

Platinum Coast Orchid Society

The Rhizome

September 2026

President's Message

I want to give a special thanks to Sharon and Mark Walters for hosting our summer ramble at their Orchid Trail Nursery on Merritt Island. It was great to see how many improvements they've made to the greenhouses and the new building to house the supplies and check-out for purchases. Most of us probably get our plants at orchid shows throughout the year. It's so nice to be able to go to an orchid nursery to see just how the plants thrive in a greenhouse atmosphere. That's the magic of our rambles, learning different ways to make our treasures flourish, whether it's a greenhouse like Sharon, Mark and Sally, an arbor like Charlie, or a pool enclosure like Margaret and Ed. We generally only do rambles in the summer so if you missed this one, you'll have to wait another year.

Fall is a busy time for PCOS. At our September meeting we'll be voting on a name for next year's orchid show. We'll also be announcing the slate of nominees for next year's Officers and Board Members. In October we have our picnic and in November we vote on the new Board for 2027. We're also planning a bus trip to the Tamiami Orchid show in January 2027 and all the planning and sign-up will take place before the end of the year. We also have speakers for the September, October and November meetings so make sure you mark the dates in your calendar.

I also want to draw your attention to the essay that appears later in this newsletter. It's from the American Orchid Society and talks about caring for your orchids in September and October. If you haven't looked at the website, or the magazine, then you're missing a wonderful source of information on all things relating to orchids. Check out the monthly magazines Margaret brings to the meetings and talk to her about becoming a member. You won't regret a single issue.

See you September 9th!

Laura



CALENDAR—SAVE THE DATES

Wednesday, September 9th,
6 p.m. Board Meeting.

Wednesday, September 9th,
7 p.m. General Meeting.

Wednesday, October 14th,
6 p.m. Board Meeting.

Wednesday, October 14th.
7 p.m. General Meeting.

October 18th. PCOS Picnic.
Noon. Cocoa Beach Country Club.

SUNSHINE

A few of our members are recovering from surgery. They are on the road to recovery and healing well.

Julie Howard will have quite a walk when we see her next! Julie, we all wish you a speedy pain free rehabilitation.

Jo Waits had unexpected surgery also in July. She is recovering well and she is returning to a stronger and healthier life. Congratulations to you both.

We wish any member not mentioned a healthy and speedy recovery. Please let me know what we can do to support you.

Please contact Mary Ellen Jelen at 330 -715-2874 if you or another PCOS member is in need of some sunshine. Please do not disclose any personal information that the person has not granted permission to give.

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

Tomas Bajza will be our speaker at the September meeting. He is owner of Tarzane Group in Miami Florida. He is originally from the Czech Republic. He's had a love of orchids since his teenage years. He relocated to the U.S. and settled in Miami, Florida. Although living in a tropical climate it was some time before he tried his luck again at growing orchids. Like most of us he started out with box store phalaenopsis. Once mastered he moved on to the other species, cattleyas, vandas, and dendrobiums. He was looking for something different and while doing research online stumbled on to miniature orchids. He ordered several plants and upon receiving them was amazed at how small they actually were. That was it, the light went on and he was hooked.

Since that first order he's ordered hundreds of plants. He prefers cool to intermediate growing species and been told more than once that you can't grow those plants in Florida. Can't and impossible are not in his vocabulary. He has found that the species of plants he prefers are only grown by international growers.

One of Tomas's mentors once told him that a beginner orchid grower has killed less than 10 plants, and an advanced orchid grower has killed less than 100 plants, and a professional orchid grower has killed over 1000 plants and doesn't count anymore.

Tomas also has another passion and that is photography. It has been very beneficial with building up and growing his business.

Tomas will be doing a presentation on "The Miniature World of Dendrobiums". He will be supplying plants for the raffle and bringing orchids for sale to the members.

PLEASE NOTE - Zoom, live streaming and any recordings during Tomas' presentation is not permissible



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VALID UNTIL SEPTEMBER 7, 2026

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS

JULY 8th MEETING

Lady Vanda's Serena Roman was our July speaker.



