The Houston Happenings

The time is here for our 2019 Show!!

Our April HOS meeting on Thursday, April 4 will be at the Memorial City Mall where we will be having a Show Set-up PARTY!

Please plan on showing up after 6pm. We will be in the same location as last year - the large court directly in front of Dillard’s and we will be providing dinner!!

Many thanks in advance for all that you will do in support of your Show! We still have need for a few volunteers for the HOS table and the Children’s table.

If you wish to clerk during ribbon judging, just show up at 6:30 at the exhibits.

If you are not putting in your own exhibit, please bring in your blooming plants for display in the HOS exhibit. There are lots of ribbons and trophies that can be won!!

Please let Holly or Jay know if you have any questions.

Following is the current schedule of events:

* Thursday, April 4, 2018
  - 6:00 P.M. – 10pm+ Large Vendor and Exhibit Setup
  - Friday, April 5, 2018
    - 7:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M. Large Vendor and Exhibit Setup
    - 10:00 AM – 4:00 P.M. Plant Registration / small setup (arranging plants)
  - 4:00 P.M. Deadline for Registration
    - 5:00 P.M. Judges’ Dinner
    - 6:30 P.M. Ribbon & AOS Judging
  - Saturday, April 6, 2018
    - 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Show Exhibits and Plant Sales
  - Sunday, April 7, 2018
    - 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. Show Exhibits and Plant Sales
    - 4:00 P.M. Dismantle and Clean up

The Houston Orchid Society
Annual Show & Sale
April 6-7, 2019
Dillard’s Court (Within The Mall)
Saturday 9 AM - 5 PM
Sunday 11 AM - 4 PM
www.houstonorchidsociety.org
April Tips  
By Father Ted Baenziger

Hey, everybody, let’s do a show! The Houston Orchid Society is really busy this first week of April and we all need to lend a hand, in some way or another. I’ll be there for the set-up, the identification of species and hybrids, the classification of them in the “schedule”, so people can get ribbons and trophies; and then I’ll be judging, guiding visitors and finally, breaking down the exhibits with you. Please be there and volunteer. Afterwards you can read the rest of this article…

Our tips this month have nothing to do with any of that, except if something spills an orchid on the floor at the exhibits. What am I talking about? The MEDIA, plural media, that we use for orchids. The stuff in those pots the orchids grow in, on, and sometimes out of...

There is only one truly aquatic orchid - Habenaria repens, pictured below.

Terrestrial orchids, like our native Cyripedium kentuckiense (see picture at the bottom of first column), grow in duff, which is not mud, nor even dirt, but the layer of decomposing matter above the substrate, in this case a mixture of sand and leaf litter. Some terrestrials like very acid conditions and grow near swamps, like Pogonia species.

Others, like Paphiopedilum mala-poense above, from Southeast China, like it in broken down limestone and litter, while a whole group of orchid plants will only grow on rocks and these are called lithophytic. The terrestrials are very difficult for us because they may also depend on fungus for all their nutrients and we do not grow mushrooms very well, if at all; and lithophytes mean we have to water rocks, a lot!

No, most of our orchids are epiphyte, meaning they grow on something else, like a branch, a trunk, a twig, or among mosses and other plants on a substrate. One we know well is both terrestrial and epiphytic, Vanilla, called a hemiepiphyte, based in duff (feet on the floor) but reaching up into the branches with clasping roots, like arms with sticky fingers. Some of us have tried growing it, but it needs to be at least 15 ft. tall in order to bloom, and the flowers last exactly half a day.

So, let’s start with pots: Clay of Plastic. Advantages for each: clay is solid, re-useable (with scrub brush washing in a bleach solution) and “breathes”, that is, it dries out and cools the roots at the same time. The pots are stable on the bench unless the base is too small. Do not use tall, thin pots.

Plastic retains moisture better, but watch out for sogginess. It is also light and re-usable (soak and scrub). You can buy more sizes too, from thimble to gigantic and still lift them. I use one-pint, one-quart, half-gallon clear plastic that I cut the tops off and puncture for drainage: they last forever (five years) and the roots of many orchids like the light. You can see when the roots are happy. And, they can go into recycling afterwards. One disadvantage of all plastic is wind, since they tend to fall over regularly unless they are in a holder. A disadvantage of clay is that it can build up dangerous levels of salt and getting plants out to repot can be a real pain unless you smash them out. One thing to avoid is glazed pots because the roots grow out of the drainage holes and can never be removed without hammering the pot to smithereens: leave then for cachepots, not for growing.

Now for media, which I have pictured below:

From the top and clockwise: bark (this is Orchiata©); sponge rock or perlite, which looks white; two pieces of charcoal, and hard to see because it is black (not the kind for barbeque! We use agricultural or activated charcoal); one packing peanut (not green or pink, please); coconut husk; and finally, some stones.
April Tips, continued

Most people use bark as the medium in clay or plastic pots. Orchiata is superior to any I have found, as it lasts longer. Bark alone can be good for strong roots that are fast growing, but most people use a mix of bark and perlite, or sponge rock, with some charcoal. The latter is supposed to keep the mix “sweet”, i.e. not smelling bad, and it is true that activated charcoal can absorb some minerals and gases, and it does not break down as fast as bark. The former allows for a bit more humidity as it retains some water; it is also very cheap as a neutral filler (not adding pH but also helping to fill the pot). Stones, or chips of stones can be added for drainage and stability, but makes the pot heavier, and watch out for high alkaline or very acidic rocks.

