



# Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

October  
2024

## Next Meeting

**Date:** Saturday, October 12, 2024  
**Time:** 1:30 Informal "talk story"  
2:00 Meeting starts  
**Place:** Kamana Senior Center,  
127 Kamana St., Hilo  
**Speaker:** Alan Koch  
**Topic:** What's New in Miniature  
Cattleyas

Alan Koch owns Gold Country Orchids in California, where he specializes in growing and breeding miniature and compact Cattleyas. Alan started growing orchids in 1969 with three Cymbidiums given to him by an aunt. While in college he became interested in other orchids and discovered that many would grow outdoors in southern California.

Over the years Alan has moved five times as his orchid obsession has grown. With his last move, he purchased 10 acres in Lincoln, California, near Sacramento, where he grows 250,000 orchids.

He is recognized as an expert in the Brazilian Cattleya alliance and as a trend setter in miniature and compact Cattleya breeding.

Alan has been published in Orchids magazine and Orchid Digest. He is an accredited AOS judge and has served as an AOS Trustee as well as the Orchid Digest Board of Directors.

Alan's talk will cover not only his own work, but what has been going on around the world in miniature Cattleyas. Don't miss it!



## Sign Up for the Holiday Party

There will be no regular meeting in December. Instead, we're holding our annual Holiday Party and Auction on Sat., Dec. 14 at the Hilo Yacht Club.

The event includes a delicious buffet lunch, followed by an auction of donated plants, where you have the chance to obtain some special orchids and benefit your Society at the same time.

You must sign up and pay in advance. The price is \$25 per person for HOS members, and \$60 per person (the actual cost of the meal) for non-members. If you want to bring your spouse/partner and you have an individual membership, you can upgrade to a joint (family) membership for only \$5, to avoid paying the \$60 non-member cost for your spouse/partner.

You can sign up at the October or November meeting. If you miss the meeting, instructions for how to sign up are in the email that accompanies this newsletter.



## Orchid Isle 2025

Our Orchid Isle 2025 calendar (above) features orchids grown by our members right here on the Orchid Isle. They make great Christmas gifts for friends and family. We will be selling them at our October and November meetings.

## Beginners Corner

### Going to Pot, Part 4

#### Divide and Conquer

So you're repotting one of your orchids. Should you divide it at the same time? Like everything, it depends.

*Monopodial* orchids such as *Phalaenopsis* keep growing upward, not across the pot, so they never need to be divided. *Sympodial* orchids such as *Cattleyas* have rhizomes that grow sideways across the pot. Don't divide them before they reach flowering size; just keep potting them into bigger pots as needed. After they reach flowering size, though, you can't keep potting them in bigger and bigger pots forever. Eventually they need to be divided or trimmed back.

**Just a trim?** First check to see whether, by chopping off a few of the oldest pseudobulbs, the plant will fit back into the same size pot with room to grow for a couple more years. This is often the best option if the plant only has one lead (active growth).

If the plant has multiple leads that have grown in different directions, it may not be possible to fit it back in the same size pot (see upper photo). If there are many leads and the plant is compact, you may want to put it in a bigger pot and grow it into a showy "specimen" plant. Otherwise, consider dividing the plant into multiple, more compact plants.

The next step is to determine where to cut the rhizome to get the size pieces that you want. How big should the divisions be? Each division should generally have least 3 pseudobulbs, including at least one active growth, in order for it to be flowering size. A smaller division will live, but it may take a while to grow back to flowering size.

**Cut to the chase.** How do you divide the plant? Let's assume that you've already removed the plant

from the pot and removed the old medium (we'll talk more about that process next time). Once you've determined where to cut, just cut the rhizome with a sterilized knife and gently pull the pieces apart to disentangle the roots (see bottom photo). Before using the knife on another plant, make sure to sterilize it, either with a flame such as a propane torch, or by dipping it in a saturated solution of trisodium phosphate (TSP). This prevents spreading virus from one plant to another.



**Back to the future.** After dividing, you may have some older pseudobulbs, not attached to an active growth, left over. These are called backbulbs. As long as they're green and haven't rotted, even if they have no leaves, they can produce a new plant. Just put the backbulb into an empty pot in a semi-shaded location and sprinkle it with water from time to time.

(Some authorities tell you to put the backbulb in a plastic bag, but every time I tried that, it rotted. I prefer the empty pot technique.) If the bulb still has any dormant growth buds, a new growth will eventually sprout and make roots, at which time you can pot it into normal medium. A backbulb may take a few years to grow into a flowering-size plant. Don't feel guilty about throwing the backbulbs away, if you have no use for all those extra plants.



**Too many orchids?** Even without backbulbs, if you divide all your orchids, you'll have twice as many plants. What to do with them? Give them to friends. Sell them at

HOS meetings. Donate them to our Orchid Isle project (see Ellen Train) or to be mounted at the zoo (see Eric Guttormsen).

Next time: the joy of potting.

Larry Kuekes



**September Show and Tell Table** Photos by Dana Culleney



Bulbophyllum (Crown Point x fascinator) grown by Jeff Fendenz



Paph. (In Charm Topaz x Hsinying Gold)



Potinara Memoria Yoshi Tsubaki 'Supreme'



No-name Brassidium or Miltassia



## August AOS Awards

Photos by Glen Barfield



Left: *Cattleya jenmanii* h.f. *semi-alba* 'Sweet!' FCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros  
Right: *Rhynchothechea* Jim Wallace 'Envy' HCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros



Left: *Bracidostele* Raspberry Stars 'Red Hot Mama' HCC/AOS, grown by Okika  
Right: *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Little Mike 'Orchid Eros' FCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros

# September AOS Awards

Photos by Glen Barfield



Left: *Cattleya* Laura Newton 'Lues Blue Stars' AM/AOS, grown by GLA Orchids  
Right: *Cattleya* Martian 'Freckles' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros



Left: *Cattleya* Truford's Cat 'Pouty Lips' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros  
Right: *Tolumnia* (Spanish Dancer x pulchella) 'Lues Hot Skirt' AM/AOS, grown by GLA Orchids



Left: *Cattleya* Truford's Cat 'Button Nose' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros  
Right: *Paph.* Odette's Shadow 'Slipper Zone Next Time' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids





Left: *Paph.* Fred's Barbie 'Slipper Zone Add On' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids  
Right: *Paph.* Fred's Barbie 'Slipper Zone Monster' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



*Paph.* Sandra's Helen Maha 'Slipper Zone Triple Play' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paph.* Sandra's Helen Maha 'Slipper Zone Charm' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids  
Right: *Paph.* Sandra's Helen Maha 'Slipper Zone Double Play' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Bulbophyllum othonis* 'Matty's Sunshine' CCM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids  
Right: *Dracula psittacina* 'Demigorgon' HCC/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids



Left: *Cattleya* Mrs. Mahler 'Wide Open' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros  
Right: *Cycnoches cooperi* 'Heart of Darkness' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros

## Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

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