Cultivation Basics

- Understand origin and natural environment- replicate
- Indoor growing- intermediate
- Outdoor growing- intermediate to warm
- Cool Growing - need cooler nights and cloud forest environment; Wardian Cabinet or converted fridge
- Warm growing species are usually flowering during our spring- fall months
- Pot/ mount on moisture retentive media- Do not allow the media to get crunchy
- Filtered light is best, watch leaves for signs of damage- sun burn, yellowing etc
- Winter- decrease water/ nutrients frequency- 55-60F+
- Some species are deciduous- bloom after leaf drop
- Seem to be a bit more tolerant of pests and diseases- but still look out for Mealybugs and Scale as they can hide

Plant Nutrients

Peter's Cal- Mag 15-5-15	CALiMAGic- Calcium and Magnesium
• Feed every 2 weeks at a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp/gallon • We do not use bloom boosters and have not noticed any detriment or changes in flowering without use	• Feed monthly at a rate of 1tsp/gallon • Calcium helps plants with heat tolerance and strengthens the cells walls • You may find deficient plants are more susceptible to rot and sunburn

Plant forum



Above: Margaret .

Left: Clive with his 6-foot long flower spike on this yellow-flowered beauty.

Photos by Jennifer Starr

BRUCE TATJE – BIOGRAPHY

BIRTHDAYS

August

Karen Chandler
Leonard Chandler
Sandra Dzurek
Karan Eiermann
Claudine Mooty-Clerget
Sharon Nelson
Ed Quillian
Janet Scenna
Denise Scott
John Vasconi

September

Elizabeth Bishop
Dave Buzenius
Maria Chaffee
Lois Fletcher
Diane Gates
Mike Gigler
Holly Pardi
Bruce Tatje

Bruce was born in Amityville, New York (his mother claims he was the ORIGINAL horror) but has been a Florida resident for almost 70 years. While studying Marine Biology in college, he took one botany course and was hooked on plants for life. He received a BS in Zoology and an MS in Botany, specializing in endangered plants and animals. While an undergraduate he was introduced to the Fakahatchee Strand in the southwestern part of our state, which he describes as “the plantiest place in Florida”. Most weekends during his college days would find him waist deep in the swamp, mesmerized by orchids and other epiphytic plants.



As a graduate student in college, Bruce studied native orchids, bromeliads, and ferns, doing his thesis work on the migration patterns of orchid species within the Fakahatchee Strand. During his work in these swamps he discovered one new species of fern and located and researched healthy populations of three endangered species that had been thought to be extirpated from Florida for several decades. Bruce wrote and published his first book while a high school senior, entitled “Let’s Explore a Tidepool”, and has published over 30 professional articles resulting from his botanical research in college. He is most proud of working on a grant from the US Department of the Interior as a researcher, resulting in the inclusion of 54 plant species on the US Endangered Species List. The endangered species he listed include four orchids: tailed spider orchid (*Brassia caudata*), Coot Bay dancing lady orchid (*Trichocentrum carthagenense*), Fakahatchee beaked orchid (*Sacola lanceolata* var. *paludicola*), and leafless vanilla (*Vanilla barbellata*).

Following his 11 years in college, Bruce became an ardent aviculturist, breeding and raising rare parrots. At one time his breeding aviaries housed over 800 parrots of over 100 species. After ten years with the birds he went back to the sciences, and for the next 26 years he was an Environmental Scientist in central Florida. His environmental work dealt with wetland issues, endangered species issues, and regulatory agency coordination. He also conducted training classes and educational seminars on scrub and wetland plant species identification for federal, state and local agency personnel. He has harrowing tales of exploits with alligators, crocodiles, and venomous snakes, but preferred spending time in the swamps and woods with them rather than working in the office writing reports and permitting.

Retired life found Bruce focused on extensive travels throughout Europe and Africa, international cooking (attending Le Cordon Bleu and other cooking schools in Paris), and expanding his orchid collection. He mostly collects species orchids and native orchids (NOT collected in the wild!). He is thankful to the Platinum Coast Orchid Society for the additional knowledge they have imparted and for the friends he has made within the club!

PCOS members at the August Ramble to Orchid Trail on Merritt Island .



AOS Monthly Checklist for September and October

Cattleya

Despite the shortening days and lowering angle of the sun, September can still be one of the hottest months. Water and fertilizer need to be in balance with heat and light. The alert grower will notice, however, that his or her plants are beginning to slow down a bit. Growths are maturing, and the sheaths are giving the promise of the next six-months' bloom.

Check plants for potting needs for the last time this season. Any in dire need should be potted, even some that may be on the cusp, as there is just enough of the growing season left to allow the plants to establish before the days start to get really short and cold.

This is the month for purples derived from *Cattleya labiata* breeding to flower. If you are short on flowers, look into this group. There is nothing that can quite match this type for beauty and fragrance. They are easy to grow, too.



Cycnoches

This little-known and under-appreciated genus, which can have male or female flowers, is at its best in the autumn. Two of the spectacular varieties are *Cycnoches loddigesii*, with its large brown flowers resembling a prehistoric bird, and *Cycnoches chlorochilon*, the swan orchid. This last one has large, fragrant green flowers. The biggest problem, culturally, will be red spider mite infestations that require immediate attention. Plants are quite seasonal, requiring heavy watering in the growing season and then a drier dormant winter season.



