



Sarasota
ORCHID SOCIETY, INC.

sarasota orchid view society

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

April 4—Annual Meeting

**May 2—Jim Roberts—
“Summertime and
the Growin’ is Easy”**

**June 6—Phillip Hamil-
ton, Broughtonias**

July—No Meeting

**August 1—Alan Koch,
Gold Coast Orchids—
Miniature Cattleyas
for the Home**

**September 5—Annual
Picnic**

**Meetings are on the 1st
Monday of each month.
Doors open at 6:15 pm.
Cultural Study Group
starts promptly at 6:30 pm.
Regular meeting starts at
7:30 pm.**

**Marie Selby Botanical
Gardens, 801 South Palm
Avenue, Sarasota, Florida
www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org**

April in your Orchid Collection

April Climate Data

Average high: 83.8°
Average low: 67.6°
Average mean: 75.7°
Average rainfall: 3.36"

Far from the cruelest, April is the kindest month to South Florida orchid growers. The weather in April is definitely settled into warm, even deliciously hot, with passing cold fronts only adding the delight of a pleasant change in temperature. The clean, bright days brimming with abundant sunlight and the low relative humidity create the high drying potential that orchids love. Now we can get our orchids off to a great start on the growing season by practicing our very best watering skills under ideal conditions. Water heavily when you water and allow the plants to dry thoroughly before watering



Cattleya lueddemanniana

heavily again. Drying ‘hard’ in the Spring will produce benefits all season. We want to get our plants well launched while leaving all the fungi

high and dry.

The new shoots of *Oncidinae*, *grammatophyllums* and *dendrobiums* are quite

See “April” on page 5

INSIDE:

Upcoming Shows	4
Orchid swap meet April 4	5
Sky to Singapore	4
A foolproof orchid	6
Suggestions for <i>Masdevalias</i> 10	
Minutes of March meeting	12
Orchid basics: Watering	14
Overwatering diseases	15

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2011

April

The Sarasota Orchid Society Inc.

(SOS) meets on the first Monday of each month at Selby Botanical Gardens, 800 South Palm Ave., Sarasota, FL. The SOS Inc., an affiliate of the American Orchid Society, is a nonprofit association with the aims of promoting the development, improvement and preservation of orchids through the dissemination of information concerning the culture, hybridization or development of orchids; and generally to extend the knowledge of orchids.

Annual dues are \$20; \$25 for family. Deadline for the newsletter is the 15th of the previous month.

Contributors to this newsletter give reprint rights of their work to newsletters and other affiliates of the American Orchid Society.

www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org

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941-445-4789

orchidpix@comcast.net

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srqjd@verizon.net

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JOIN THE AOS

If you are not a member of the American Orchid Society, let me briefly tell you about the premier organization devoted to our hobby. The AOS is the world's largest specialty horticulture group and offers information not available elsewhere. The monthly magazine, *Orchids*, is the most highly-regarded orchid periodical in the world. The photography and articles are outstanding. Membership entitles you to a 10% discount on publications and your dues support conservation and educational programs. As a new member you will receive a copy of *Your First Orchid*, a book chock full of advice and an *Almanac* listing all affiliate organizations (Florida has the most with 58), growers, special interest groups, descriptions of awards, and many more resources. Membership forms are available at the sign-in table for anyone who needs one.

The AOS also publishes the *Awards Quarterly (Now on CD AQ Plus)*, with detailed descriptions of 200-300 awarded orchids with color photographs. I eagerly await mine every three months.

Dues are U.S. single membership \$60.00; for a 2 year membership \$108.00. American Orchid Society, 16700 AOS Lane, Delray Beach, Fl. 33446

Monroe



Cyc. Jem's Golden Dragon
Photo by Monroe Kokin

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SHELTON A. THORNE

UPCOMING SHOWS

April
2-3 - Central Florida Orchid Society Show,
Maitland Civic Center, 641 S. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL

16-17 - Tallahassee Orchid Society Show,
Doyle Conner Bldg, 3125 Doyle Conner Blvd., Tallahassee, FL

22-23—Vero Beach Orchid Society Show, Riverside Park Dr., Vero Beach, FL

23-24—30th Anniversary Orchid Show & Sale
Flamingo Gardens
3750 S. Flamingo Road
Davie, FL 33330

29-May 1—Platinum Coast Orchid Society

For members who are receiving the newsletter by mail, you are missing out on some wonderful color pictures taken during the year in our newsletter.

If you have computer access and are getting the newsletter by snail mail, you can switch and save the Society \$7.00 per year per person.

Please contact me and I'll be glad to add you to our e-mail list.

