



# Florida West Coast Orchid Society

## *Orchid News & Views*

*March 2011 Volume 9, No 2*

*Meeting Information*

# *March 10, 2011*

*7:00 pm Educational Class: Scott Hadley on  
Different Types of Nitrogen*

*7:30 pm Featured Speaker: Michael Polen  
on "Springtime Repotting"*

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**Our Speaker  
Will Bring  
Plants to Sell**

\*\*\*

**Remember  
Food!**

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*Content must be received by one week past the monthly meeting for inclusion in the following months newsletter. Ads must be in high resolution (at print size) Picture format: .TIF, .GIF, .JPG or .PDF. Submit via email or CD.*

**Diane Jones - Membership, Mailing Address or Email address change to: djones9@tampabay.rr.com**

### **Operating Procedures for Membership**

*Membership: The term of membership shall be for the calendar year. Annual dues for the first annual member in a household shall be \$20.00, each additional annual member in a household and not receiving a newsletter shall be \$15.00. For a mailed newsletter add \$10.00. Lifetime membership is \$200.00.*

## *From Our President*

Hello all,

Looks like February is starting to mellow out with no nights lower than 50 degrees. Maybe Punxsutawney Phil knows something we don't know. He did not see his shadow on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> so we are supposed to get an early spring. I will take any weather that looks like spring.



Cheryl Finke

I wanted to go over my list of announcements again.

1. March 12<sup>th</sup> Tampa Orchid Club Auction, contact Tina Kendall ([tdkendall@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tdkendall@tampabay.rr.com))
2. April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held at FBG auditorium. Entrance located off Walsingham Road.
3. April 16<sup>th</sup>, FWCOS Orchid Auction at SW Recreational Center at 131<sup>st</sup> and Vonn Road from 8 am – 4 pm
4. April 17<sup>th</sup> - Need some volunteers to man a membership table at Sunken Gardens. Free entry.
5. May 13<sup>th</sup>, bus trip to Redlands International Orchid Show in Homestead, FL

Save your plant divisions for the Orchid Auction. Donated plants must be free of pest and diseases. If you are going to donate, please bring to the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

We also need volunteers to pick up plants. Ruth will be scheduling this with the vendors the first or second week of April.

If spring is going to come a little early, then possibly our orchid plants may start new growths early. Now is the time to check your plants for the need of repotting and dividing.

With the recent rains be on the look out for fungus or bacterial rots.

Cheryl Finke  
FWCOS President

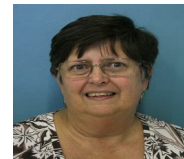
## *Our Featured Speaker, Michael Polen*



Michael was born in St Petersburg and has lived here his whole life. Mike and his wife, Paula became interested in orchids through their mothers who both grew them. In the early 1980s, when they went to the Keyes, they shopped for orchids on the way home for their mothers. It wasn't too long before they were buying orchids for themselves. They put orchids around their fountains to enhance the fountain sales and the orchids were so popular customers were stopping for orchids and thus the orchid business resulted in 1984. One other relative, Aunt Kay, was an orchid grower and a founding member of FWCOS. Michael joined FWCOS in 1986. He served as President in 1992 and 1993. Now he enjoys growing orchids, lecturing at orchid societies around the state as well as doing workshops and orchid shows.

Most of all he enjoys his family, friends and also

## *From Our Membership Chairman*



Diane Jones

Even though our meeting was well attended considering the weather we had, no new members.

We did have several snow birds visit us.

I'm currently working on our new directory for membership. I'm hoping to have it available for you at our March meeting. Since I have to recreate my entire database, I really can't promise it. So depending on how things go it may be April.

We have had an increase in the price of our name tags; they are now \$10.00 and we need a minimum of four.

I am currently using a different email address which is below. If you need to reach me, please use it.

See you next month.

Diane Jones,  
FWCOS Membership Chairman

## Mexican Señoritas

Mexico is the home of a large number of orchids, a few of these genera are: *Barkeria*, *Brassia*, *Catasetum*, *Chysis*, *Cuitlauzina*, *Encyclia*, *Euchile*, *Laelia*, *Lycaste*, *Oncidium* and *Stanhopea* with some occurring only in Mexico and others are represented by one or two species, with the majority of their cousins growing farther south. The tropic of cancer runs through roughly the geographical middle of Mexico, giving it a tropical climate. Because of its mountainous terrain, major stretches of this country are semi-deserts with continuous sunshine – lovely for the tourists!. There are very few orchids that belong in the desert area, like the diminutive *Mexipedium xerophyticum* – a close relative to *Phragmipediums*. What is left of the natural vegetation, including orchids, covers only a rather small part and the plants have adapted to long dry seasons without rain.

Reading up on cultural advice for these orchids, the long dry rest, with some scant misting is always emphasized. Yes, many people go to Mexico in the winter because it doesn't rain there. Uninterrupted sunshine is what the tourists want – and get. The orchids too get this uninterrupted sunshine. How can they stay alive?

