



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

January
2026

Date: Sat., January 10, 2024
Time: **1:30** Informal “talk story”
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Mike Fong
Program: Why We Love Orchids



Why do we love orchids? Of course, different people have different reasons, but there are some things about orchids that are unique, and the more we know about them, the more we want to know. This month, Mike Fong (above) will explore our fascination with orchids and tell us some things that maybe you didn't know.

Mike is a horticulturalist, curator and educator, currently teaching at Edmonds College near Seattle, Washington. As a child he germinated his first plants, beans, in moistened paper towels in Tic Tac containers. Since then, he has managed collections of more than 2,500 species and created public exhibits ranging from orchids and carnivorous plants to the famous corpse flower. He was curator of Amazon's Spheres, the spherical greenhouses in downtown Seattle containing 40,000 cloud-forest plants.

But it's orchids that are still special. Come to the meeting and find out why.

Dues Are Due

Just a friendly reminder that your membership dues for 2026 are due. New members who joined at our Orchid Show at Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium in July and members who joined in September 2025 or later are considered paid through 2026 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 (cash, check, or credit card).
- (3) Fill out the form on page 5 and mail it in with your payment (address is on the form).

Mahalo!

Kiwi Orchid Bark Sale

Did you sign up to get one or more bags of Kiwi Orchid Bark that Tom Mirenda ordered? Due to complications around tariffs on imports from New Zealand, the delivery date has changed once again, and the bark may or may not be available at our January meeting. We're sorry! The bark is coming, it's just a matter of when.

If the bark is available at the meeting, the price is \$20 per bag, but only for people who signed up for it.

These delays are beyond our control. We apologize and thank you for your understanding and patience. We think the bargain-priced, high quality bark is worth it.

Master Gardeners Plant Sale

Sunday, Jan. 25 from 10 am to 2 pm, there will be a Master Gardeners Plant Sale at the Komohana Research and Extension Center, 875 Komohana St., Hilo. HOS will have an information booth. Hope to see you there!

President's Message

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends. We are certainly looking forward to an enjoyable and prosperous New Year. Starting in January we have a few changes. One big change is that we have four new board members. It's a nice mix. Dorothea (Trustee) has been a member for 22 years along with her husband, Jeff. Daniel (Trustee) is young and active in the Orchid Industry. Lori (Treasurer) is an exceptional accountant. She's new to the island and new to the Hilo Orchid Society. Steve Meyer (President-Elect) is extremely knowledgeable in managing large botanical gardens. It's a great pleasure to have them all on board.

Dana (Corresponding Secretary), Larry (Recording Secretary), and Tom (Vice-President) are Past Presidents. Lise (Trustee) has been a long time board member and Kathryn (Trustee) has been our Membership Chair for quite a few years now. Ellen put her all into being the President for the last two years and she now has the honor of being Past President.

Rick and Karl are no longer on the Board. In previous years, they worked behind the scenes to set up our monthly Saturday meetings. Karl reserved our meeting place and picked up the key for our

meeting room. He arrived early to make sure everything was set up. Rick arrived early, often bringing extra tables. He set up tables and chairs with the help of others who arrived early. He brought the equipment and set up the audiovisual components with the computer, the screen, and the speakers. Although assisting with the transition in January, these two helpful men are stepping down.

The meeting place is reserved for the year, and I can get the key. I like to arrive early to make sure things get set up. However, we desperately need people to come and set up the tables, set up the chairs and especially set up the computer, screen and speakers. I would like to create a "Set-up Team" so that the responsibility is not just on one person. Please contact me at hiloorchidsociety@gmail.com if you are willing to be on the "Set-up Team."

I will also have a sign-up sheet at the January meeting for "Set-up Team" volunteers. Thank you to all the people who have helped to set-up and break-down in the past.

I am looking forward to seeing you folks at the January 10th Saturday meeting.

With warm aloha,

Kathy G



2026 Board members sworn in. Board members for 2026 were sworn in at the Holiday Party on Dec. 13, 2025 by Karl Mendonca, at left. Board members, left to right: Lori Fuller, Dorothea Fendentz, Daniel Bark, Tom Miranda, Kathy Gollaher, Kathryn Duval, Larry Kuekes, Ellen Train, Dana Culleney, Lise Dowd, Steve Meyer. Photo by Robin Nakayama.

Orchid Stories Hits the spot



Left: *Brassavola nodosa*

Right: Closeup of the throat of the lip of *Brassavola nodosa*. Photos by Larry Kuekes.



Left: *Cattleya (Laelia) milleri* 'Fissure 8' HCC/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros. Photo by Glen Barfield.