Carolyn Langdon
carolynlangdon@tampabay.rr.com

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Orchid Show, Cocoa Expo Sports Arena, on SR 520, just west of I-95, Cocoa, FL

May
7-8—Volusia County Orchid Society Show, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Hester Building, 3150 E. New York

Ave., Deland, FL. Contact: Jennifer Reinoso; 58 Fernwood Tr., Deland, FL

27-28—Greater Orlando Orchid Society Show, Orlando garden Club, 710 Rollins St., Orlando, FL

Sky to Singapore

The 20th World Orchid Conference promises to be a spectacle for orchid and exotic plant lovers like no other. As if planned for the rush of November 2011 attendees, the huge Marina Bay Sands complex (host venue) and adjacent Gardens by the Bay colossus will provide a modern yet natural (and very 'green') backdrop for the events. As awesome as the physical surrounds are, plants...and in particular orchids, will be the true focus of all participants. Though Singapore is already an example to the world as a melting pot of cultures, attendees from all continents will provide additional distinction for everyone... whether in showing their

plants/flowers or sharing information at the impressive conferences.

Located virtually on the equator and surrounded by water, the island-state's year round weather is moderately warm...well-suited for a visit anytime. Participants from both hemispheres will find conditions pleasant for sight-seeing and shopping, whether indoors or outside.

With the orchid spirits supporting their recovery from the recent disasters in their country, Japanese growers and hobbyists will also be on-hand to join the world orchid family. In conversations with orchidists there fol-

See "Singapore" on page 8

LET'S TALK ABOUT SALES
The vendors who lecture at our meetings take their valuable time and effort to educate us on orchid culture. In turn, they ask us to buy their plants which they bring to sell at our meetings.

We know that there are lots of places to buy orchids in our area but as members of SOS, we should really make a point of patronizing the speakers and advertisers when we buy new plants.

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HELPING HAND HOME SERVICES

"April" from page 1

cup-like; care must be taken that water does not stand too long in these immature growths. Water these types very thoroughly with two or three applications of water spaced 10-15 minutes apart. Water should run freely through the pot on each application. Saturated thoroughly in this fashion the plants will need only weekly watering. Even more care should be taken with the soft plicate leafed genera like *Catasetum*, *Mormodes*, *Cynoches*, *Gongora*, *Calanthe* and *Thunia*. The new growths of this type are rolled together (the fancy word is convolute) like a collapsible drinking cup. These should be grown in water retentive media that should be saturated at each watering to permit the developing roots to have abundant water but allow the vulnerable new growth extra time to dry. Feel the weight of a pot when you have finished watering. Be sure it is heavy with water. If it's not water one more time. With plants properly spaced, good drying should not be difficult in the hot dry air of April. But do be careful to water early enough in the day to allow the tender new growth to thoroughly dry by twilight.

With vandaceous orchids grown in slatted baskets, most growers find that they dry altogether too well in April. Vandas can be watered almost every morning in April. Indeed, a second light watering or misting in mid-afternoon in April and early May is often beneficial provided the crowns and leaf axils of the plants have time to dry completely by nightfall.



Renanthera monachica

Another strategy under high drying conditions is to bend the rules, at least occasionally, and water heavily in mid to late morning. Late waterings on weekend mornings (you didn't want to get up early, any way) provide relief for plants that are more stressed on week days with their owners absent. Very occasionally, one needs to break the rules absolutely and water thoroughly (not just mist) in the mid to late afternoon so the plants can slowly absorb the water across the cool hours of the night. This is the season that one must be sure that Vanda roots have turned over all dark green when we have finished watering. Two applications of water to the point of runoff spaced several minutes apart should accomplish the required color change from white to totally green. Saturated roots are absolutely necessary to provide the plants the moisture the plants need to withstand the heat and dry air typical of April. Sometimes, particularly at this season, the roots will not change color even after the second or third

application of water. This lack of response to water is because the roots have become so dry that they are repelling rather than absorbing water. They are behaving like a cork in a wine bottle. The grower must exert special effort to re-saturate the roots. Often this will require 4 or 5 waterings to the point of run off spaced 15 minutes apart. Once the roots have been changed to the healthy overall green, normal applications of water should bring them around in future.

With increased heat and light and the onset of growth, fertilizer becomes more crucially important to the plants. Balanced time release pellets (13-13-13) can still be applied to potted plants provided the duration is 180 days or less. Most time release fertilizer breaks down faster under South Florida conditions and should be exhausted by October when we will want our plants to slow down. The brand marketed at retail as "Dynamite" is generally considered by professionals as superior in reliability to other types. In April, 15-5-15

can be applied to most genera at the rate of 2 tsp. per gal every two weeks. Vandas, ascocendas, Aerides, et al will benefit from a full tablespoon of 15-5-15 weekly during this high energy period. One can also apply high phosphorous 'Bloom Booster' fertilizer once or twice at this time to stimulate them to flower for Mothers' Day or failing that to win those trophies and A.O.S. awards at the Redland International Orchid Festival the next weekend. High phosphorous (we use Millers' *Solugrow* 8-48-12) also stimulates root action and is important in getting all genera off to a good start on the growing season. This is one of the few times that high phosphorus is perhaps beneficial. During the rest of the year it is to be avoided particularly with our alkaline water. Current science recommends fertilizers lower in nitrogen, much lower in phosphorus and higher in potassium, magnesium and calcium. Peter's Excel 15-5-15 is now the standard for year round use.