When I try to do as the books say and not water these plants for 4 – 6 months, only giving them an occasional careful misting, they go dormant and STAY dormant, never to bloom for me. There is not just a *Cuitlauzina* drying out beyond hope; a lot of other orchids from Mexico have been on my "Don't Buy" list for the same reason. When we plant *Lycastes*, *Oncidiums* and *Brassias*, they usually go into pots, into a potting mix that may hold a bit of humidity. We try to help those "difficult" species like *Barkeria*, *Catasetum*, *Chysis*, *Cuitlauzina pendula*, *Euchile citrina* and *Euchile mariae* by mounting them on slabs or sticks, because they are so fussy. There they cannot be over-watered and will have a better chance to get their total dry rest. Thus they go to their "eternal rest". What was I doing wrong?

Then there came this revelation: if you look at the front cover of the April 2007 Orchids magazine, you will see a charming photograph of an inflorescence of *Cuitlauzina pendula*. Inside the magazine, there is a very informative article about this plant's history and at the end, there are cultural notes from the author, Dr. Rudolf Jenny and more notes written by Dr. Wilford Neptune. There I had my answer.

It is true that in their native haunts, at high altitudes, on leafless trees, the orchids never get a drop of rain, sometimes for 6 months! But here is the secret: All night long, there is fog and in the morning, everything is covered in dew. The plants don't get their water as rain during the day or night, but rather as dew during the night. And then during daytime, the hot sun dries them off again. But they do not go without any water for six months!

Thanks to Drs. Jenny and Wilson, I shall try again to grow those Mexican Señoritas and I shall provide the dew for them, in the form of daily early morning misting. Regular watering and fertilizing can start once the new growth is about 10 cm long. I just hope that this treatment will produce Sleeping Beauties that will bloom again – do they just need that dewy kiss to live?

*Ingrid Schmidt-Ostrander* - Canadian Orchid Congress

### Thoughts on Watering

Remember that all orchid plants starting to flower need more water than they normally do. If you do not supply extra water the plants extract it from its bulbs and the bulbs shrivel.

It is really simple to determine if a plant needs more water. If the plant is making new growth, vegetative or floral, it should be watered. When dormant do not water if humidity is sufficient; 50-70% for Cattleyas, 60-80% for Miltonias, Phalaenopsis, etc. Even without water the plant will start growth when the proper time arrives, but resulting blooms and/or leads will be healthier with proper watering.

Vandas do not take up much water through the stem. They are frequently wilted on arrival from the nursery, especially if they have been sent by air. They can be revived usually by soaking entirely, flowers and all, in tepid water. Vanda's blooms last so long that they sometimes need dusting and where air-circulation is good it never hurts to water blooms as well as plants. This goes for phalaenopsis, too, if watered early enough in the day to insure drying by night.

News & Views September 1970; Vol XI No IX



F W C O S  
 A P R I L 1 4 M E E T I N G  
 L O C A T I O N C H A N G E  
 T H I S M O N T H O N L Y

**We will be at the Auditorium at the Botanical Garden and not in the Extension Center.**

From gate at Extension Center, turn left onto 125th Street.

At the stop sign, left on to Walsingham Road -  
 1st left which is driveway to Botanical Garden.

Please use walk to covered walkway.

First building on the left is the Auditorium.

# Florida West Coast Orchid Society Annual Orchid Auction

Southwest Recreation Complex  
13120 Vonn Road, Largo, FL

Sat, April 16, 2011

Preview 8:30 am / Auction 9:00am

**No Admission - Free Parking**

For more information, call Ruth Cannon (727) 550-7993, or visit <http://www.fwcoss.org>

A- is the Botanical Gardens and B is the SW Recreation Center – distance is 1.5 miles

## OPEN GREENHOUSE AT MARION STEEL'S

See where and how

Marion Grows her Orchids

Sun, March 13 1:00 to 4:00 PM

2400 Kent Pl

Clearwater, FL 33764

For info, call Corinne Arnold: 727-447-2898

(On day of event only, call 727-475-0750)

You may bring plants donations  
or the auction

## FWCOS Newsletter Editor

### Says 'Thank You'

The newsletter is a result of teamwork of several of our members.

Marty Heath is our webmaster and he also makes sure our newsletters are on the FWCOS website every month.

Barbara Feeley has typed many of Carol Siegel's articles which is no small task.

Freda Dexter is our 'Bloom Table' photographer.

Brent Finke proofs the newsletters before they go to print.

Cheryl Finke prints and mails a snail mail copy each month to those who have no computer.

## Meetings and Events

March, 2011

**Mar 2 at 7 pm; Orchid Society of West Pasco.** Buena Vista Civic Center, Holiday . Contact: Greg Sytch; 727-841-9618; [gsytch@cs.com](mailto:gsytch@cs.com)

**Mar 7 at 7:30 pm; Sarasota Orchid Society .** Actrivity Center at Marie Selby Botanical Garden Contact Monroe Kokin 941-586-7795 [orchidpix@comcast.net](mailto:orchidpix@comcast.net).

**Mar 10 at 7 pm; Florida West Coast Orchid Society at** Pinellas County Cooperative Extension Center, 12520 Ulmer-ton Rd, Largo; 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact Bill Nu-nez 727-392-6864.

