

# THE HOUSTON HAPPENINGS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Houston Orchid Society, Houston, Texas

## Reminder: Meeting on MONDAY January 5!

### Speaker: Don Garling

By John Stubbings, First Vice-President



**Home:** Born in Dayton, OH with stops in Flint, MI; Richmond, KY; Starkville, MS (it really was stark!); and Blacksburg, VA before ending up in Okemos, MI with wife Kris and two kids (both out of the house).

**Education:** B.S. Biology, University of Dayton, M.S. Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Ph.D. Mississippi State University, Zoology (Fisheries Option & Biochemistry minor).

**Profession:** Professor, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University. Extension specialist with program responsibilities in aquaculture, fisheries management, nuisance aquatic plant control, and home orchid growing.

**Hobbies and Special Interests:** Orchids and daylilies (before Hurricane Ike, he had 3500 seedlings in Bridge City, TX), home brewing, Sunbeam Alpines, photography, wood working, and reading.

**Orchid Related:** Past-president of the Greater Lansing Orchid Society (twice), GLOS Orchidist of the Year - 1994. A fully accredited orchid judge since 1991 and Chair of the AOS Great Lakes Center Judging Center since 11/2008. He has been a co-principle investigator on three funded orchid research projects and served on 4 M.S. committees in horticulture for students completing theses on flower induction in orchids. He has a courtesy extension appointment in Horticulture.

**Favorite Orchids:** P orchids, as in Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium, Phalaenopsis, Pleurothallids, Pretty, Puny, and Peculiar.

**Orchid Beginnings:** As a high school student, purchased orchid corsages for those "special" women in his life. Visited

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The Houston Orchid Society was established in 1945 and is a recipient of the AOS Distinguished Affiliated Societies Service Award.



the orchid collection at the Bogor Royal Botanical Gardens while on sabbatical in Indonesia ('86) and thought: "Too bad you can't grow these in Michigan!" His (actually Kris') first orchid was a gift from Don's cousin, who lives in a FEMA trailer for now in Bridge City, for a new bay window (also '86). When it survived, they slowly expanded their collection for two years, built an attached 17' X 21' lean-to greenhouse in 1990 which filled much quicker than expected. Spent second sabbatical in Hawaii ('94) where co-workers thought he was working with shrimp and fish instead of continuing his orchid training at the AOS Judging Center on Oahu.

**Orchid Talk:** Like many orchid growers, Don occasionally had problems with critters on his orchids. Out of self defense, he researched and tested many home remedies and other cures for orchid pests and diseases. He used those results to develop "Magic Potions, Home Remedies, and Other Orchid Pest Control Methods." He has presented this talk in 9 states and 2 Canadian provinces.

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## President's Post

By Holly Miller, President

I hope each of you has had a nice holiday and I wish you a Happy New Year.

I am honored and happy to be your President for 2009. I walked in the door a little over five years ago owning 11 orchids and hoping to learn how to grow them. It was a usual meeting with a lot going on - raffle plants, silent auction, refreshments, the plant table, a speaker and a lot of people talking to each other. I walked out that night with a raffle plant, thinking, "These people are crazy!" Needless to say, I was back for more the next month and I joined the society. A year later, I was asked to chair the raffle table and when telling my mother about it, she said, "You'll be running the place before you know it." I told her, "Oh no. I'm not going to get that involved!" Well, here I am, hoping to fulfill your expectations. I guess my mother knows me - but that's not my point here - my point is that I did get that involved because it's fun, I've made good friends and in the process of working together with people, I've learned a lot more than I would have by just sitting in meetings.

We have a lot of opportunities this year for everyone to get involved. The first major upcoming event is our Spring Show combined with the AOS meetings and those of a number of other organizations, in April. This is a rare opportunity and we want to show them some great Texas hospitality. If you haven't been asked to help and you want to, just let me know. John Stubbings is working on a great speaker program for our meetings and we also have our Summer Workshop in August and the Picnic in October.

