I had almost two dozen different varieties. After that came the African angraecoids in their white and green glory, the dendrochilums with their chains of miniature flowers and... well, you get the idea.

Roy Tokunaga of H&R Nurseries had some *Habenaria medusa* seedlings for sale when he came to talk to our club and I had seen pictures of this oddity and thought, why not? When it bloomed, it was love at first sight and the hunt was on for more. There have been many enablers along the way, including Thanh Nguyen of Springwater Orchids on the east coast and Peter T. Lin of Diamond Orchids on the west coast and several in between. Before the year was over, there were about two dozen habenarias in the greenhouse, orchids that grow from tubers and require a dry dormant winter.

That's how I found myself outdoors on a cold January afternoon with all these dead looking plants figuring out how I was going to repot them so they'd come back to life in the spring. The trickiest part is keeping the tuber oriented so the shoot end is pointing up and the root end is pointing down, easier said than done in that one end looks pretty much like the other. I think I made the wrong decision on one or two of them last year. For the similarly afflicted, this is what I have gleaned from reading about them and talking with other orchid growers.

Pot Selection. First, look for deeper standard size pots rather than azalea or bulb type pots. Don't use peanuts at the bottom of the pot because that's where the tubers will want to form. Use smallish pots, if you think you're slightly underpotting, you've probably chosen the right pot.

Cont.

Potting Mix. Most folks suggest using either sphagnum moss or Pro-Mix HP as your potting mix. I opted for a Pro-Mix HP/sponge rock mix and top dressed with a little sphagnum moss so the soilless mix wouldn't wash out of the pot. If you use sphagnum, make sure you have the AAA grade, otherwise find a good soilless mix. Next year I may try a few in straight sphagnum moss packed tightly enough that the plants will stand up without support.

When to Repot. After flowering, the vegetation starts to brown and the plant begins to enter dormancy. The tubers are still growing and storing energy for next year's growth so just limit your watering until the plant dies back. Don't be in any hurry to remove the dead top vegetation from the pot because that will help you orient the tubers properly during the repotting process.

Tuber Orientation. If you just knock the plant out of the pot and clean away the old potting mix like you would with other orchids, you'll find yourself saying oops, which end is up? The first time repotting, I held the tubers in my hand oriented top to bottom from depotting through repotting, to make sure they didn't get turned around. Often you can tell there is a pointy end from which the shoot grows that should be oriented up when you repot. But if you can't tell which end should be up, hedge your bets and lay the tuber sideways.

Then You Wait. Once your tuber is happily ensconced in its dry new home, put the pot someplace where it won't accidentally get watered. You have to wait until the tuber breaks dormancy and sends up a new shoot and then you can begin watering. If there is no new growth when all your other orchids have spring fever, you can give your *Habenaria* an occasional sip to encourage it to start growing. Once it has a few inches of height, give it copious amounts of water and fertilizer during the growing season because like your other winter dormant orchids, it has to cram 12 months of growing into 7 or 8 months. In the fall the bloom spikes will emerge from the center of the plant, get ready for the show!

Orchid growers go through all sorts of trials and tribulations learning how to grow one type of orchid and then when they finally figure it out, they decide to start growing a different type of orchid. It is probably natural that our taste in orchids evolves over time. After all, if you look back at your recipes from several years ago you realize your ingredients and techniques have morphed over time... though you must be careful not to admit to a Louisiana native that you are now adding beans to the gumbo!

Sue Bottom started growing orchids in Houston in the mid-1990s after her husband Terry built her first greenhouse. They settled into St. Augustine, Florida, Sue with her orchids and Terry with his camera. They are active in the St. Augustine Orchid Society, maintaining the society's website and publishing its monthly newsletter. Sue is also a member of the AOS Editorial Board. sbottom15@hotmail.com

The original article with complete photo layout can be found here: [ORCHIDS Magazine \(aos.org\)](http://ORCHIDS Magazine (aos.org))

- The loss of humidity as a result of forced air heating can take its toll on your orchids. Remember, most orchids grow optimally with 60-75% humidity. If your home is especially dry, and you will know by the way your own skin reacts to winter, provide extra humidity for your orchids. A tried-and-true method is to set orchid pots on trays of pebbles that are filled with water; just make sure your plant is not sitting in the water. Misting a couple times a day can also help.
- Winter is cold, so protect plants from drafts. If buds start falling off of a *Phalaenopsis* inflorescence the first thing to suspect is a drafty window. Do not put plants close enough to a window to touch the glass!