**Mar 12, 10 am til 2 pm; Tampa Orchid Club Auction** USF Botanical Gardens, Tampa. Call 813-910-3274.

**Mar 12, 4:30 am; AOS Judging at** Harry P Leu Gardens, Palm Room, 1920 North Forest Avenue, Orlando. Contact Glen Brown 352-735-2898

**Mar 17, 6:30 pm; Tampa Bay Orchid Society Meeting at** Tampa Garden Club, 2629 Bayshore Blvd, Tampa; Contact Patty Cartwright [pcartwright@earthlink.net](mailto:pcartwright@earthlink.net) or <http://tampabayorchidsociety@shutterfly.com/> 813-281-2126

**Mar 19, 9 am til noon; Orchid Friends Sale** at 12350 Ridge Road, Largo.

**Mar 22, 10 am; Tampa Orchid Club,** American Legion Hall, Northdale Recreation Center, 15550 Spring Pine Dr, Tampa 33604 [www.tampaorchidclub.info/](http://www.tampaorchidclub.info/) Contact Laurie Nissen 813-909-3394.

**Mar 22, 7:30 pm; Ridge Orchid Society Meeting; Bartow Civic Center, 2250 S Floral Ave;** Contact Bill Byrd 863-859-5060 <http://www.ridgeorchidsociety.org/>

**Mar 23, 7:30 pm; AOS Judging** at Tampa Garden Center; 2929 Bayshore Blvd, Tampa; Contact: Patty Cartwright 813-349-0097 [www.aos.org/](http://www.aos.org/)

**Mar 26, 27 10 am til 4 pm; Orchid Lovers of Spring Hill Show** at SNPJ Lodge., 13383 County Line Rd, Spring Hill ; Contact: Linda Roderick [Imroderick@earthlink.net](mailto:Imroderick@earthlink.net)

### FWCOS FIELD TRIP

**Redlands Orchid Fest May 13, 2011**

**\$45.00 Includes: Bus Fare, Driver Tip,  
Bus Refreshments, Entrance Fee  
And a \$5.00 Discount Coupon.**

**Require 26 people pre-paid by April 24th**

**No refunds after April 24th**

**Bus will be at Pinellas Park Super Walmart  
8001 US 19 N [just north of Park Boulevard]  
Behind gas station in front of store.**

**Leave time: 4:15 am sharp**

**9 a m Arrival at Redlands Orchid Fest**

**Rest Stop en route.**

**Mail check payable to FWCOS to:  
Corinne Arnold, 1007 Turner St. Clearwater, FL 33756  
Contact Corinne 727-475-0750  
or [parnold3@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:parnold3@tampabay.rr.com).**

### Orchid Friends Sale

**March 19, 9:00 am-12:00 noon**

**12350 Ridge Rd, Largo**

We will be underneath the trees toward the back on your left. A variety of species and hybrids, blooming and non-blooming orchids and other plants,

## Common Household Stuff For Your Orchids A - Z

by Carol Siegel

It seems like you're constantly BUYING stuff when you grow orchids--pots and bark and fans and thermometers and...well, it never ends. However, there are a lot of common household things all around your house that you can use in your orchid care, and you won't have to spend a thing. Here, from A-Z, are some ideas you might find useful.

A - ALCOHOL - No, not the stuff on the bar (which you might need when they continue to refuse to bloom no matter what you do...) but just plain rubbing alcohol. Alcohol is really useful used straight on a Q-tip to squash and kill those pesty mealy bugs that nestle in the leaf axles. An inch of alcohol, an inch of Formula 409, a tablespoon of dishwashing liquid mixed in a spray bottle full of water is also quite effective as a spray to kill bugs, and it can't harm you. You can also mix some rubbing alcohol with a cap of Physan in a bucket of water to disinfect your cutting tools.

BOTTLE - A spray bottle is a terrific item to foliar (leaf) feed your orchid. Alan Koch recommends an interesting fertilizing regime which I like - Fertilize the roots one week, spray the leaves with the solution the next two waterings or weeks, and then just water the fourth week. He says plants do better when leaves and not roots are bombarded with fertilizer salts. Jerry Fischer recommends fertilizing normally each watering with a weak solution of his Green Jungle fertilizer ([www.orchidweb.com](http://www.orchidweb.com)) and then once a month in the growing season spraying the plants with a SIX times stronger solution of fertilizer in a spray bottle. For example, if you usually put one ounce in a gallon of water with his product, occasionally use SIX ounces in a gallon and spray it on. I tried it and the plants looked great.

C-CINNAMON- Cinnamon is made from the bark of a tree. Because trees are bothered by viruses and fungus and bacteria just like orchids, the cinnamon bark contains powerful ingredients to control those very things. Cinnamon is remarkably effective sprinkled on funky-looking leaves, on cut stems, and on a lot of orchid fungi. Try sprinkling it on your problem plants. I have great success sprinkling them on orchid cuts. They seem to dry out right away.