## Houston Judging Center

By Margaret Putman

### HJC Results - December 20, 2008 -.

There were 16 plants entered for judging, 14 pulled for further evaluation and 3 awarded:

1. Dtps. Shiuhdong Sweetheart 'Jumbo Ruby' (Sunrise Halobird x Taisuco Firebird) HCC 77 points, owned by Clown Alley Orchids, Pasadena, TX
2. Bulbophyllum micropetalum 'Vera Cruz' (species), provisional CBR, owned by David Hunt, Houston, TX
3. Epidendrum chlorops 'Vera Cruz' (species), provisional CBR, owned by David Hunt, Houston, TX

There were 13 Accredited Judges, 2 Probationary Judges and 2 Student Judges present with 27 persons attending. The next regular judging will be held January 17, 2009 in Jerabeck Center, University of St. Thomas, 2000 Mt. Vernon St., Houston, TX. It is requested that all plants be entered before 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched prior to judging.

## December Meeting was a Great Success!



Photograph by Malcolm McCorquodale III

Deana Roberts, our outgoing president, as one of her last acts presented thank you gifts to those members who served as officers and committee chairs during 2008. It is, as always, amazing to see the number of people who are actively supporting the society by their work. Almost the whole stage was full!



Photograph by Malcolm McCorquodale III

Incoming president, Holly Miller, presented Deana with a paperweight with the HOS logo in thanks for her work in 2008.

Marvin Gerber was the auctioneer for the HJC Auction and has indicated that the total raised was approximately \$1,100. This is not as much as prior years, but a good amount for the center.

## American Orchid Society 2009 Calendars

will be available at the January 5, 2009 HOS meeting for \$10 -- a savings for HOS members. Purchased from the AOS Web site, cost is \$12.95 plus shipping and handling.

## Mites

By Susan Jones

Mites are almost-microscopic creatures, closely related to ticks, spiders and scorpions. Because of their size, their presence is usually not suspected until considerable damage has occurred. Mite damage makes a plant's leaves look silvery, especially on the underside, where the pests have killed the cells of the surface layer. From the top, the leaf often has many tiny yellow spots that turn brown over time. Spider mites also spin silken webs on the undersides of leaves. These are easy to see if you mist the foliage with water and hold the plant up to the light. You might even see the tiny mites walking along their webs. False spider mites do not make silk, and are extremely tiny and hard to see, but they produce the same silvering of the leaves.



Red Spider Mites live up to their name; they do make webs.

A good way to tell if you have mites is to wipe a white cloth or tissue over both sides of a leaf of a plant suspected of mite infestation. If mites or their eggs are present, reddish or brownish streaks will be seen on the cloth. Another test is to tap a leaf over a piece of white paper and see if any of the dislodged particles move. A good magnifying glass is recommended with this test.

Mites can severely weaken plants, as well as disfiguring them. Mites damage orchids by removing sap and chlorophyll with their needlelike mouthparts. It is this withdrawal of chlorophyll that results in the characteristic blanching and silvery appearance of the leaf. Their sap sucking can also cause bruised-looking areas on flowers. Because of their feeding style, they are also potential vectors of diseases

### Life Cycle

The adult female lays one large (for her) egg at a time, which hatches into a tiny nymph. After molting a few more times, the adult stage is reached again. The life cycle speeds up under warm conditions; adult to adult takes only a week at high temperatures.

When colonies become overcrowded, winged forms appear, to fly to establish new colonies. The insects can cycle continuously under greenhouse conditions, their rate of development affected only by temperature.

*Continued on Page 4*

## It is an Orchid Convention!

By Carol Holdren, AOS Affiliated Society  
Committee, [cjholdren@gmail.com](mailto:cjholdren@gmail.com)

Take my advice and get your room reservation now--I have mine!--for the April 22-26, 2009 Houston Orchid Society Orchid Show, "Orchids, Texas Style". You can go to the HOS web site [www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org) and download all of the details. There is a discount for registering early--for \$80 you can go to all of the lectures, the orchid show and the preview party. If you have never been to an orchid show preview party this is one part of the fun you won't want to miss. One of my orchid friends says there is nothing better than walking around looking at orchids with a glass of wine. The preview party, Thursday April 23 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM, also gives you first chance at buying from the vendors.