Right: *Bc. Richard Mueller (B. nodosa x C. milleri)*

*Everyone is ticklish. You just
gotta find the right spots.*

– Derek Jeter

Look at the photos of *Brassavola nodosa* (upper left) and *Cattleya* (formerly *Laelia*) *milleri* (lower left). What would you expect to get if you crossed them? Probably something star-shaped like *B. nodosa*, but red or pink colored. What do you actually get? *Bc. Richard Mueller* (lower right). Surprise! It's yellow, and it has spots on the lip.

Where did the spots come from? If you look at the closeup photo of *B. nodosa* (upper right), there are some tiny purple spots deep inside the throat of the lip. They're on the inside surface, so you can barely

see them from the outside.

These spots are incredibly dominant in hybridizing. Almost all *B. nodosa* hybrids have spots (or sometimes stripes), and these can carry through generation after generation. If you cross *Bc. Richard Mueller* with *Cattleya Tangerine Jewel*, an orange *Cattleya* hybrid with no spots, you get *Bc. Hoku Gem* (top left on the next page). The spots have multiplied! Now they cover every surface of the flower. Or cross *Richard Mueller* with *Laelia rubescens*, a pink/lavender flower with a dark throat (but no spots). Result: *Blc. Petite Stars* (top right on the next page). The color has come from from *L. rubescens*, but the spots are from the *B. nodosa* grandparent.

I first found out about *Brassavola nodosa* hybrids



Left: *Bc.* Hoku Gem 'Precious' (*C.* Tangerine Jewel x *Bc.* Richard Mueller). Photo from Orchids by Hausermann on Flickr.com.
 Right: *Bc.* Petite Stars (*Bc.* Richard Mueller x *Laelia rubescens*). Photo from orchidsforum.com.



Left: *Bc.* Keowee 'Mendenhall' AM/AOS. Grown and photographed by Larry Kuekes.
 Right: *Bc.* Green Bird 'Green with Envy' AM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids. Photo by Glen Barfield.

when I was a beginning grower in the Connecticut Orchid Society. I loved them because of their spots. So I was surprised that the late Ben Berliner, who was an AOS judge in Connecticut who seemed to know everything about orchids, said that he didn't like them. AOS judging standards say that Cattleya-alliance hybrid flowers should be round-shaped, ideally with very wide, overlapping petals and sepals. Ben loved those full, round Cattleya hybrids.

But *B. nodosa* hybrids inherit its narrow petals and sepals, making the flowers star-shaped, not round. Also, *B. nodosa* flowers are small, which tends to reduce the size of the flowers in its hybrids, and in AOS awards, the bigger, the better.

Luckily, other AOS judges like *B. nodosa* hybrids. Who doesn't love *Bc.* Keowee 'Mendenhall' AM/AOS (*B. nodosa* x *Bc.* Lorraine Shirai), (bottom left photo) with its outrageous spotted and striped lip?

And our local AOS judging center in Hilo awarded an AM/AOS to *Bc.* Green Bird 'Green with Envy' (bottom right photo), a cross of *Bc.* Binoso x *B.* Little Stars made by Karen Kimmerle. It has *B. nodosa* as a grandparent on both sides. Spots? Of course!

I love orchids with spots. You want to tickle my fancy? Like Derek Jeter said, you just gotta find the right spots.

Larry Kuekes

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

December AOS Awards

Photos by Glen Barfield



Left: *Phragmipedium* Acker's Flame 'Blushing Love' AM/AOS, grown by Sandra Dixon
Right: *Stelis gelida* 'LHC Tis The Season' CCM/AOS, grown by Leslie Hayes-Cullins



Left: *Cattleya* Louis Chaton 'Echo' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros
Right: *Cattleya praestans* 'Second Chance' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros



Left: *Cattleya walkeriana* 'Arace' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros
Right: *Rlc.* Raspberry Parfait 'Pink Sprite' AM/AOS, grown by Matt Sylva



Left: *Vanda* Goodwin's Glitzy Gala 'Spot On Keith!' AM/AOS, grown by Sandra Dixon
Right: *Bulbophyllum* Khoon Meng 'Aries' AM/AOS, grown by Matt Sylva



Left: *Cattleya walkeriana* 'Elegance' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros
Right: *Cattleya walkeriana* 'Cintia Cavasini' AM/AOS, grown by Orchid Eros

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

President – Kathy Gollaher
Vice President – Tom Miranda
President-Elect – Steve Meyer
Treasurer – Lori Fuller
Recording Secretary – Larry Kuekes
Corresponding Secretary – Dana Culleney

Past President – Ellen Train
Trustee 2025-2026 – Kathryn Duval
Trustee 2025-2026 – Lise Dowd
Trustee 2026-2027 – Daniel Bark
Trustee 2026-2027 – Dorothea Fendentz

Hilo Orchid Society
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Visit us on the web at
www.hiloorchidsociety.org

Contact us at
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