D- DRILL - An electric or hand drill is very effective for making the holes in pots for barbecue skewers. Small wooden skewers are just wonderful to hold newly potted plants in place. Drill or punch a hole on either side of your plastic pot and thread the skewer through the pot. Cut the excess off, and voila, you have a gentle way to hold the plant in place. Some people like to punch two holes in the BOTTOM of a plastic pot and thread a twist tie through one hole in the bottom, around the plant, and down out the other hole, twisting the tie on the bottom. See what you like. You can buy a package of the skewers in the barbecue grill stores, in the grocery stores, and even in the 99 cent stores.

The same drill with a 3/8" bit makes very nice extra holes in the bottom of plastic pots. Bob Gordon, phalaenopsis expert, recommends a square inch total of drainage hole area in a 4-inch pot or about eight or nine 3/8" round holes. A 6-inch pot should have two square inches total of hole area. Most pots don't have that much---or the holes are blocked with plastic from manufacture - so drill away for good drainage.

E-EGG CRATE - Many of us have overhead lights with an egg crate pattern plastic covering. You can grow orchids in a shallow pan with the same egg crate cut to fit. Fill the pan with water to the top of the egg crate, and set your plants on top (not sitting in the water or they will rot). This will provide splendid humidity for your plants. If the egg crate gets dirty, a few hours in a Clorox solution in the bathtub will

take care of it.

F - FAN - Fans of every shape and size are an orchid's best friend. In nature, orchids receive fresh air and breezes daily. The hobbyist can duplicate this delightful natural condition by using fans---floor fans, clip-on fans, oscillating fans, just anything that moves the air. Stand in the middle of your growing area. If you just love the gentle breeze, so will your orchids. If your hair is whipping around your face, turn down the fan or move it farther away. If the air is dead, look for another fan. Walmart has a fan that sprays a mist from the middle when connected to a hose, and it is really useful on hot summer days.

G - GARDEN TOOLS - You probably already have scissors and garden shears and clippers that you can use to keep your orchids tidy. Make sure that you sterilize your tools between use with Physan or a propane torch. (See P) Go to the 99 cents store and buy a dozen or more clippers that you can soak overnight in Physan. You will have enough fresh ones to use on your whole collection.

HORTICULTURAL OIL - Fred Schechter recommends adding one tablespoon of horticultural oil (available at Plant World) to one quart of 91% isopropyl alcohol (or 1 ½ tsp. of oil per 16 oz. Alcohol) and spraying it on pests like scale. He swears it is very effective and really safe for you. Don't have horticultural oil in the house? Many recommend that a little salad oil will do the trick. Buy toothbrushes at the 99 cents store and scrub the scale off with a toothbrush dipped in the alcohol/oil mixture and then throw the toothbrush out. (They are six for one dollar...) Then, spray with Fred's mixture.

I - IVORY SOAP - Ivory soap liquid (and most dishwashing soaps) are almost as effective as insecticidal soap in killing insects AND it won't kill you. Add a little soap to some water and spray. If you use a powerful insecticide, the addition of a little soap to your mixture will help the stuff stick to the poor buggies and kill them more effectively. ORCHIDS magazine also recommends half-filling a bucket, adding 1/6 cup dishwashing liquid, and immersing a plant completely for an hour to drown ants. Remove, let drain, and replace where it was growing.

J - JUICE, that is BUG JUICE (I can't think of a J...) Bug juice, or insecticide, is a necessary evil. Just remember to use the LEAST powerful first. A little alcohol on a Q-tip will control the first bug. Don't use a nuclear bomb when a fly swatter will do. Much has been written on insecticides, but I can't stress how important preventive measures are. First, never bring a new plant directly into your growing area. Quarantine it for a couple of weeks. Inspect it. Distrust it. Might it have a ROACH in it? A MEALY bug? An ANT colony? Some people like to lightly spray new additions with an insecticidal soap, Neem Oil, or one of the gentler insecticides. Second, inspect your plants for a few minutes a day. If you hose your plants or have them automatically watered, take some hands-on time to see if your plants are getting bugs. One bug is easier to eradicate than an infestation. If you do have something crawly, isolate the plant(s) RIGHT AWAY. Do not risk creating an epidemic. Don't be lazy. Third, if you have to spray something strong like Ornthene, make sure you do it as they tell you on the label. Most of the sprays require spraying two or three times a week apart. AND do be sure to wear protective clothing, take the plants outside if possible, leave the area immediately after, take a bath, and be smart. If a plant is REALLY bad, introduce it to the trash. One plant breaks your heart. Your whole collection in the garbage will kill you.

K - KLEENEX and its sister TOILET PAPER - Boxes of Kleenex and rolls of toilet paper are really handy in the greenhouse. Paph orchids and phals tend to collect water in the leaf axles after watering.

This wet condition can kill paph buds and rot phals. Pushing a little toilet paper or Kleenex into the wet spot and leaving it there for a moment is a really effective way of drying out the leaf junction and saving the bud and plant.

L - LIGHTS - Many growers don't realize that their greenhouses can have dark spots. Not every greenhouse or growing area is ablaze with light. You can improve your blooming success by adding fluorescent grow lights to your greenhouse dark areas or your window sills. Take a light meter and see just how much light various areas of your growing space get during different times of the day, and see if you don't get better success adding a shop light with grow lights.

