

Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

October 2015

Next Meeting

Date: Sat., Oct. 10, 2015
Time: **1:30-4:00**
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Dennis Olivas
Topic: Specimen Plants



OK, admit it. You thought a specimen was when you have to pee into a cup for the doctor. Luckily, that's not what this month's talk is about! In the world of orchids, a specimen plant is one that is particularly large and beautiful, one that has made many new growths, so it is full of flowers.

How can you grow your orchids into specimen plants? This month, Dennis Olivas will tell you all about it. Now a California resident, Dennis was born in Hawaii on the island of Kauai. His first orchid

was a *Cattleya bowringiana* that was given to him by a neighbor when they divided the plant growing in a very large galvanized tub.

In 1980, Dennis moved to the mainland and swore off the orchid family, leaving thousands of Dendrobiums, Vandas and Cattleyas to his mom to care for. With no intention of growing another orchid, his biggest mistake was purchasing a *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* in 1981, from the Rod McLellan Company, known as 'Acres of Orchids'. Today, he tries to maintain a three thousand square foot greenhouse in Half Moon Bay and some cymbidiums in Pleasant Hill.

Dennis belongs to 14 orchid societies and has been President of the Peninsula Orchid Society, San Francisco Orchid Society, Diablo View Orchid Society, and the Santa Cruz Orchid Society. He is an accredited judge of the American Orchid Society.

Orchid Show Moves to June

The HOS Board of Trustees has voted to hold our annual orchid show on June 3-5, 2016. The location will move back to the Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium. The date change from August to June was prompted partly by the near-misses that we have had from hurricanes in the past few years (hurricane season peaks in August and September), and partly by concerns of some growers that they typically have little in bloom in August. It also would be nice to have the temperature a little cooler than it was at this past August's show.

Ben Oliveros remembers that in past years our show was held in April and other months, so hopefully the public will adapt to the change of date as they have in the past. But the main thing is that our commercial growers, whom we depend on for the show, are on board with the date change, and they are. We're excited at the prospect of seeing a whole new set of orchids in bloom at the show next year.



Paphiopedilum Macabre Contrasts 'Flirting Pink Lehua' HCC/AOS, exhibited by Lehua Orchids

2015 Calendar Correction

I was mortified to learn of an error in the 2015 Orchid Isle calendar that I created and that we sold at last year's orchid show: the month page for December is wrong! In the printed calendar, the month starts on Thursday, but it should start on Tuesday, making every day in December wrong.

I don't know how it happened (I used commercial software to create the pages), but the bottom line is: it's wrong and I apologize. I have prepared a corrected December page (see page 5 of this newsletter). If you have a 2015 Orchid Isle calendar, or you know somebody who does, please print page 5 and tape it over the original wrong page.

Please note that the new 2016 Orchid Isle calendar is correct; I have triple-checked all the dates. The only flaw that I know of in the new

calendar is the date of the 2016 Hilo Orchid Show. In the calendar it is marked in August, which was true at the time the calendar was composed, but the show date has now been changed to June 3-5 (see article on page 1).

Larry Kuekes



CALENDAR OF ORCHID EVENTS

Hilo Orchid Society meetings and AOS Judging are held at Kamana Senior Center, Hilo unless otherwise specified.

- Oct. 10 1:30 HOS Meeting
4:00 AOS Judging
- Oct. 24 Newcomers Tour in Puna (see article on page 3)
- Nov. 14 1:30 HOS Meeting
4:00 AOS Judging

Newcomers Tour In Puna

Everyone who has joined HOS in the past two years is automatically a member of the Newcomers Group. On Saturday October 24, Newcomers can visit Rick Kelley's property in Orchidland Estates located between Kea'au and Pahoia 20 miles south of Hilo. Note to other members: sorry, this event is for Newcomers only, to help welcome them into the orchid society.

Rick has mounted several hundred orchids in his ohia trees since moving here three years ago. He grows primarily cattleyas and vandas. This is a great opportunity to see how to grow orchids without a greenhouse or shade house. Most orchids are epiphytes that naturally grow in trees with their roots spreading ten feet in all directions. See how to fill your trees with orchids for years of trouble-free enjoyment. All Newcomers should receive an email with times and directions. If you have any questions, call Gail and George Crosthwaite at 238-2554. The



Rick Kelley with a vanda growing on one of his trees.

property has some steep trails and slippery conditions. Sturdy hiking shoes are required. Please, no sandals or flip-flops. No exceptions.

Orchid Stories

Going to Pot, Part 1: Fear of Potting

"If you move I strike, and if you do not move I strike," said Nagaina the cobra in Rudyard Kipling's *Rikki Tikki Tavi*. After my first few attempts at repotting orchids, followed by the plants' swift demise, I felt a similar dilemma. "If you repot us, we will die, and if you do not repot us, we will die," my plants silently reproached me. Since then I have learned how to repot without fear. Let me offer a few pointers to those who are afraid to repot.

Potting-On. This refers to repotting into a larger size pot. If the old pot is small and the plant has outgrown it, just remove the old pot, set into the new, larger pot and fill around it with new medium. This technique leaves the roots completely undisturbed and will not shock the plant. But you are just postponing the inevitable. This technique doesn't work for large pots. Sooner or later you will have to replace the old, broken-down medium.

A variation of this technique works well for plants that like to be on the dry side like *Brassavola nodosa*. When the plant has made a bunch of roots outside its pot, just enclose the whole thing, pot and



all, in a slightly larger pot, so the new roots are in the space between the two pots, with no medium. The roots dry quickly and the plant loves it.

When to Repot. You can't delay indefinitely. Eventually either the plant climbs over the pot edge or the mix breaks down into compost (usually after two or three years) and kills the roots. For cattleyas (and many other genera), the ideal time is when tiny new roots are just starting to grow from the leading shoot or rhizome. This is because in your gentle way you will probably cut, break, or mangle most of the old roots during repotting, and the rest will promptly rot. But the new roots will still grow and re-establish the plant. Paphiopedilums and phalaenopsis don't have a special time of year for repotting; you can repot any time they're not in bud or bloom.

Watering. Don't water for a couple of weeks after repotting. I know your gardener's instinct is to flood a transplanted plant, but don't. This gives all those broken roots a chance to heal so they won't rot. Almost all orchids have succulent pseudobulbs or leaves and can easily survive a couple of dry weeks.

Next Time: the pros and cons of different potting mixes.

Larry Kuekes

Pictures From the Show

We have created a new gallery on the HOS website for pictures from the 2015 Hilo Orchid Show. Do you have some photos of the show that you'd like to contribute? Please email them to Larry Kuekes at lkuekes@me.com. Here are a few of the gallery photos. To see more, go to www.hiloorchidsociety.org and click on the Galleries menu.



Left: Ben Oliveros and Donna Barr looking at the HOS exhibit during ribbon judging.

Right: What happens if you cross a Vanda and a woman? You get Karen Kimmerle's magical Island Sun Orchids exhibit.



Left: Lottie Haspe showing off her great-grandson and her exhibit.



Right: Fred and Linda Levine modeling Wahine Toa designs in the fashion show.

Tolumnia (Golden Sunset x Elfin Gem). This miniature flower is only an inch high, but the plant makes many flowers and each one packs a punch.

December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Pearl Harbor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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