Cork, which is a special kind of bark, can be used for mounting orchids (more on that in later tips), but wine corks are excellent as a bottom filler, especially red wine, as it contains some yummy compounds for the roots. Another bottom filler, besides rocks and corks, is the ubiquitous packaging peanut, made of Styrofoam. Do not use those made of corn, like popcorn or paper as they collapse into a soggy mess and interfere with the growth.

What about coir or COI (coconut fiber)! I mix it with sphagnum, but it can be used alone. In any case, it must be soaked and rinsed two or three times because it is processed in salt water, a poison to plants. The mix of half and half is what I use for Restrepia and they do very well in it.

Sphagnum moss, pictured at the top of the next column, gets a bad rap because a) it is hard to get wet and b) it is hard to get it to dry out. On the other hand, that is a perfect quality for seedlings and many orchids that like to keep their roots damp but not wet. Most Phalaenopsis in stores come to us in sphagnum, and often not of the highest quality. I’m showing you what I use and I am very pleased with it, but I do not wrap anything tightly in it, because it will retain water, when packed, for weeks! I wrap the roots loosely and place the plant in plastic over corks or peanuts so the roots can go where they want. It is most effective with Phals, but also with any orchid that looks stressed or has very few roots, as the sphagnum is very helpful for antibiotic conditions, besides providing a slightly acid medium. Paphiopedilum with no roots at all can start growing and be quite happy after you dip the end in rooting hormone and put them in sphagnum. Disadvantage: sphagnum moss only lasts one year with regular watering, so your store-bought Phals probably need to be repotted.

A precaution about sphagnum is that, dry, it can cause a very bad reaction if the powder gets into the lungs. Some propose that one should wear gloves and a mask. The risk is very small, and absolutely minimal if there is good air circulation and you don’t go sniffing the stuff. I have a bale of it and carefully take out as much as I want, putting it underwater so the dust does not float away. Wet the moss thoroughly until sopping wet, squeeze out as much water as possible, wrap the roots and voilà, it’s done. I wash my hands carefully. One could say that clay pots, filled with stone and a heavy orchid just is dangerous for your toes when wearing sandals. I believe it because I did it. Never again.

How to pot, when to pot, can you mount this or that orchid? That’s for next month, folks. Meanwhile, start with a reasonable goal and get that Phal in new medium sooner rather than later...

Just remember, you’re only as good as your roots!

Houston Judging Center

By Marilyn Holloway

There were 18 people present at the March 16th meeting of the Houston Judging Center. Randy Johnson, a student judge, gave an excellent program on Guaranthe. Our raffle plants were from Andy’s Orchids in Encintas, CA.

Eleven plants were entered and four awards were given.

Dennis Tomjack’s Johnlagerara Remar’s Logan ‘Nellie 2’ received an HCC of 79 points. The cross was Rcc. Midnight Magenta ‘Fine Wine’ X B. nodosa. The plant had six flat, stellate flowers and 18 buds held above the foliage on six strong, upright inflorescences.

Stephen Moffitt’s Fdk. (Fredclarkeara) Kimberley Ariel ‘Rare Earth Orchids’ earned an HCC of 77 points. It’s a cross between Mormodia Leopard Drops X Catasetum expansum. It had thirteen light rose-lavender flowers overlaid with burgundy-red spots that coalesced to bars. The lip margin was dentate.

Larry Baker from Pearland (Galveston Bay Orchid Society) entered an unregistered plant which was awarded an HCC of 76 points. The parents are Slc Final Touch x Ric Lynette & Alan. The two flowers had crimson sepals and petals, faintly veined red, and the petals had lightly ruffled margins.

The fourth award was given to Dendrobium Chocolate Chip ‘Harri’s Cuttie Pie’ which belongs to Harriet Davis. It earned an HCC of 76 points. The cross is Den. Microchip X Den. normanbyense. It had 21 well-arranged, nodding flowers on five inflorescences.

Monthly meetings of the Houston Judging Center are held the third Saturday of each month at the First Christian Church. The next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2019. Please bring your blooming plants by the cutoff time of 11:30 a.m. There will be a slide show by Dennis Tomjack of newly awards plants.

Unfortunately, pictures were not available in time for publication in the newsletter.
**April 2019**

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**HOS Workshop**

By Derek Lowenstein

Don’t forget to put the 2019 40th Consecutive HOS Workshop on your calendar, August 2-3, 2019. The workshop is being held at our usual monthly location at the First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd., Houston 77005. On Friday evening, August 2, bring in your plants for AOS judging. Plant sales will begin at 5PM and continue through Saturday, August 3. AOS judging begins at 5:30PM.

Come join us for dinner (your tab) and have an opportunity to speak with our presenters and HOS colleagues.