If you are growing with lights, your lights will fade with time. Replace your grow lights and halide and sodium lights once a year. Remember that you get very little light toward the ends of the bulbs and more toward the middle, so place high-light loving plants toward the middle. Any room can become a growing area with the addition of a light cart, a fan, and a humidifier.

M-MILK - If your orchid leaves are dirty, a little whole milk on a Kleenex gets them clean in an instant.

N-NOTEBOOK - Many people have fun keeping records of their orchid plants. If you make a page for each plant, you can give it a number (which you note on your plant tag), record the purchase date, repotting information, nursery you bought it in, blooming success, flower size, and the like. Diana Smith does this, and it adds to her hobby pleasure. I am not that kind of person, but I photograph my plants in bloom, put the pictures in albums, labeling them with genus, species, and date. It thrills me to go through the albums.

O-ORANGE OIL - The last issue of ORCHIDS mentions using orange oil to control ants. There is a product called Orange Guard that is death to ants. Available at Ace Hardware or at 1-888-659-3217, it is sprayed on ants or ant areas and their wax coat is destroyed and they suffocate. Don't spray on flowers. (Orchid, 10/02)

P-PROPANE LIGHTS- There are really handy small propane lighters from companies like Scripto and Bic that you use to light the grill. These are nice, safe, cheap ways to sterilize your cutting tools between plants to prevent the spread of disease. They are way more handy than the big propane tools available from garden catalogues that threaten to burn off your eyelashes every time you use them--and they work just fine.

Q-QTIPS-- Q-Tips are very handy for getting between leaves to squash bugs, dry out spaces, and wipe out cottony things. I like the little travel packages that are small and plastic so that they don't get wet in the greenhouse.

R-ROLLS OF TOILET PAPER- See K. Festoon your greenhouse with rolls of toilet paper and use it to dry off leaves to prevent rot and spots.

S-STYROFOAM- Save Styrofoam in a drawer to use in the bottom of plastic pots instead of crockery to increase drainage. If a plant is very wide but has few roots, and you must put it in a BIG pot, add a lot of peanuts so there is not so much bark to stay wet until the plant grows lots of roots. This will prevent the

medium from staying too wet and rotting the poor plant. Test Styrofoam before using to make sure it doesn't dissolve in water. Throw out this goopy type of Styrofoam since it would prevent drainage rather than increase it. Bob Gordon does not like to use Styrofoam but makes extra holes in the pot instead, but most do use it.

T-TWEEZERS- What would we do without tweezers? Use them to remove the extra sheathing around the base of your plants when repotting. If you use your fingers, you can knock off growing tips, but tweezers are just right. Remember to sterilize them between uses.

U-USEFUL SOLDERING IRON - Your soldering iron will be very handy for making extra holes in the bottom of your pots. Look for one with about a 3/8" tip.

V-VINYL or LATEX GLOVES- Always wear gloves when you handle or water your plants. Not only will it save your hands and nails, but it will prevent you from being exposed to fungus, bacteria, insecticide, and other nasty stuff. There is even something called sporotrichosis which can make you very sick when handling sphagnum moss. Although it is unlikely, why take a chance?

W-WATERING CAN- A plastic watering can is a cheap and effective way of fertilizing your plants if you don't have a fancy system. It usually takes a cap of the fertilizer in your gallon watering can of water (follow package directions) and you can fertilize your already-watered plants.

X-10X magnifying glass-You can use a magnifying glass to inspect your plants. If you look inside a flower, you will sometimes be surprised to see it has bugs!! Inspecting your plants this way will open a whole new world to you and will help you catch and identify plant problems at an early stage.

Y-YELLOW #2 PENCILS - Nothing makes a better imprint on an orchid tag than a pencil. Surprisingly, they last longer than pens. Don't forget to always note when you have repotted your plant. It can be fun to note the date of blooming, too. It is a good idea to put TWO identical tags in each pot in case one gets lost, and one ALWAYS gets lost, especially if the plant cost you a lot of money.

Z-ZIPLOC BAGS - Ziploc bags are very handy for storing things in your growing area. Bark that is put in a Ziploc bag doesn't get all over the floor when it falls, Q-tips stay dry, clips are easy to find, dragonfly clips are always handy, and twist ties are easily accessible. The less mess in your greenhouse, the better!..

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### Hilo Hawaii Tip

Flower spikes always grow in the direction of the best light. It is very important to not move the plant's orientation once the flower spike reaches 12 inches. The spike will try to reorient itself to the best light again and this will result in a twisted and distorted spike. You can reorient your orchid's position once the flowers have opened.

# *Bloom Table*



On Left  
Howeara Lava Burst 'Puanani'  
Presented by Brenda Miller

On Right  
Calanthe. triplicata  
Presented by Roy Finley



On Left  
Dendrobium Yellow Paney 'March'  
Presented by Jennifer Upchurch

# Ryan Says...

## 3 Signs it's time to repot your orchid:

Yes, it's true that orchids DO have special, unique potting requirements that make them unlike most houseplants... BUT it's nothing that you can't master quickly and easily.



