



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

February
2025

Next Meeting

Date: Saturday, February 8, 2024
Time: 1:30 Informal "talk story"
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Local AOS Judges
Topic: AOS Judging

Every month you see photos of orchids that won AOS awards at the Hawaii Judging Center in Hilo. But did you ever wonder what happens during American Orchid Society judging? What do the awards mean, and what do judges look for in order to give an award?

This month, all will be revealed. Our local AOS judges will explain what judging is all about, and then we will have a mock judging session, where judges will look at some of the orchids on the show-and-tell table and go through the process as if they were doing AOS judging for those orchids.

So, if you have some beautiful or unusual orchids in bloom, please bring them in to the meeting! And by the way, many gorgeous orchids don't get awards, so if your orchid is selected for discussion and the judges make some critical comments, don't be discouraged. AOS judges are notoriously picky. They have to be. When they give awards, the judges are comparing your orchid against the best orchids of the same kind across the entire United States.

Thanks to the AOS award system, orchid growers and hybridizers keep making better and more beautiful orchids, and we have amazingly knowledgeable AOS judges among us who we can go to for help and information. It usually takes 7 years of study to become an AOS judge. They know a lot!

Why did the *Dendrobium polysema* orchid at right win both an AM/AOS (Award of Merit) and a CCM/AOS (Certificate of Cultural Merit) last month? Come to the meeting and find out!

Dues Are Due

If you haven't already paid, your membership dues for 2025 are due. New members who joined at our Orchid Show at Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium in July and members who joined in September 2024 or later are considered paid through 2025 and do not have to pay.

For the rest of you, dues are still only \$20 for individual membership or \$25 for family membership. In return, you get a year of interesting speakers, newsletters, and activities, plus the chance to get together with folks who share your interest in these beautiful and fascinating plants.

There are three ways you can pay: (1) Go to our website www.hiloorchidsociety.org, click on Membership and pay online, (2) Pay us at the meeting, or (3) Fill out the form on page 5 and mail it in with your payment (address is on the form).

Mahalo!

Mahalo For Your Donation

We want to thank the following people who donated orchids to the live auction at our Holiday Party in December: Ricardo and Pei Chen of Winning Orchids, Karen Kimmerle of Island Sun Orchids, John Juszczak, Glen Barfield of Okika, and Leslie Hayes-Cullins. It's your generosity that makes our Holiday Party possible. Mahalo nui loa!



Orchid Stories

What is an Orchid? Part 1

Note: This is the first in a series of columns called Orchid Stories that I'm rerunning. I published them ten years ago, but I think new members will enjoy them, and old members may enjoy seeing them again.

Welcome to my new column for the Hilo Orchid Society newsletter. One of the reasons I love growing orchids is their endless variety. There's always something new to learn, and that's what I want to share. This column is aimed at beginning growers, but I'll also try to cover some items of interest to the more experienced among you.

Let's begin at the beginning. Perhaps the most basic question that can be asked about orchids is: what is an orchid? That is, what is it that distinguishes orchids from other plants? What do orchids have in common that other plants don't?

If you have looked at the show table, you must have been struck by the enormous differences between the plants and flowers displayed there. They're all orchids, but they don't look anything alike! Some plants are several feet tall or wide; others would fit in a thimble. Some flowers are as big as a dinner plate; others are the size of a gnat. Some flowers are round; some are star-shaped; some have petals like corkscrews; some are ineffably complex (Stanhoepa flowers have been described as looking like a cross between an eagle and a squid – see photo at right).

Well, it turns out that none of these things matter to the botanist. Botanists have precise criteria for dividing plants into different groupings. For flowering plants, the most basic such grouping is the division between monocots and dicots – plants that have one seed-leaf versus those that have two. Orchids are monocots. So are grasses, lilies, and palms, among many others. One of the characteristics of monocots is that the veins in their leaves are parallel, not branching. If you look at your orchids, you will see that their leaf veins all come from the base of the leaf and run parallel to each other, like a blade of grass and unlike the branching veins in the leaf of a maple or a hibiscus, which are dicots. Also, the flowers of monocots have flower parts (such as sepals and petals) in multiples of 3, whereas dicot flowers have multiples of 4 or 5. The lip of an orchid is considered to be a modified petal, so orchids have 3 petals and 3 sepals.

But that doesn't distinguish orchids from other



Stanhoepa orchid grown by Vivian Ueoka.

monocots.

In the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, the Cowardly Lion asked:

What makes the Hottentots so hot?

What puts the ape in apricot?

What have they got that I ain't got?

If he were talking about orchids, he might have asked:

What puts the ono in monocot?

What have orchids got that I ain't got?

Answer in next month's column.

Larry Kuekes

Master Gardener Event



Cindi Helton, Kathryn Duval and Kathy Gollaher manned the HOS table at the East Hawaii Master Gardener Plant Sale on January 26.

Orchids on the January Show Table

Photos by Larry Kuekes



Left: *Blt.* Lily Marie Almas 'MGR', grown by Steve Meyer
Right: *Clty.* Spring Fragrance 'Hawaii', grower not known



Left: *Dendrochilum*, grower not known
Right: *Zygopetalum* Debbie De Mello, grown by Daniel Bark



Left: Group of *Paphiopedilums*, grown by Glen Barfield
Right: *Trichopilia suavis*, grown by Jeff Fendentz

January AOS Awards

Photos by Glen Barfield



Left: *Coelogyne wenzelii* 'Okika' CCE/AOS, grown by Okika
Right: *Dendrobium nemorale* 'Eli' AM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids



Left: *Cattleya rupestris* 'Okika II' AM/AOS, grown by Okika
Center: *Dracula marsupialis* 'Captain Kangaroo' CHM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids
Right: *Oncidium Irene* 'Okika' AM/AOS, grown by Okika



Left: *Paphiopedilum* (Jaeger x Spotglen) 'Hawaiian Dream' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids
Right: *Dendrobium polysema* 'Metawee' AM/AOS and CCM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids

HILO ORCHID SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please print this form, fill it out, and mail with your dues payment to:

Hilo Orchid Society
P.O. Box 4294
Hilo, HI 96720

Dues are \$20 for individual membership, \$25 for family membership.

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email for receiving newsletter: _____

Check one:

- Individual membership (\$20)
- Family membership (\$25)

Check one:

- I grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.
- I do not grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.

Signature: _____

Optional:

Are you interested in volunteering to help with any of the following activities? Check as many as you like.

- Monthly meetings
- Annual Orchid Show
- Orchid Isle Project (mounting orchids on trees in public spaces)
- Orchids at the Zoo
- Serving as an officer

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

President – Ellen Train pecetrain@gmail.com
Vice President – Tom Miranda biophilialk@gmail.com
President-Elect – Kathy Gollaher
Treasurer – Rick Kelley
Recording Secretary – Larry Kuekes
Corresponding Secretary – Dana Culleney

Past President – Karl Mendonca
Trustee 2025-2026 – Kathryn Duval
Trustee 2025-2026 – Lise Dowd lisedowd@aol.com
Trustee 2024-2025 – Sandra Dixon
Trustee 2024-2025 – Cyndi Helton

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www.hiloorchidsociety.org