On Saturday, August 3, we will have Fred Clarke (Sunset Valley Orchids), Fr. Ted Baenziger and Stephen Moffit (Rare Earth Orchids) speak on Catasetinae species and hybrids and their allied genera. We will hold a silent auction, and Sunset Valley Orchids, Rare Earth Orchids and Orchids and Tropicals will be selling plants.

A light breakfast and lunch will be served on Saturday.

**Hold the date, have a great time, learn about orchids, and buy your favorites!**

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**The Bromeliad Society / Houston Inc. presents**

2019 **Show and Sale**

Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center  
2020 Hermann Drive  
Houston, TX 77004  
May 4-5, 2019

**Show hours**  
Saturday 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
Sunday 11:00 am to 3:00 pm  

**Sale hours**  
Saturday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Sunday 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

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**Refreshments**

By Lily Chang

There were quite a few people who brought refreshment the March HOS meeting. Thanks go to Melba and Jim Butler, Marianne Canevaro, Lily Chang, Kim Chau, Mary Rogge, Lim Dilger, Cherie and Frank Lee, Troy and Kim Merchant, Bill Raab, Robert and Reva Raschke, Kar Chong and Winnie Yap.

Our next meeting will be held at Memorial Mall to prepare for the show this weekend; however, we’ll need refreshments for the May meeting, so please be sure to bring to wow and dazzle us with your culinary skills!
March Plant Table

By Sarah Bentley

Just a reminder, the HOS Spring show will be held at Memorial City Mall. Address is 303 Memorial City Way, Houston TX 77024. and all members are asked to bring your flowering orchids there after 5pm on Thursday, March 4, to participate in the exhibit building fun! You will need to retrieve your plant(s) Sunday afternoon when the exhibit closes after 3 or 4pm.

There was a great showing of member grown plants at the March 2019 Houston Orchid Society meeting. The hybrid table was overflowing with more than 30 plants brought in by 14 members and the species table had 21 plants brought in by 14 members.

Thanks to everyone who voted for a favorite plant! There was a two-way tie for plants in the hybrid category. Tan Tran exhibited a stunning Dendrobium with multiple canes that were literally covered with large flowers with a delicate shading from yellow to white to purple on the edges of the petals. I’m guessing there were more than 50 or 60 blooms on this well grown plant.

The first thing I noticed with the hybrid plants was a delicious scent from the cattleya area. Further inspection (sniffing) led me to the other winner, the beautiful rich purple blossoms of the Blc Chia Lin owned by Jay Balchan. This plant, with a varietal name of “New City”, has received an “AM” designation from the American Orchid Society. The Award of Merit means this exact variety received 80 to 89 points on a scale of 100 points when it was evaluated by accredited AOS judges. An AOS flower quality award gives value to the orchid as well as recognizing its potential for hybridizing.

The species end of the table held a great variety of plants from around the world. A beautiful Dendrobium aggregatum, brought in by Scott Goedde, was winner of the popular vote for this category. It exhibited nearly a dozen bloom spikes which cascaded down from the basket of dark green foliage with myriad large yellow blooms with darker yellow throats. Truly, this plant reminds me of springtime!

No photos of the winners were available.
Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society
Meets the Third Sunday of each month
2:00pm, Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive
Visitors Welcome
www.tgcfernson.org

Bromeliad Society Houston
Meets Monthly on the
Third Tuesday of the month,
7:00 pm
West Gray Multi-Service Center
Visitors Welcome
www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

AOS WEBINARS

Greenhouse Chat with Ron McHatton
Tuesday, April 9, 2019
7:30-8:30pm

How to Grow Habenarias
Jim Heilig
Thursday, April 18, 2019
7:30-8:30pm
Member-only Webinar

Register

Register
Upcoming Events

April 6-7, 2019
Houston Orchid Society Show
Memorial City Mall, Dillard's Court
Houston, TX

April 12-14, 2019
Acadian Orchid Society Show
Ira Nelson Horticultural Center
2206 Johnston Street
Lafayette, LA 70503

April 12-13, 2019
Central Louisiana Orchid Society Show
Kees Park Community Center
Pineville, LA

May 17-19, 2019
Redlands International Orchid Festival
Redlands Fruit & Spice Park
Homestead, FL

May 31 – June 2, 2019
New Orleans Orchid Society Show
Lakeside Shopping Center
3301 Veterans Hwy
Metairie, LA

July 12-14, 2019
Baton Rouge Orchid Society Show
Burden Conference Center
4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge, LA

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VP - Shows
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Newcomers Group
Stephen and Tim Gallagher
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Don Ghiz
Photography
Malcolm McCorquodale
Plant Raffle
Brad Miller
Refreshments
Lily Chang
Silent Auction
Frank & Cherie Lee
Spring Show
Jay Balchan
Summer Workshop
Derek Lowenstein
Webmaster
Tom Durrett

Directors - One Year Term
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Steve Fox
Calvin Starr
Marianne Canevaro
Susan Dally
Stephen Moffitt
Ft. Ted Baenziger
Jay Balchan

Directors - Two Year Term

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Jay Balchan
IPA Representative
Father Ted Baenziger
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