This is really an orchid convention for everyone it will be at the Hilton Houston North; you can fly in to IAH and take a 20 minute shuttle to the hotel where you will get the special rate of \$115.

If you are an AOS judge then you will want to go to the judges' forum Wednesday April 22 from 8:00-10:00 PM and the judges' breakfast, Saturday April 25 from 7:30-9:00 AM.

Everyone interested in orchid societies is invited to the Affiliated Society Breakfast on Friday April 24 from 7:30 to 8:45 AM. If you are an AOS Rep or on the board of an Affiliated Society we really hope you will come to this breakfast and introduce yourself to your Affiliated Society Committee members. In fact we hope one person from every AOS Affiliated Orchid Society will come to this show and then give a report to their society.

There are fabulous lectures, wonderful displays and vendors selling all kinds of orchids and orchid related items (think orchid jewelry, orchid pots, special fertilizers, etc). With full registration you can come and go as you please wearing a nametag making you a part of the convention.

On Saturday morning, April 25 from 9:00 to 10:45 AM the AOS will have its Annual Meeting of Members. AOS members are welcome to attend and hear the reports from officers of the organization.

The American Orchid Society is not the only orchid group meeting in Houston, the Southwest Regional Orchid Growers Association, International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Orchid Digest Corporation, Odontoglossum Alliance and the Slipper Orchid Alliance will also be there. You can see - Houston and "Orchids, Texas Style" is the place to be in April if you have any interest in orchids.

For more information and a registration form visit the web site at [www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org) Melba and Jim Butler, Co-Chairs [melbajim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melbajim@sbcglobal.net)



## Culture Q&A

*HOS Culture Q&A Panel: Ted Baenziger, Jay Balchan, Dolores Fields, Joe Fields, Marvin Gerber, Renee Gerber, Doug Harris, Rick Hepler, Julius Klehm, Nina Rach, and Greg Scott.*

**Q: My Phal has fungus in the bottom of the pot, what fungicide should I use. And what are the steps I should take to save this plant?**

**A:** not sure what "fungus in the bottom of the pot" means... If you are referring to something growing on the pot itself, then just repot the plant into fresh mix, not a big deal. But if you are referring to some type of rot in the plant itself, then that is a much bigger issue. Typically rots are bacterial, not fungal, so a pure fungicide will not do much good. But often fungicides also control bacterias. You need to look at the label. If you have a bacterial rot, then remove any affected areas and treat with something like Benlate. I like to mix Benlate with Consan into a paste and then apply to the affected area. If you have crown rot in a phal, a little prayer won't hurt either. - Jay

**A:** Take the plant out of the pot, wash the roots with fresh water, you might spray some 10% Consan on the roots. Repot the plant in a sterilized pot. If the pot with the fungus is worth re-using, clean it up and sterilize it with a 10% Clorox solution. Then soak it overnight in fresh water to remove the Clorox fumes. - Marvin

**A:** AhFirst of all, do you mean there are mushrooms peeping out of the drainage hole? If so, repot.

Secondly, if you mean white stuff on the outside of the pot, it is probably salt, not fungus, which 'grows' on the bottom of the pot because of too much fertilizer, and the fact that our water is high in mineral content. The answer is to rinse the outside very well, flush the salts out, and if it is still unsightly, repot.

Thirdly, all wild orchids have fungus in thier roots because they cannot sprout without being in direct communication with a mushroom which provides nutrients for the embryonic plant, before it develops chlorophyll. If your plant is a hybrid, it probably came out of a sterile container, without fungus, that had nutrients in an agar-agar solution. When it sits outside in Houston humidity and warmth, the bark chips we use for medium can develop a white coating of fungus that is harmless to the plant.

A fourth possibility is that your fungus is black, in which case it is not fungus but dark green algae that grows on the outer surface of humid surfaces and can be quite slimy looking. It is harmless but can be rinsed off. In other words, you do NOT need a fungicide. If the plant is not doing well, take it out of the pot and rinse it off carefully with regular tepid water, then soak the roots in a solution of one to ten bleach (one cup to ten cups water) for ten minutes, then repot in new medium (and new pot, if you like). Phals love to be repotted, and will not be shocked even while in bloom (but do not bleach the flowers, please!) - Fr. Ted

**Mites** (Continued from Page 3)

In the autumn, females begin producing a few males. Females born at the same time have eggs within their bodies; they mate and lay the eggs to provide next season's offspring.