Cymbidium

Through diligent modern breeding programs, the cymbidium season gets stretched longer and longer. Now we can expect to have flowers open as early as September and October. Stake inflorescences and move the plants to a shadier location to help the flowers develop successfully. Because the plants will have warmth tolerance "built in" genetically, keeping the plants as cool as possible will help prevent bud curl. For the midseason varieties, inflorescences should be initiated by now. Feed plants on a regular schedule with a balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) and shade the plants lightly.



Dendrobium

This is a good season for hybrids of the *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium canaliculatum* types. Both are capable of putting on tremendous shows of long-lasting flowers. Fertilize with a low-nitrogen formula to promote the best flowers. *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* can get tall and top heavy, suggesting an attractive and heavy container would be appropriate for this type.



Continued on next page

Rhynchostele bictoniensis

Both *Rhynchostele bictoniensis* and its *hybrids* bloom in this season. *Rhynchostele bictoniensis*, formerly known as *Lemboglossum*, *Odontoglossum*) is a showy species from Mexico that has three different color forms: sulphureum (green with white lip), album (brown with white lip) and roseum (brown with a pink lip). It is a vigorous grower with tall inflorescences of many flowers, and imparts to its progeny (as seen in *Odcdm*. Bittersweet and *Odm*. bicross) ease of culture, warmth tolerance and eye-catching patterns. They make a prime candidate for odontoglossum beginners and advanced alike.

Paphiopedilum

Standard, green-leaved paphiopedilums begin to show their bloom sheaths this month. Late-season heat waves can blast these early sheaths, so be observant about proper cooling and air circulation. Repotting, if necessary, is appropriate.

Phalaenopsis

The bulk of this season's growth is being ripened this month, with growers in cooler climates seeing the first emerging inflorescences. Some night heating may be necessary in the cooler areas. Begin to watch watering more carefully, and reduce feeding proportionately with reduced watering needs. An extra dose of phosphorus and potassium, such as a bloom-booster or high-acid-type fertilizer, is beneficial.

Rossioglossum grande

Once known as *Odontoglossum grande*, this is a spectacular orchid with six to eight flowers up to 8 inches across. Often known as the tiger orchid, it has bright golden yellow flowers heavily marked with chestnut brown barring. The plants are beautiful with a grey-green cast to the foliage, which is borne on succulent pseudobulbs. It prefers hot and wet summers with cooler, even down to 40 F, dry winters. Grow under filtered light. Watch for snails and slugs that eat the flowers, pseudobulbs and leaves.



The AOS thanks Ned Nash and James Rose for this essay. Edited essay from the AOS.org website.



American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.
Affiliated Society

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 Margaret Croucher 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

September 19-20, 2026. "Orchids by the Lake"
Lake Mirror Auditorium, 121 South Lake Avenue
Lakeland, FL

January 30-31, 2027, Florida West Coast Orchid Society's "A Rainbow of Orchids", Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg Recreation Center, 7901 30th Avenue North, St Petersburg, FL.

January 15-17, 2027, Tamiami International Orchid Show, Miami-Dade County Fair Expo Center (Fuchs Pavilion, 10901 SW 24th St., Miami, FL.

AOS Greenhouse Chats: Must register online at AOS@org/orchids/webinars

Wednesday, October 7th 8:30-9:30 EST

Tuesday November 10th, 8:30-9:30 EST

Join Dr. Ron McHatton as he answers your questions about all things orchids. Please send your question and pictures to Sandra Svoboda at greenhouse-chat@aos.org two days prior to event.

ANYONE FOR THE TAMIAMI ORCHID SHOW IN 2027???

Carolyn Anderson has made contact with the promoters of next year's Tamiami Orchid Show. The dates are January 15-17, 2027. We'll be planning another bus trip but all of the information is not yet available. We do know entry is free and we'll be paid 50 cents per mile to offset the cost of the bus trip. However, we still don't have a price for the bus. Anyone considering going to the show should mark their calendar now!

2026 PCOS OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Laura Blackmon

VICE PRESIDENT Tom Dixon

TREASURER Charis Gaines

SECRETARY Tammy Cheng

DIRECTORS

Lois Fletcher (2026)

Wanda Morales (2026)

Karen Chandler (2026-27)

Bruce Tatje (2026-27)

PAST PRESIDENT Margaret Croucher

BE PART OF THE TEAM

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