The warmth of April, alas, stimulates the growth of bugs as well as plants. Both thrips and mites thrive in the dry heat of April. Liquid dishwashing soap (at 2 oz per gal) will control both but be mindful that soap should not be applied to plants that are suffering from drought stress. Be sure that your plants are well hydrated before you apply soap. Water them extra hard the day before. To be effective soap must be used profusely. The plants should be washed in the solution to the point of wetting every nook and cranny of both the

plant and its container. Only such thorough treatment can reach the reclusive thrips and be sure to touch all of the ever prolific mites. A second treatment at 7-10 days is necessary to control mites and a miticide such as *Kelthane* might be advised. Orthene which is the insecticide of choice for thrips (because of its residual action) is compatible with many miticides. Check with your county agent if in doubt.

April is the classic month to catch up with all the re-potting which you meant to do across the winter. New roots form fast in April; don't rot them off by over-potting or break them off by allowing the plant to wiggle in the pot. Tie them up: tie them down!

April is a month for great moral decisions. When turning on the air conditioner for the first time, consider how much better an orchid grower you would be if you set the thermostat 2 or 3 degrees higher. You will find that you spend more time with your plants when you are accustomed to slightly higher temperatures and it is the master's shadow that makes the plants grow. Besides spending more time enjoying your orchids, when the FPL bill arrives, you can celebrate with some splendid additions to your collection.

April is a great month for naturalizing orchids in the garden. Perhaps its time to think of new homes for some of our burgeoning collection.

Tasks for April

- Full speed ahead with re-potting
- Water heavily and well
- Don't forget to fertilize
- Spray for mites and thrips

April SOS Orchid Swap Meet and Spring Cleaning Opportunity

It sure feels like spring and you are probably busy repotting and taking inventory of your orchid supplies.

- Do you have too many 4" pots because all your babies have turned into specimens?
- Do you have too many divisions of that favorite plant that you don't need?
- Have you decided to concentrate on Cattleyas rather than Vandas or maybe Paphs instead of Phals?
- It doesn't matter!

At our April meeting you can share your "overstocks" with your fellow members and maybe return home with a little extra cash in your pocket, a new edition for your collection, or supplies to finish that repotting job.

We'll have tables set up for you to share, swap, or sell:

- Orchids—potted, in baskets, or mounted are preferred, but fresh bare roots are acceptable too.
- Pots—clean and usable—plastic or clay
- Potting Medium such as bark mixes or charcoal—new and in bags
- Slat baskets, driftwood, plaques, etc.
- Unused supplies such as new pot clips, pot hangers, unopened fertilizer
- Orchid Books—new or used
- Display pots and vases
- Other orchid collectables

Bring it all into the April meeting and we'll see if we can help you sell or swap it.



Ludisia discolor

Photo by Jay Pfahl

A Foolproof Orchid

James Watson tells how three hobbyists grow the Jewel Orchid—*Ludisia discolor*¹

The jewel orchid *Ludisia discolor* (loo-DISS-ee-uh DIS-kol-or) contradicts the myth that orchids are not grown for their foliage. This adaptable terrestrial dazzles the eye year round with its colorful lustrous leaves. And when ready to bloom, the plant explodes with 12-inch-tall sprays of white flowers.

Ludisia discolor shatters another myth: Orchids can be grown only in certain regions because of their specific cultural needs. Not so with *Lds. discolor*. This tough plant will thrive in a greenhouse in the Pacific Northwest yet also reward the grower with lush growth in a Hawaiian garden, where it can be cultivated in a container or planted in the landscape.

It is equally at home indoors. "It's wonderful as a houseplant because of its beautiful foliage," says Rita Cohen, proprietor of Orchid Art in New York and chair of

the AOS Northeast Judging Center. "When Linda Yang wrote about this plant in the New York Times several years ago, she listed four vendors as sources who rapidly went through a couple of hundred plants while filling orders. Two years later, people were still calling for them."

At Home Under Lights

For Cohen, *Lds. discolor*'s needs are met in a light garden where the plants are set on the floor next to the light stand. Here, the rich leafy colors are more intense than on those plants set directly beneath the tubes. "When the plants are given too much light, they bleach out. Likewise, shade seems to intensify the foliage color of another jewel orchid called *Macodes*," says Cohen. Her *Lds. discolor* shares the floor with the company of ferns in these low-light conditions.

