



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

December
2024

Note: In lieu of a December meeting, we're holding our annual Holiday Party. The deadline for reservations is past – sorry, we can't take any more!

Date: Sat., December 14, 2024
Time: 11:00 Doors open to talk story
11:45 Luncheon
1:00 Auction
Place: Hilo Yacht Club
77 Laehala St., Hilo
(see map and directions on page 7)
Program: Holiday Party and Auction

Holiday Party and Auction

There will be no regular meeting in December. Instead, we're holding our annual Holiday Party and Auction on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Hilo Yacht Club. Only those who signed up and paid in advance can be admitted. There is a dress code – see the article at right.

The event features a social hour and sumptuous lunch at the scenic Hilo Yacht Club, providing a chance to get together with old friends and maybe make some new ones. Then comes the auction, an opportunity to obtain top-quality donated orchid plants at bargain prices and benefit your Society at the same time. This event is not open to the public. It is open to Hilo Orchid Society members and their guests by reservation only.

For those who signed up, doors will open at 11:00 a.m. to enjoy beverages and talk story, followed by the installation of officers at 11:45, lunch, and the orchid auction.

For a map and directions to the Hilo Yacht Club, see page 5.

Plant Exchange Reminder

This year's holiday party will include an optional orchid plant exchange. If you wish to participate in the fun, bring an orchid plant, and in exchange you will get to take a plant, selected in a random drawing.

Plant exchange plants do not have to be in bloom, but they should be healthy and free from pests such as little fire ants.

Yacht Club Dress Code

The Hilo Yacht Club has some rules for members and guests (us). T-shirts are not allowed. Men should wear a shirt with a collar. An aloha shirt is fine. Rubber slippers are not allowed, but other sandals are fine. Shorts are fine, as long as they're tasteful (not bathing trunks).



Orchid Isle 2025

Orchid Isle 2025 Calendars

We still have a few calendars available. They cost only \$9, and they make great holiday gifts. These calendars will be for sale at the Holiday Party; it's your last chance to buy them.

Beginners Corner

Going to Pot, Part 5

The Joy of Potting



Above: Karen Kimmerle demonstrates how to repot a Vanda.

All right, so I exaggerated the title a little to get your attention. I still consider repotting to be a chore, but afterwards I do have the satisfaction of a job well done.

How to repot. People of independent means repair to the “potting shed”; the rest of us use the kitchen table. Gather the materials you will need, namely: a pot (if the plant needs a larger one); some potting mix such as bark; some Styrofoam peanuts (optional); a sharp knife or other cutting tool; and, if you're going to divide the plant, some extra pots and plant labels. To avoid spreading virus, the cutting tool should be sterilized if it has been used on other orchids.

Sterilized? Yes. Orchid viruses can cause flower streaking and discoloration or just lack of vigor in the plant, and they're spread by you when you don't clean your cutting tools. You can sterilize a knife by holding it in a flame such as a propane torch, or by soaking it in a saturated solution of TSP (trisodium phosphate). I use single-edge razor blades to cut orchids. You can buy these in a pack of 50 or 100 and use a different one on each plant. After using all the razor blades, bake them in a 450 degree oven to sterilize them and then reuse them.

Take it off. Take it all off. The first step is to get the orchid out of the old pot. For plastic pots, this is usually not too hard. Be patient and try to break as few roots as possible. With a clay pot, the

orchid roots will have all stuck to the pot. You may have to use the knife to cut around the rim of the pot, and the adhering roots will all get broken.

After unpotting the plant, you now usually see a mass of roots covering the entire outer surface of the root ball. The problem is to remove the broken-down medium from inside without damaging these healthy roots too much. Take your time and try to tease the roots apart without breaking them, picking out pieces of bark here and there as you can reach them. Eventually you'll get to the inside, where there will be very few roots and it is easy to remove the medium. Actually, expert orchid growers don't pick apart the roots so carefully: they can't take the time, with their huge collections. But as a beginner with only a few plants, you can afford the time. Remember that careless potting can set a plant back a whole year.

Leave the live white roots and cut off the dead brown ones. It may be hard to tell which is which by the color. Another test is to pinch the root between your fingers. If it's firm, it's alive; if it's mushy, it's dead.

Divide and conquer. As explained last time, if the orchid needs to be divided, this is the time to do it. Also, if you have a problem with scale, this is the ideal time to spray, dip, scrub, or swab the plant, since even the "underground" parts are exposed.

Stuff it. Next, prepare a pot by putting some Styrofoam peanuts in the bottom for drainage. Then insert the plant, holding it where it's going to go. The old (non-growing) end should be against one edge of the pot to give maximum room for growth. Fill the pot with mix, stuffing it into all cavities as you go. It helps to push it in firmly with your fingers, but you don't have to pack it with great force. If the plant is very wobbly you can insert a stake and tie the plant to it, but I seldom find this necessary. Finally, re-insert the plant label, or make new ones for your divisions. If you don't label your plants, you soon won't know what's what. I follow the practice of writing the repotting date on the back of the label. This helps you figure out when it's time to repot again.

Done. You can now replace the plant on its shelf. Remember not to water it for two weeks or so. This lets any broken or cut roots heal without rotting. Savor the true joy of potting – knowing you won't have to do it again for two or three years!

Larry Kuekes



Paphiopedilum besseae, grown by Marni Turkel. This photo was used to promote the World Slipper Orchid Conference.

World Slipper Orchid Conference in Hilo

The 2025 World Slipper Orchid Conference, sponsored by the Paphiopedilum Guild, will be held right here in Hilo at the Naniloa Hotel from January 17-19.