1. The roots are overflowing over the edges of your plant's container
2. You've noticed that the potting matter no longer drains properly... i.e., stays really soggy.
3. And finally, the orchid itself has grown over the edge of the pot.

Now, once you've determined whether in fact your orchid needs to be repotted, the next step is to understand the best time of year to actually repot your plant.

### WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS BEST TO REPOT:

Most orchids should be repotted in the \*spring\* months once the plant starts to produce new growth (signs include when you start to see new roots or a new shoot begin to creep out.) At the same time, however, you should also DEFINITELY wait until your orchid has finished flowering before repotting. (I live in the southern United States, and typically repot most of my plants in the month of May.)

Cattleyas, for example (one of the most commonly grown orchids) are are best repotted

1. Shortly after they've flowered,
2. Once the plant has reached the edge of the pot, and
3. Only after the new roots are \*at least\* 1 inch long.

And when it comes to deciding when to repot your plant, here's something else to consider: While spring is typically the best time of year to repot, never wait TOO long to repot your plant.

Repotting an OVERGROWN orchid is going to be more difficult for you, because when working with a plant that is much too large for its pot, you have to be EXTRA careful not to break off roots and new growth when you remove the plant from its current pot.

So if you have a plant on your hands that's EXTREMELY overgrown (as long as it's not currently in bloom) I usually recommend repotting immediately even if Spring is still a long ways away.

Ryan, located in central Texas, has been growing and caring for orchids for over 25 years. He was first introduced to orchids through his wife many years ago, with whom he still shares a mutual love and passion for orchids to this day.

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A glass-marking pencil is most helpful for marking plastic pots. The name of the plant and year of potting are put on outside rim. Fine steel wool easily removes the more waterproof markings when necessary. Such a pencil makes an excellent identification, applied on underside of an older leaf., when taking plants to shows, or any place where a mix-up could occur.

Farewell Schomburgkia  
By Greg Allikas

Certain tropical orchids are well-suited and often used as landscape subjects in frost-free areas of Florida. *Schomburgkia tibicinis* was one of them. I say “was”, because although the orchid is still around, the name isn’t. I will use it in this personal tribute until farther down the page when we deal with new order of taxonomy.



I came to West Palm Beach forty years ago. I was growing a few orchids then and remember seeing a fairly robust specimen of *Schomburgkia tibicinis* growing high on a Royal Palm tree at Hennegan’s Garden Center on State Road 80. In those days I had thought most orchids were of a delicate nature and wondered about this orchid with a long inflorescence that was growing in nearly full sun. Years later, I would see this species growing in a similar, but even brighter, setting in its habitat in Belize. By that time I was a far smarter orchidist and knew about the schomburgkias’ preference for bright light. My early exposure to this dramatic orchid gave me an introduction to the diversity of orchids and *Schomburgkia tibicinis* has always been a favorite. I learned about the orchid’s association with ants that its current name reflects. Although we never saw ants taking up residence in hollowed-out backbulbs, it seemed that ants always showed up on the inflorescences of flowering plants. I wondered if there were some quality to the sugary nectar on the flowers and pedicels that had a special attraction for ants, preparing the relationship for future housing. As with that other species found in Belize, *Coryanthes macrantha*, the orchid provides the shelter and the ants provide the defense. I also learned the folklore the dried-out pseudobulbs are used as toy horns by native children, giving the orchid the common name, “cow horn orchid”. I have always been drawn to orchids that have a history as well as a pretty face and *Schomburgkia tibicinis* fills the bill nicely. I picked up my first *Schomburgkia tibicinis* from a long-gone local nursery called Quiet Place

Nursery. They were a small orchid firm behind a busy intersection in Lake Worth. There was nothing but white sand underneath the benches and one thin layer of shade cloth above the plants. Those orchids that weren’t mounted were potted in cypress mulch topped with *Osmacote*. I remember Marie telling me once, “Maybe these plants are grown a little tough, but we don’t have to worry about people taking them home and killing dainty little things. If they’ll grow here, they’ll grow anywhere.”



There are many other fine ant-loving schomburgkias to know and grow. The Monocot Checklist shows ten species, four varieties and one natural hybrid. Some of these can be found in the trade and are popular among hobbyists, especially those living in mild climates. *Schm. thomsoniana* and *Schm. humboldtii* are popular on their own with the former being a parent for a number of successful intergeneric hybrids; *Recchara* Adele King (x *Blc.* Waikiki Gold) and *Schombocattleya* Trudy Fennell (x *C. gutatta*) being awarded examples. At opposite ends of inflorescence

length; *Schm. bryisiana* is best used as a garden subject unless you have a high greenhouse roof, while *Schm. wendlandii* with its unique non-resupinate flowers and short inflorescence is most suitable for greenhouse growing.