Ludisia discolor is potted in a mixture of ProMix to which some perlite is added. Says Cohen, "The plants like to be kept damp, but not sopping wet." Because *Lds. discolor*

is grown for its foliage, it is fertilized sparingly. A temperature of 58 to 60 F is maintained both night and day.

Fortunately for growers, the plants are almost insect and disease free. However, when mealybugs invade, the plants are washed with warm soapy water or rubbed with alcohol.

Propagating *Lds. discolor* is a snap. When Cohen needs more to meet customer demand, she breaks off a piece of the pencil-thick brittle



The beautiful foliage is the reason why many people grow *Ludisia discolor*.

rhizome and then pins it on the top of some potting mix in a small container. Kept damp, the cuttings root quickly, and soon Cohen is ready to spark another orchidist's enthusiasm for *Lds. discolor*.

Life Under Glass

Ludisia discolor also makes a pretty picture in natural light, whether on the windowsill or in a greenhouse. Mary Davidson Dunnell of Seattle, Washington, recalls her first encounter. "When we first saw it, we thought it was an exotic tradescantia. Then, discovering what it really was,

we began growing it like a rhizomatous begonia in our glass greenhouse," says Dunnell, a longtime member of the American Orchid Society who served as president from 1990 to 1992. Her potting mix contains a bit of everything—vermiculite, perlite, soilless potting mix, fine bark and tree-fern fiber. The plants, which are grown in 4-inch pots, are watered when the top of the soil is dry, and they are rarely fertilized.

Says Dunnell, "I treat this plant like a begonia, not an orchid." Her plants of *Lds. discolor*, which grow in the shade cast by begonias, marantas, ferns and aroids, are kept neatly trimmed in their plastic vessels. However, if the stems reached the greenhouse floor they would probably grow like a groundcover.

Ludisia discolor makes a great gift, too. Says Dunnell, "We gave one to a friend and she is growing it in a bathroom with a skylight, where it blooms all the time."

Suited to the Tropics

At Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, Florida, *Lds. discolor* is grown in 10-inch-wide shallow clay pots like those used for bulbs and epiphytic orchids. Says Conservatory Horticulturist Craig Allen, "I use a mix of one third perlite, one third peat moss and one third Aliflor, baked-clay pellets that are a substitute for tree fern. To each pot I add 1-1/2 tablespoons of cow manure and 1/2 tablespoon of bone meal." When he repots, which is once a year, Allen often divides each clump in half and centers each division in a new container.

The plants are watered

three times weekly and fertilized once a week with Dyna-Gro. Allen echoes Cohen's advice: Although *Lds. discolor* can be watered often, it will not tolerate a soggy medium.

Allen, who has worked at Fairchild for 13 years, sets the containers on plastic-slat benches (for air circulation) outdoors under 50 percent shade cloth. When a cold night is forecast, the plants are brought into the greenhouse until the threat of chilly temperatures passes.

Ludisia discolor is a hot item at the garden's sales. "We have a different form that has an almost black velvety color with a gold center vein, which is popular with our members. It is more difficult to grow than the regular type, taking longer to fill a container, and its leaves are not as large," says Allen.

Basics

Ludisia discolor is still often sold in nurseries and referred to in books under the older name of *Haemaria discolor*.

This terrestrial species is native to Southern China and Myanmar to Indonesia.

Ludisia discolor is commonly called a jewel orchid, which refers to the quality of the leaves. Other genera of orchids also referred to as jewel orchids include *Macodes* and *Anoectochilus*.

The culture is remarkably easy for this orchid that remains attractive year round. Pot in a clay or plastic container filled with a basic houseplant mix, such as that recommended for African violets. Place in a well-lit window with other houseplants and orchids or set a plant in your greenhouse. Water to keep the

soil moist, perhaps twice a week, remembering to adjust your watering schedule as the seasons change. Fertilize with a balanced plant food regularly. Keep temperatures above 50 F year round, avoiding excessively high temperatures in the summer. —James Watson

Rooting Stems in Water

Unlike many orchids, *Ludisia discolor* is a terrestrial and it is usually grown in a potting mix; one recommended for African violets works well. I found that I can also grow this plant in water. This was not planned but as I was moving my plants to their outdoor location in June I broke off a couple of stems accidentally. The stems of this orchid are fleshy, turgid, similar to those of some begonias. Having rooted begonias in water, I placed the *Ludisia* stems in a glass mustard jar filled with water. I placed the jar on my kitchen windowsill (north exposure with a large skylight above). Over the weeks and months, roots formed. No food was added. It was only necessary to add water as needed to maintain a constant level. By December, inflorescences began and eventually burst into bloom. The blooms lasted about two months and in March I cut off the spent blossoms and potted the plants, which are now putting out vegetative side shoots and growing well.—

Charles Zill, DOS, 2350 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

Republished from *Orchids* magazine, July 1997

"Singapore" from page 4

Following the quake & tsunami, I have found their outlook to be much more favorable than one might anticipate. Since 20WOC will be convened nearly 3,500 miles to the southwest, well away from the problems at Fukushima Dai-Ichi. The Show will go on! Visit: www.20woc.com.sg for

more detailed information.
Robert M. Scully



Above: *Paravanda Nelson Mandela*. At right: the CloudForest Conservatory under construction in a Dec 2010 photo.