**Types of Mites**

*Brevipalpus californicus* The first observable injury from this mite feeding on orchid leaves appears as silvery areas that eventually become sunken and brown. Heavily infested leaves will become yellow and drop from the plants. Individuals of *B. californicus* are difficult to see because they lie flat against the leaf and move slowly; however, populations can be detected by the presence of cast skins.

Phalaenopsis mite (*Tenuipalpus pacificus*) This is one of the false spider mites, which do not spin webs. This mite is a pest in California, Florida, Panama and some European countries. Feeding by these mites causes dark spots on leaves and eventual tissue death. This mite has a slow development; the incubation period requires 18 to 23 days, and each of the developmental stages 14 to 15 days; therefore, the life cycle is at least 64 days.

Two-spotted Spider Mite, also known as the Red Spider Mite (*Tetranychus urticae*) These mites are greenish-yellow, wingless, eight-legged creatures with a dark spot on each side of their bodies. As day lengths shorten in the autumn, they become deep red in color. As their population builds, you will start to see webs and aggregations of mites at certain sites, usually the growing points of the plant. They feed on leaf undersides and suck the chlorophyll out of plant cells. These mites thrive when plants are stressed under warm, dry conditions, but they are less of a problem under conditions of high humidity. Two-spotted spider mites are most often found on new growth and on thin-leaf orchids.



Mites can multiply quickly during warm, dry conditions and get out of control before you even notice them.

An adult female two-spotted spider mite will lay three to five eggs per day on the underside of leaves. Each adult female can produce more than 100 eggs in three weeks. They reproduce at alarming rates: 10 spider mites in May are capable of becoming 1,000 by June and 100,000 by July. Part of this equation is because the egg incubation and adolescent-to-adult periods are drastically reduced as temperature increases. Egg to adult takes about 14 days at 70 F, or less than a week at 86 F. As temperatures increase, what started out as a small population of mites can become a major infestation in just a few days.

To make matters worse, red spider mites can overwinter without feeding and emerge in the spring and summer to reinfest plants, although artificial lighting may stop the mites from hibernating, making control easier.

### General Prevention

To minimize orchid pest problems, implement such cultural management strategies as prevention, sanitation and plant inspection. Proper cultural conditions, such as the correct amount of water, temperature, light, fertility and humidity, minimize potential pest problems. Be sure to know the cultural practices specific to the orchids being grown.

Sanitation is another strategy to prevent orchid pest problems. Remove all plant debris and old potting medium. Also, remove old leaf sheaths to eliminate hiding places for pests. Inspect plants on a regular basis by looking underneath leaves to check for spider mites.

### Methods of Control

The first line of defense against mites is to raise the humidity in the growing environment. Mites are usually most severe on plants in heated greenhouses or in the home during the winter, when the air is quite dry and there are no natural enemies to keep them under control. Washing the plants thoroughly, wiping every leaf, is one way to bring the population down. Because mites feed by sucking the sap from individual cells of the surface of the leaves, and plant sap is very dilute, mites must consume a lot of sap to get the nutrients they need, and get rid of all the water they do not need. Therefore, they do better when the air is dry, as it is easier for them to get rid of the water.

If the time of year allows, put the plants outside - the natural enemies in the garden plus the more difficult environment will usually sort out the problem.

Another option is biological control. Predatory mites are released onto the infested plants, where they eat harmful mites. This strategy works well only if your mite population is not too large for the predators to catch up. Consult biological control supplier catalogs for natural enemies available for each type of mite. One word of caution: if you are using biological controls to eliminate mite populations, do not use chemical pesticides as they will kill the beneficial mites, too.