Registration for members of Orchid Digest is \$275 before Dec. 15 and \$325 afterwards. Registration for non-members is \$325 before Dec. 15 and \$375 afterwards. Since a subscription (membership) to Orchid Digest costs \$39 a year, it would be cheaper to join Orchid Digest and register as a member than to register as a non-member.

The price includes lectures by eight speakers, Friday night dinner, Saturday lunch and dinner, and a visit to Hilo Orchid Farm's Open House on Sunday.

For more information, see <https://www.orchiddigest.org/events>.

Master Gardener Event

On Sunday, January 26, Master Gardeners are holding a plant sale at the Komohana Center, 875 Komohana St., Hilo. This year the event will also include the Ohia Fest.

Send Us Your Photos

Each year we have an Orchid Photo Contest. The only rules are: (1) the photo has to include a blooming orchid, and (2) you have to be the photographer, though you don't have to be the grower. We want your photos, not some photo that you found on the Internet.

We accept photos all year up until next October. But please send us your photos now, because in addition to the contest, we like to post our members' photos on the HOS Facebook page, and we do this all year long.

You can email your orchid photos to Larry at lkuekes@gmail.com, the same address from which you get the HOS newsletter. And please tell us the name of the orchid if you know it. Mahalo!



Paph. Charmingly Golden 'Big Buggar' AM/AOS, grown by Okika



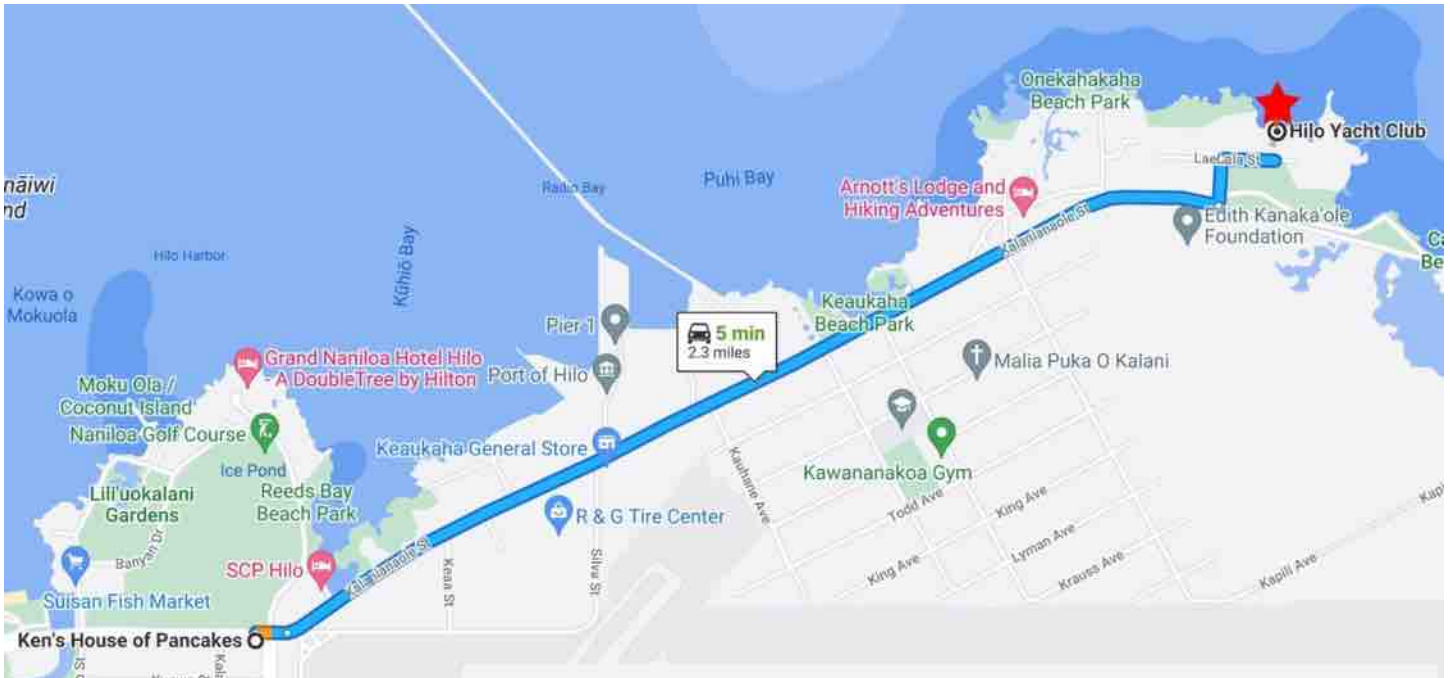
Left: *Paph.* Voodoo Magic 'Slipper Zone Sepal Star' HCC/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids

Directions to Hilo Yacht Club

Note: To attend the Holiday Party, you must have signed up and paid in advance. You will be checked in at the door.

To use your GPS to get to the yacht club, the address is 77 Laehala St., Hilo.

From the intersection of Rt. 11 and Rt. 19 in Hilo (Ken's House of Pancakes): Take Kalaniana'ole St. for about 2.1 miles, going past Keaukaha Beach Park. After you pass a sign for Onekahakaha Beach Park, take the next left onto a short road called Kamokuna St. that ends at Laehala St. Turn right on Laehala. The Hilo Yacht Club will be on your left. Park in the parking lot.



Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

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Trustee 2024-2025 – Cyndi Helton

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Visit us on the web at
www.hiloorchidsociety.org