2011 Sarasota Orchid Society Renewal Membership Dues

are now being accepted!. Single Membership \$20. Family Membership \$25. Please complete the attached 2011 Membership Renewal Form and mail, with your check made out to Sarasota Orchid Society, Inc., to: PO Box 19895, Sarasota, FL 34276 The 2011 Membership Renewal Form is also on our website: www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org <<http://www.sarasotaorchidsociety.org/>>, under "About Us."



Stan. florida
Above photos by Monroe Kokin

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Look for them at membership tables at selected orchid events around the country or email Barbara Noe, Chair of the Membership Committee at celebrateorchids@aol.com for more information.

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As members of the Sarasota Orchid Society we now have the ability to order customized Sarasota Orchid Society Merchandise <<https://imprintsite.com/p/sos/index.php/>> with our personal choice of:

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These funds will be focused toward our S.O.S. Or-

chid Research Program which promotes and supports active research programs and the publication of orchid research projects, performed by active members of the Sarasota Orchid Society. The purpose and definition of orchid research is to further the understanding, conservation and appreciation of orchids and their role in Nature and in cultivation.

This Orchid Research Program will encourage people who may have a more scientific interest in orchids to become members of the S.O.S., both to participate in the regular meetings and activities, and hopefully to become involved in future research programs. The orchid research activities will create publicity and goodwill for the Sarasota Orchid Society, help reach a broader audience with information regarding the S.O.S. and also offer greater credibility of the

Sarasota Orchid Society's non-profit status.

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SOS Customized Merchandise available online during the month of April, at a 10% discount!

As we SWING INTO SPRING, see directions at left, go to the top of our Home Page and find S.O.S. Customized Merchandise, All orders received April 1st through April 30th are eligible for a 10% discount. SOS Members must type in the Code Word: **getyourten** (all lower case and one word) at the bottom of the shopping cart page in the "Coupon Box". The Code Word must be in the Coupon Box or the system will not recognize the order as eligible for the 10% discount. A Sweet Saving as we Swing into Spring!

Some Cultural Suggestions For Masdevallias

By Marguerite Webb

THE VARIED and beautiful genus *Masdevallia* is the showiest member of the subtribe *Pleurothallidinae*. Individual species can vary in size from the one-inch *Masdevallia muriculata*¹ to the one- and one-half-foot *Masdevallia macrura*, although most fall in the size range of four to ten inches. Such compact plants allow the orchid grower to include a great variety in a limited space. The flowers are usually brightly



Masd. coccinea var. *alba*
Photo by Monroe Kokin

colored, often of bizarre configuration, as so many of the illustrations in this article reveal, and frequently large in proportion to the plant. In the case of such smaller-flowering species such as *Masdevallia gutierrezii*, size is usually compensated for by the great quantity of flowers

produced, and this Bolivian species blooms profusely two times a year. Members of the *Alaticaulae* and *Reichenbachianae* sections, such as *Masdevallia infracta* and *M. reichenbachiana*, will flower repeatedly on the same stem, thus keeping the plant in flower for months. *Masdevallias* are indigenous to Central and South American cloud forests. While the greatest concentration is in Colombia and Ecuador, many are found in Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela and northward into Central America, ending in Mexico with *Masdevallia floribunda*. The average temperature range recommended for the species which grow in the higher elevations such as *Masdevallia rosea* and other members of the *Coccineae* section is 50-55F (winter night) with the temperature range for those from lower elevations such as *Masdevallia reichenbachiana*, *M. rolfeana* or *M. gutierrezii* from 55-60F (night temperature). A median temperature of 55F is appropriate for most species. Day temperatures ideally should not rise above 80F. When this is not possible, as is often the case in the summer months, the relative humidity should be close to 100%, and the air movement should be excellent. Achieving a temperature drop of ten to fifteen degrees at night is also beneficial. In the summer heat, *masdevallias* are particularly susceptible to fungus rot. This may occur as black spotting on the leaves or as rapid leaf drop. An occasional treatment with a fungicide as well as

careful watering and good air movement will help to alleviate this problem.