Most insecticides have little effect on mites, but a number of chemicals (called acaricides or miticides) are developed specifically for mite control. These are useful in controlling large populations of mites. Use these chemicals with care, and do your spraying cautiously, so that you get the

maximum effect. Be aware that some insecticides and miticides cannot be used on orchids. Many materials have not been tested on orchids, so try any material on a small group of plants - especially when they are in flower - before exposing the entire collection to a new chemical.

Another less-exotic and much cheaper method of control involves a pint of 409 household cleaner and a pint of rubbing alcohol mixed with water to make 1 gallon of spray. This method is especially effective as a preventative or to control light infestations. For any miticide, homemade or purchased, apply a heavy coating, especially to the underside of leaves. Reapply every three to four days for six to eight applications. This will ensure that both the adults and hatching young are eliminated.

### References

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Pest Problems Explained: Red Spider Mite (two-spotted mite). Defenders, Safe, Effective Natural Biological Pest Control for Gardeners. Defenders Ltd., Kent, United Kingdom. ([http://www.defenders.co.uk/red\\_spider\\_mite.html](http://www.defenders.co.uk/red_spider_mite.html)).

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President's Post (Continued from Page 2)

We have seven Newcomers who have volunteered to chair and co-chair committees for the first time this year! Please join me in welcoming them, along with the returning volunteers. The 2009 committee chairs and co-chairs are listed on the last page of this newsletter and will be introduced at the January meeting.

I'm looking forward to a good year - I hope you are too. Don't forget to renew your membership - the deadline is the end of this month.

## HOS Membership Renewals for 2009

It's that time of year. Memberships to the HOS run from January through December. Please fill out the enclosed membership form and bring it to the next meeting along with your check to renew!



**HEART O' TEXAS ORCHID  
SOCIETY'S  
38th ANNUAL SHOW &  
PLANT SALE**

Heart O' Texas Orchid Society  
Invites you to attend

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, February  
7th & 8th, 2009**  
Zilker Botanical Garden Center  
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Show & Plant Sale: 10:00am -  
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Sunday  
Admission: Free  
Public is encouraged to attend!

Information:  
Geoffrey Frost (512) 413-3199  
web-site: [www.hotos.org](http://www.hotos.org)

**Welcome New Members**

Vicki and Steve Hansen  
Tan Tran and Minh Tuyet Nguyen  
Devan Sewell

**Welcome Guests**

Clifford Leguspi  
Rommel Marquez

Thanks to Everyone for  
Refreshments

**Just a Little Shady Spot  
Needed!**

We need volunteers with six square feet with 70-80% shade to to grow 45 to 50 orchids so we can transplant grown out plants back into the Texas forests and thereby make sure our children have a chance to see them in the wild.

This is the next phase in our Cyp restoration project and we are sadly lacking people who have the time and space to hel out. No experience required, but a real commitment required. The plants have to be watered on a regular basis. Say every two days in spring and fall, perhaps daily in the midst of our rather warm summers.

So far we have homes for only about 250 out of 1,000 seedlings so help out on this important conservation initiative.

**Free Orchid Pots**

Contact Glynda Friedrich 281.447.7165  
Hwy 45 no. at West Mt. Houston

## Committee Bulletins

### **Newcomers Group**

Chair: Jeane Schwenke [schwenke@atlascsusa.com](mailto:schwenke@atlascsusa.com)

Our first Newcomers meeting for 2009 will be Sunday, January 18th at the home of Rick Hepler, 2505 Mary Avenue, Pearland, TX 77581. Maps will be provided at the January meeting. Rick specializes in slipper orchids. Even if you don't grow slipper orchids yet, you won't want to miss this chance to observe such a well established greenhouse, and to learn a few growing tips from a dedicated hobbyist with a remarkable success record.