The genus *Schomburgkia* was established by Lindley in 1838 with the type species being *Schm. crispa*. That species has not much in common with the ant orchids yet up until recently, was nonetheless a *Schomburgkia*. There lies a source leading to the final demise of *Schomburgkia*. The name honors Moritz Richard Schomburgk, a German-born gardener and plant collector who went on to become the director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1865. Despite Richard being the honoree, it was his older brother Robert Hermann Schomburgk who dragged his little brother along on his second British-sponsored boundary-mapping expedition to Guiana (1840-1844). There was also a middle Schomburgk brother named Otto who emigrated to Australia with Richard in 1849. Although Veitch reported that Robert discovered the type for the genus, this is reflected nowhere in today’s nomenclature. As a matter of fact, of the eight species in the Monocot Checklist bearing the Schomburgk name, all are attributed to Robert Hermann and only one was an orchid. That single orchid species, *Sobralia elisabethiae* R.H.Schomb., is now correctly, *Sobralia liliastrum* Lindl. *Schomburgkia humboldtii*, described by Reichenbach in 1856, acknowledged the Schomburgk brothers long-standing friendship with the great naturalist and explorer, Alexander von Humboldt. As a note of trivia, it was Richard Schomburgk who discovered that Victorian rage, the giant waterlily, *Victoria amazonica*, described as *Victoria regia* by Lindley in 1837.



We have never grown what were, until recently, considered the “true” schomburgkias; those from South America. Some grow them successfully here in South Florida but I suspect many are from elevations higher than the three-foot average across most of the southern part of the peninsula. Our summer night temperatures never go below 75 degrees fahrenheit. This group would include the type for the genus, *Schm. crispa* (now *Laelia marginata*) and many fine orchids such as *Schm. undulata*, *Schm. rosea* and others.

When the type is moved to another genus, then all of the species follow. For years there has been confusion, differing opinions and rumblings about changes in *Schomburgkia* and *Laelia* so we can’t say we weren’t forewarned. Withner, in his 1992 Volume III of *The Cattleyas and Their Relatives* had not yet reached the conclusions that enlightened taxonomists have with modern DNA research. He kept a slightly enlarged concept of *Schomburgkia* that enlightened taxonomists have with modern DNA research. He kept a slightly enlarged concept of *Schomburgkia* that included the South American species, the ant-loving species, and one Mexican (Guatemala and Honduras too) *Laelia*, *L. superbiens*. This is not so odd because the Mexican species has been passed around genera like a hot tamale, having visited *Cattleya*, *Laelia*, *Schomburgkia* and even *Bletia*. Withner was at least sharp enough to deduce that



the Mexican *Laelia anceps* was different enough from the Colombian *Schomburgkia splendida* to not put them in the same genus. But today’s taxonomists, who are heavily vested in DNA evidence as the irrefutable truth, have indeed lumped the South American schomburgkias into the same genus as the Mexican laelias – *Laelia*. Although I am happy to see such a pretty name preserved (*Laelia* named after one of the Vestal Virgins), I expect that some time in the future we will see this genus spilt when the large swath of Central America separating the two groups is noticed, not to mention visually obvious floral and vegetative characteristics of certain species.



So the genus *Schomburgkia* is gone. The South America species have moved north to *Laelia* and the ant-lovers are now in the genus *Myrmecophila*. Withner addressed the latter move even though he himself used *Schomburgkia* for all of them in vol. III: “The choice of using the segregate genus (*Myrmecophila*) for the ant-inhabited taxa, or keeping them altogether within *Schomburgkia*, seems to me a relatively arbitrary one”. He goes on to propose keeping them all in *Schomburgkia* and dealing with the differences at the sub-generic level. Now there’s a thought that appeals to me. I always liked Pabst & Dung’s revision of Brazilian laelias (Orchidaceae Brasiliensis, vol.I, 1975). They presented a group of orchids that had some things in common (*Laelia*), yet some differences (*Cattleyodes*, *Hadrolaelia*, *Parviflora*, *Microlaelia*) - sections within the genus.



I suppose I will get used to it, but only if the name changes stop coming so rapidly. I for one will be happy to say goodbye to those silly hybrid genus names from the everything-in-*Sophranitis* days, like *Thwaitseara*. But I will miss hearing the rich guttural sound of *Schomburgkia* (or as one friend pronounced it, *Schromburgkia*). The name itself holds a special magic for me; remembrances of my early days as an orchid grower when every new orchid discovered was a source of excitement. I’ll miss hearing the call of the *Schombocatt* as I console myself watching ants crawl up and down the five-foot inflorescence of a *Myrmecophila tibicinis* next spring.

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Schomburgkia tibicinis Batem.  
As featured in Lindenia 1898-1906

There were times when this remarkable orchid had a great reputation and when it was considered one that had to be present in all collections claiming to be more or less complete. Today it is much less known by the orchidophiles, and for this, there are two reasons. On the one hand, its somewhat more modest qualities have been masked by the brilliant discoveries in the genera *Laelia* and *Cattleya*, and on the other hand, it has become rare, as many orchids of central America which are not often imported because the collectors have turned their interest away from those well-known areas which bear no longer any secrets to them.