Light intensity should be comparable to that given for phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums. *Masdevallias* do not require high light in order to flower. In nature, they are often found growing on the jungle floor in deep shade. Leaf color is the best indicator of proper light. The leaves should be dark green. If the leaf color is light green, the plants are receiving too much light. Members of the *Leontoglossa* section of the genus, such as *Masdevallia angulata* or *M. torta*, have heavy, fleshy leaves with light red pigmentation. These species require slightly higher light intensity to flower, and the red leaf color will darken as the light is increased.

Since *masdevallias* like to stay moist at all times, plastic pots are most suitable. The potting media should provide excellent drainage and good aeration of the root system.



Masd. soderoi

Photo by Monroe Kokin

Three-fourths coarse tree fern mixed with one-fourth perlite in a well "crooked" pot works quite well. With such a mix, watering should be frequent enough to keep the plants moist but not soggy wet. *Masdevallias*



Masd. floribunda
Photo by Monroe Kokin

grow actively year round and must be kept moist to keep them growing. They will, of course, require more frequent watering during the summer months. Pot size is another consideration. Plants tightly potted seem to stay uniformly moist but not overly wet.

The plant itself should be potted so that its crown is even with or very slightly above the level of the potting medium. If potted too deeply, new growths tend to rot as they emerge from the rhizome at the base of the plant. Deep potting is a common problem and is often the result of difficulty in securing the plant in the pot. Using a small wire clamp to hold the plant in place is a good alternative.

Masdevallias do not take kindly to repotting and will nearly always suffer a certain amount of leaf drop. Repotting should be done in the winter or early spring so that the plants are well established by summer. Never repot during the summer heat since the plants are already in a slightly weakened condition. They might have difficulty re-establishing themselves.

A viable alternative to potting masdevallias is to grow them on cork or tree fern slabs. It is wise to pad the roots with a cushion of osmunda fiber or a similar substance. If humidity is high and watering frequent, slabbing works extremely well for many compact species such as *Masdevallia paiveana*, *M. gutierrezii* and *M. strobilii*. *Masdevallia polysticta* and its close relatives often have a rambling

growth habit which makes them good candidates for mounting. Although taller plants with long bloom spikes will grow mounted, they are more easily managed in pots.

Mounted culture decreases the problem of keeping the roots too wet since slabs dry out much more quickly than pots. The plants are usually mounted vertically, but a second technique is to place them upright on horizontal "rafts." Aside from providing cultural advantages, mounting masdevallias contributes to their aesthetic appearance. Such species which produce flowers among the leaves or at the base of the plant are displayed far better on a vertical mount than in a pot.

Masdevallias respond well to windowsill culture and under-lights conditions if their cultural requirements are met. Pebble trays will provide additional humidity. The plants, however, must be set well above the level of the water. A small fan will supply necessary air movement as well as create additional moisture in the air by blowing air across the tray. *Masdevallia strobilii*, possibly the most spectacular *Masdevallia* species, has been grown and flowered beautifully under such conditions.

It is a misconception that masdevallias are hard to grow. They offer a challenge which is met without great difficulty and yield a reward of flowers all year round.

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March 2011 minutes of SOS

President Kokin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Carolyn Langdon introduced all of our new members; Pamela Bucci, Jacqueline Harris, Joe & Saron Petty, Madi & George Ruhl, Susan Scholz, and Jessica & Vince Ventimiglia. Guest Sonya Halyk came in with Helena Indianu.

Minutes of the February 2011 meeting found in the newsletter were approved by vote following a motion and second.

The treasurer's reports were posted on a cover letter for members receiving their newsletter by email and an insert for those members receiving it by mail. A motion was made to approve, seconded, and approved by a vote of the membership.

The Sarasota Orchid Society had a table at the 2011 Marie Selby Botanical Gardens Plant and Garden Festival two weeks ago. Sixteen of our members volunteered to be at the table during the two-day event. We welcomed two new Family Memberships (\$50) and sold 22 of our Culture Booklets (\$22.25). Thank you Carolyn for putting the figures together and to everyone that took the time out to man the table. It was great weather this year not like in the past.

New Business

President Kokin asked the nomination committee for their report. Leroy Mouton reported that the slate of Officers for the next year are as follows: Monroe Kokin—President, Denny Pavlock—Vice-President, Laurie Stoner—Treasurer, Recording Secretary—Jo Davis, AOS Representative—Barry Reese, Members at Large—Leroy Mouton, Norm Hillstrom, Michael Sinn, Roy Krueger, Manuel Chepote, and Connie Waymer. Membership—Carolyn Langdon, Librarian—Patti Quinnelly The Election of officers will be in April.

Monroe asked for a volunteer to organize the Refreshment Committee. Jean Kennar and her daughter Whitney Van Winkle volunteered. Many thanks to Jean and Whitney.