I'd like to ask our general membership to keep the Newcomers in mind if you cull your collections. We gladly accept all donations; all orchids are good practice for us. Just give me a call or drop me an e-mail anytime, and I'll be pleased to come pick up your donations for our Newcomers meetings. I'm also looking for volunteers to host our meetings for 2009. If you would be so kind to welcome us to visit your greenhouse or growing area for a couple of hours one Sunday this year, please let me know

### **Intermediate Group**

Chair: Debbie Peterson [dpeterson@avalonadvisors.com](mailto:dpeterson@avalonadvisors.com) 281-890-0811; Co-chair: Calvin Starr 281-482-5589  
[calvin@kr5e.com](mailto:calvin@kr5e.com)

The Intermediate Group has started up again for 2009. We plan on doing some intense orchid research in this group. We will be having a planning meeting on January 11th 1PM at Clown Alley ([www.clownalleyorchids.com](http://www.clownalleyorchids.com)) to decide the when, where's & what to do in the group. Members who have already signed up should be aware of this meeting already. At the February 5th HOS meeting the details will then be announced. You can join our group if you have been a member of the Houston Orchid Society for more than two years. If you would like to join us, please contact Debbie or Calvin.

### **Raffle Table**

Chair: Mary Gunn, Sylvia Dekmezian, Amy Colville

The Raffle Table for October will feature plants from Carmela Orchids in Hakalau, Hawaii. Many of you know Sheldon and Grace as they are regular vendors at our annual Orchid Shows. Established in 1960, Carmela Orchids provides beautiful orchids to both wholesale and retail customers worldwide. They grow, hybridize and clone all varieties of orchids including cattleyas, dendrobiums, phalaenopsis, oncidiums and vandas and are known for their high standards of quality and for satisfied customers. They specialize in phalaenopsis breeding and in cloning, and offer orchids at every stage of development - from tiny baby plants to mature, blooming plants. They have a great website with lots of gorgeous pictures on the web at [www.carmelaorchids.net](http://www.carmelaorchids.net) <<http://www.carmelaorchids.net/>> and can be reached by phone at: (808) 963-6189.

We are excited about handling the HOS raffle table this year and one of our goals is to provide a wide variety of plants that will appeal to everyone. Carmela always provides lovely plants. Be sure to stop by our table to get your free ticket(s) for the door prize and while you are there please buy some raffle tickets to help us get off to a jump start for 2009. We need your participation to make the raffle a success!

## Houston Orchid Society 2009 Officers and Committee Chairs

### **Officers**

<i>President</i>	Holly Miller
<i>1st Vice President</i>	John Stubbings
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	John Jamerlan
<i>Membership</i>	Katherine Brown
<i>Recording Sec.</i>	Claudia Hanson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jill Smith

### **Chairs**

<i>Guest Hospitality</i>	Allan Davies
<i>Happenings Editor</i>	Susan Taylor
<i>Librarian</i>	Sarah Bentley
<i>Newcomers Group</i>	Jean Schwenke, Judith & Loren Neufeld
<i>Intermediate Group</i>	Debbie Peterson, Calvin Starr
<i>Parliamentarian</i>	Marvin Gerber
<i>Photography</i>	Malcolm McCorquodale III
<i>Plant Raffle</i>	Mary Gunn, Sylvia Dekmezian, Amy Colville
<i>Refreshments</i>	Noreen Tolman, Ken Gardner, Eddie Mitchell, Will Litchfield
<i>Silent Auction</i>	Lee and Gordon Rowell
<i>2009 Spring Show</i>	Melba and Jim Butler
<i>HOS Web</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>2008 Workshop Chair</i>	Ted Baenziger and John Stubbings

### **Directors**

<i>Two-Year Term</i>	<i>One-Year Term</i>
Donna Williams	Jeff Bradley
Joe Fields	Greg Scott
Ted Baenziger	Dave Hunt
Don Ghiz	Johnny Williams
Calvin Starr	Sandra Higham
Doug Harris	Dolores Fields
Loren Neufeld	Marvin Gerber

### **Representatives**

AOS Representative	Jim Butler
IPA Representative	John Stubbings
ODC Representative	Joe Fields
SWROGA Representative	Julius Klehm and Marilyn Holloway

**Houston Orchid Society**  
*January 2009 Meeting*

Program: Don Garling  
Orchid Pest Control Methods

Date: January 5, 2009  
Time: 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Place: Houston Garden Center

**2009 Speakers**

January – Don Garling, Orchid Pest Control Methods

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

**HOS Website**

[www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org)

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**Houston Orchid Society**  
*The Houston Happenings*  
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