*Schomburgkia tibicinis* is one of the longest known species of the genus, and together with *S. lyonsi*, the nicest one, the latter species being even much rarer than the one discussed here. The flowers of *S. tibicinis* attain a diameter of up to 3 inches. They are arranged in a loose panicle at the end of an inflorescence which is 3.3 feet or more in length. The segments are well spreading, obtuse oblong, less undulate than in *S. rosea* or *S. undulata*, but folded inwards in their center parts, rose basally and from the center to the apex of a nice reddish-brown. The labellum is trilobate, the lateral lobes are very large, wide open, with the margins distinctly less raised than in *Cattleya* or *Laelia*, orange-yellow, intensely striated with purplish-red, with a medium band of yellow and the anterior margins in that same color; the outer surface purplish-rose, darker near the top. The anterior lobe is much more narrow and much shorter, and forms a rounded blade preceded by a short nail. The disc is yellow, the anterior part purplish-rose. The column is white, shaded rose. The flowers open in May.

The pseudobulbs are more or less cylindrical, somewhat thinner near the top, 8 to 14 inches high, with two or three coriaceous, spreading, rather short leaves. The pseudobulbs have somewhat the form of a tube, and as they are hollow when dry, it has been said that the natives of Central America, actually use them in their daily life. This anatomical feature is indicated by the specific name given by Bateman.

*Schomburgkia tibicinis* was discovered by George Ure Skinner in Honduras and flowered for the first time in the collection of Bateman in 1840. It is also found, although not quite as abundant, in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and the southern part of Mexico. It seems to be quite variable in respect to the flower color and the width of the segments. The form flowered in our annexed plate flowered recently in the greenhouses of Mr. F. Pauwells, in Deurne, near Antwerp, and it is one of the largest and nicest varieties known to us. The plant received a first-class certificate of merit, voted unanimously, at the May meeting of L'Orchideenne.

Schomburgkias, in general, should be grown like the Mexican laelias to which they are quite closely allied (for example *Laelia superbiens*). They do very well in the most ventilated part of the *Cattleya* and *Laelia* greenhouse. Their only drawback seems to be their large size, but this drawback does not hinder them in producing a superb decorative effect at exhibitions and within arrangements of flowering orchids on the premises of their owners. To obtain a good show effect, it suffices to put the various plants, according to their size, on pedestals of different heights, and to place the plant of *Schomburgkia* in the center, directly on the ground. In this way, its flowers, in their entire beauty, will be appreciated.

### VOLUME AND LIQUID MEASURE

3 Teaspoons = 1 Tbs. (Tablespoons) = 14.8 ml (Millilitres)  
2 Tablespoons = 1 Fl. oz. (Fluid ounces) = 29.6 ml  
8 Fluid ounces = 16 Tablespoons = 1 Cup = 236.6 ml  
2 Cups = 32 Tbs. = 16 Fl. oz. = 1 Pint = 473.1 ml  
2 Pints = 64 Tbs. = 32 Fl. oz. = 1 Quart = 946.2 ml  
1 Litre = 1000 ml = 0.2642 Gallons = 33.81 Ounces  
1 Gallon = 4 Quarts = 128 Fl. oz. = 256 Tbs. = 3785 ml

### WEIGHTS

28.35 Grams = 1 Ounce  
16 Ounces = 1 Pound = 453.6 Grams  
1 Kilogram = 1000 Gram = 2.205 Pounds  
1 Gallon water = 8.34 Pounds = 3.8 Kilogram  
1 Cu. Ft. water = 62.4 Pounds = 28.3 Kilogram  
1 Ton = 2,000 Pounds = 907 Kilograms

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Diameter of a Circle  $D = \text{Distance from side to side}$   
Radius of a Circle  $R = 1/2 \text{ of Diameter}$   
Acre Feet of a Pond  $AF = \frac{\text{Length (ft.)} \times \text{Width (ft.)} \times \text{Avg. Depth (ft.)}}{43,560}$

(approx.) 43,560

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WATER		QUANTITY OF MATERIAL				
100 GAL.	1 LB.	2 LB.	3 LB.	4 LB.	5 LB.	6 LB.
5 GAL.	3 TBS.	1.5 OZ.	2.50 OZ.	3.25 OZ.	4 OZ.	5 OZ.
1 GAL.	2 TSP.	1 TBS.	1.5 TBS.	2 TBS.	2.5 TBS.	3 TBS.

NOTE: Wettable pesticide materials vary considerably in density. Therefore the teaspoonful (TSP.) and tablespoonful (TBS.) measurements in this table are not exact dosage by weight but are within the bounds of safety and efficiency for mixing small amounts of spray.

### EQUIVALENT QUANTITIES OF LIQUID MATERIALS (EMULSION, CONCENTRATES, ETC.) FOR VARIOUS QUANTITIES OF WATER:

WATER		QUANTITY OF MATERIAL				
100 GAL.	1/2 PT.	1 PT.	2 PT.	3PT.	4 PT.	5 PT.
5 GAL.	1 TBS.	1 FL OZ.	1.5 FL OZ.	2.5 FL OZ.	3 FL OZ.	4 FL OZ.
1 GAL.	1/2 TSP.	1 TSP.	2 TSP.	3 TSP.	4 TSP.	5 TSP.

NOTE: These are approximate equivalents.

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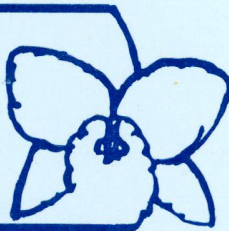
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