Englewood Orchid Society will be holding their annual show on Friday and Saturday, March 24 & 25. Set-up is Thursday, March 23. This is a 10 x 10 display and we need plants. Anyone with plants please let Jo Davis or Laurie Stoner know so arrangements can be made to drop them off or bring them to the show.

The library is open during the meeting for members to take sign out books for the month. See Patti Quinnelly for help if needed.

Leroy & Al sold raffle tickets in the back of the room. This is a wonderful

and inexpensive way to increase your orchid collection.

After the break, Monroe introduced our speaker for the evening, Keith Emig of Winter Haven Orchid Nursery. Keith spoke about growing Paphiopedilums. Keith recommends Lance Birk's Paph Growers Manual as a great reference, and uses the following mix for repotting Lady Slippers; 8 parts medium fir bark, 2 parts shredded sphagnum (rub dry sphagnum between hands to shred fine), and 1 part patio paver sand (fine sharp sand). He said Paphs really prefer to be repotted once per year, and he top dresses paphs with crushed limestone. Keith also did a potting demonstration and provided each member attending a Paph seedling to pot up with potting mix right at the meeting.

Roy Krueger went over the members plant table that everyone voted on. Be sure to note the pictures of the winners at right.

Leroy and Al did the plant raffle. Raffle plants were supplied by Leroy, Jo, and our speaker, Keith Emig.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo Davis,
Recording Secretary

Winners from Monday March 7th meeting



Z. Jumping Jack—Members Choice; Owner: Brigitte Ortiz



Ddc. glumaceum—Speakers Choice; Owner: Kathy Lewis



Paph. St. Swithin—Speakers Choice; Owner: Jo Davis



Rl. glauca—Species-of-the-month; Owner: Roy Krueger



Ctna. Why Not—Novice Owner: Ester Lee

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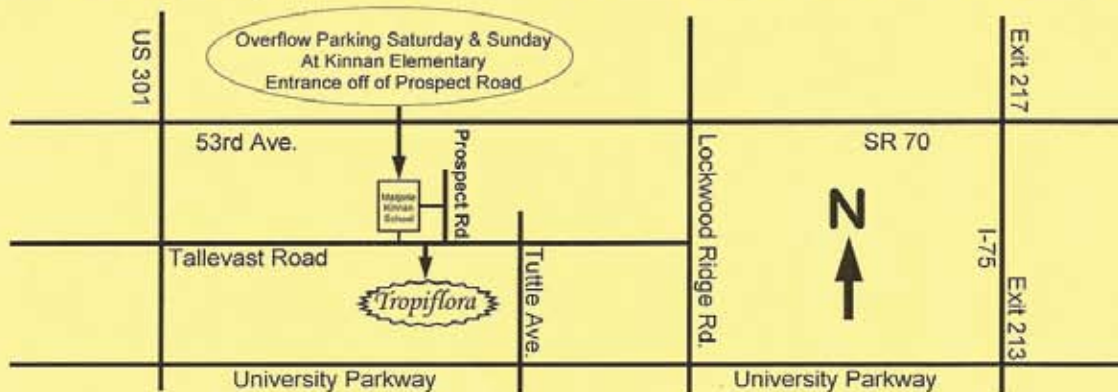
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Orchid basics: The How and Why of Water

More orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. There are two separate components to proper watering; when and how. The vast majority of orchids grown by hobby growers are epiphytes, growing on trees above the ground where the light is more plentiful. These plants are adapted to having their roots exposed to light and air so in addition to water, orchid roots need air. The central core of an epiphytic orchid root is covered with a spongy material called velamen designed to store water. When this spongy material remains wet too long, the central core suffocates and begins to rot. Once the roots begin to rot, the plant can no longer take up water properly and a whole host of problems begin. At worst, root rot will spread upward into the rhizome and cause the death of the plant. In other cases, the loss of roots prevents the plant from absorbing sufficient water to maintain the plant in good condition and the leaves will take on a wrinkled appearance. Unfortunately, the symptoms of over-watering and under-watering are superficially similar and the tendency is to increase watering rather than inspect the roots. Over-watered roots will be brown and mushy while those on under-watered plants will be white or gray and obviously dry. Let's look first at when to water.

When do I water?

Orchids should be watered just as they dry out. This rule applies to all orchids with slight variations depending on whether your plant has pseudobulbs (thickened stems that are designed to store water) or not. Orchids such as cattleyas

and oncidiums should be allowed to just dry completely between waterings while orchids such as phalaenopsis and vandas that have no water storage organs should be watered just before dryness occurs. For vandas, this may mean daily watering during the warm summer months. Vandas and ascocendas that are properly watered will have actively growing root tips at all times. If the root tips on your plants dry up and seal over, you are not watering often enough.



Note the particles clinging to the stick inserted into the medium. This indicates the presence of moisture

There's unfortunately no magic formula; i.e., water a plant in a 6" pot every 7 days and you'll be trouble free. This is because your growing area is different from anyone else's. Humidity, air movement, potting medium (type and age) and light levels all play a role. There are several ways to determine when a potted orchid is almost dry: 1) the surface of the potting mix will appear dry; 2) dry pots will feel lighter when lifted; 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a wooden stake or skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry. If in doubt, a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix. It will cause no harm to the plant. And remember, fresh potting mix will

always dry out faster than the old medium.

How do I water?

How to water is just as important to proper culture as when to water. When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Water should be provided until it runs freely from the drainage holes. This serves several functions. First, thorough, copious watering is necessary to soak the potting medium. In addition, thorough watering helps to flush away the salts that naturally accumulate in the potting medium from the dissolved salts in our water supplies and the fertilizers applied for good growth. Also, this is your opportunity to examine how the potting mix behaves. If you cannot pour water rapidly through the pot, the potting mix is too dense and you run the risk of starving the roots for air. If you see finely divided material that looks like coffee grounds in the water coming from the drainage holes, your potting mix is breaking down and it's time to repot into fresh medium. At a minimum, try to thoroughly water your plants at least once a month.

Finally a couple of notes about mounted plants and those like vandas that are grown in baskets without additional potting medium. First, avoid dunking these plants in buckets of water.



Overwatered Cattleya

This practice very easily spreads diseases. If one plant has a disease, all those dunked in the same bucket of water will have been exposed as well. Also, two short waterings a few minutes apart are much more effective than one long watering. Once water runs off the plant, the roots will have absorbed essentially all they can at that time and excess water simply runs off to the ground. The proper technique is to water your plants and then a few minutes later water them again, always beginning with the first plant you watered. This allows time for the roots of the last plant watered to finish absorbing water before you wet them again. Roots that are completely saturated will be a solid color while those that are not will appear mottled.

*Ron McHatton,
AOS Director of Education*

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Diseases Associated with Overwatering

Unfortunately, along with the pleasure of seeing your orchids come to bloom, there are a few negative aspects to orchid growing such as disorders and disease. Most orchid sicknesses are preventable by proper growing conditions. We hope you never encounter any of these.



Basal Rot

Basal rot is commonly known as 'Southern Blight'. It is directly related to watering methods and practices. Either over watering, or water left standing in the crown of plants combined with cool humid situations can bring on this condition.

Basal rot, as the name suggests, starts at the bottom or the crown of the plant and proceeds upward. The condition is discovered on a plant with multiple growths, and only a small portion is afflicted, you can attempt to save the plant by cutting away the diseased portion

with a sharp knife and treating the wound with sulphur. Keep on the dry side after the "operation" and hope the rot does not spread.



Botrytis

This is a fungal disease which affects primarily the flowers of phalaenopsis, cattleya, cymbidium and dendrobium. This condition occurs most frequently in cool, moist conditions where there is little air movement. Symptoms are tiny black spots on the petals which soon grow larger and in extreme circumstances are covered with a grey fuzzy mold. If caught early, take measures to increase night time temperatures to no less than 65 degree F and provide maximum air circulation.

Remove and destroy badly infected material such as dead flowers which have fallen to the floor and are covered with mold. Spray flooring with a strong solution of fungicide. Spray plants with a mild solution of physan or other liquid fungicide. This will not reverse the damage already manifest on your bloom, but should dry up the affected areas and halt the further spread of spores.

Fusarium Wilt

Not a disease in itself, but rather a common afflic-

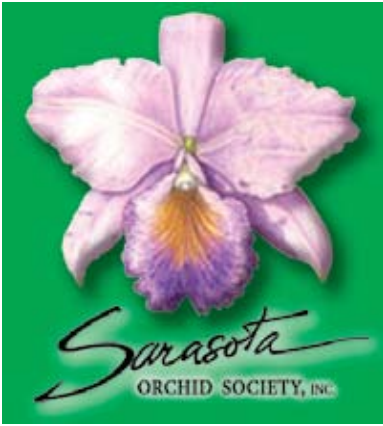


tion due to poor culture or growing conditions. The most often contributing factor is severe shortage of water, especially during the growing season. This is evidenced by extremely shriveled, desiccated leaves. Over watering can produce the same symptoms once the roots have rotted and can no longer provide moisture to the plant.

Remedy: Pull the plant out of the pot. If there are no live roots, give it a decent burial because it will not be worth the time and effort spent to attempt a resurrection. If in the early stages however, and if there are still some viable roots present, you can attempt to save it.

Repot immediately in fresh moist orchid seedling





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