

Richmond Orchid Alliance

We are all about Orchids!

July 2009

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ROA Bulletin

Fragrant Zygos

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Birthdays

Bayne Hawkins	7/4
Nan Archer	7/9
Arline Murphy	7/13
Joe Mathias	7/20

Happy Birthday to you!

Show Table

There was no show table at the Repotting Event, however, the show table will resume at our July program. Bring your blooming orchids and share your success.



Z. Artur Elle
Grown by the Creeches

Paul Sheetz will be the speaker at our meeting on July 12. He will be talking about *Zygopetalums* and related hybrids. *Zygos*, as they are commonly called, are fragrant and typically pass this trait onto their children. Paul is the owner of JustPat Orchids, has a 30' by 48' greenhouse and has been exhibiting plants for more than 20 years..

For many years, my brother John and I have been attending the Philadelphia Flower Show. Each year we were drawn to one orchid vendor called JustPat Orchids, not just because this booth has an extensive collection of orchids that are beautiful and healthy, but also because the owner, Paul Sheetz, possesses a wealth of knowledge on a wide variety of orchids genera and their culture who willingly and patiently answered every dumb question from us inexperienced growers.

From conversations over the years, we found that Paul has been growing orchids for over 30 years. He bought his first white *Cattleya* at the Philadelphia Flower Show in 1976 and was hooked. He has been active in local orchid societies for the past 25 years and is currently Vice President of the Greater Philadelphia Orchid Society. Paul is an accredited AOS judge and chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Region, and is also active in show table judging for several local orchid societies.

We 'found' Paul again at the Longwood Gardens' "Orchid Extravaganza." I asked if he will be available to come to ROA, and to my delight, he accepted.

You don't want to miss hearing this talk and seeing all these wonderful plants. **See you on July 12 at the Science Museum.** He will have plants for sale.

-Thuyen Trevino

Upcoming Events

- July 12
Paul Sheetz
Zygopetalums
- August 9
Jeff Morris
Phragmipediums
- September 13
Blooming Plant Auction
- October 11
Dr. Clark Riley
Using your resources to the max
- November 8
Holiday Party and Discussion
- December
No meeting

ROA activities and speakers emphasize the how-to and hands-on aspects of growing orchids.

President's Message

Summer is here and your orchid collection should be outside enjoying the humidity and the bright light. Just a reminder, most orchids will get sun burn on their leaves if placed in direct sun. Keep checking for ants. They have been a problem this year due to the rainy days.

We just held our repotting event. This year, we had more new members participating, watching, and asking lots of questions. It was a success! We could not have had a nicer day to be outside on the tracks.

Recently, ROA has received several monetary donations. They are always welcome. Please ask Judy Craggs for an in-kind donation form; these are tax deductible and this form is an acknowledgement of your gift.

I hope to see everyone at our next program, because Zygo's are great additions to your collection. Easy to grow, many have fragrance and interesting flowers.

See you July 12th.

- Valli

Repotting at the Tracks - June 2009

We had a wonderful day for repotting! It was the very best weather we have ever had with moderate temperatures and a nice breeze. The best part was working with the people that brought their plants in and actually having time to talk with them as we potted their plants.

I have known Nelda Thung for many years. Actually, I have been acquainted with her for many years but she decided to work with me at the potting and I had several hours to get to know her. She is funny and fun. One of the neat things about attending and assisting at ROA events is learning about the plants and the other members. Participation in activities such as this increases our knowledge of what is needed to keep the organization operating as well as providing for a lot of enjoyment through the camaraderie.

You really don't want to pass up opportunities such as this. Plan on assisting at events such as these: the State Fair, next year's repotting, represent ROA at Great Big Greenhouse activities. Thanks to all who attended and participated at this event.



Steve and Barbi Partlow helping Vicky Rust repot in the foreground; Arline Murphy and Bob Woehrle talking about plant care in the background.

- Wanda Andrako

ROA Library

We all have our favorite orchid hybrids. We can easily find the orchid parents of these hybrids – indeed, find the entire family tree going back to the species – by referring to *Sander's List of Orchids*. This list goes back to the first cross, *Calanthe Dominyii* (*C. furcata* x *C. masuca*) made in 1858 by John Dominy, the head grower for Veitch & Sons. It includes all orchid hybrids registered since then – over 130,000. It is the most complete list of hybrids on all of botany.

How did such a compendium as this come to be? Late in the nineteenth century the House of Sander began publishing *Sander's Orchid Guide* describing orchid genera, species and hybrids to complement its orchid business. Later, issues began to include more detailed information on the increasing number of hybrids being reported. With no formal registration procedure or agency to keep track of all of this confusion – nay, chaos began to develop. For instance, while only four *Cymbidium* species parents were listed over one thousand hybrids, obviously with many duplications though different names. Three hundred *Cattleya* hybrids contained duplication such as *C. Enid* and *C. Adonis* for the cross *C. mossiae* by *C. warscewiczii*. Such a situation could not continue. In 1895 Mr. Fred Sander in recognition of this developed a system for registering orchid hybrids. From this system he began to list hybrids alphabetically by name followed parents and including the name of the hybridizer. These lists were included in periodic issues of *Sander's Orchid Guide*.

In the early years of hybridization when seed germination was not all that certain Sander could accomplish this in the evenings although some records were difficult to decipher. With the development of aseptic seed germination by Lewis Knudson in 1922 successful orchid hybridization increased dramatically but Sander persevered. On January 1, 1946 the first edition of *Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids, 1854 – 1945* was published. It was a monumental effort and a life's work. All orchidists will forever be indebted to Fred K. Sander for his foresight in 1895 and for his succeeding diligence to produce this opus. The comment on the title page describes it perfectly: "CONCISE, RELIABLE AND INDISPENSIBLE."

This list was first appended in 1960 by Sander's nephew David R. Sander and since that time has been continued by the Royal Horticultural Society. The ROA has copies of these manuals. Various members of ROA have this information on CDs.

-L.K. Harvie

References:

- Royal Horticultural Society – Research web page- <http://www.rhs.UK/research/registration-orchids.asp>
- Sander's Notes: SLOH Indices of Contents of Notes, 1895 through 1995

The ROA Library is a rich source of orchid information and enjoyable reading. An inventory of the library was taken and a Library Catalog was developed from it. The inventory indicated that certain items were missing. If you have checked out items and forgotten to return them please do so. Then they will be available to other ROA members and so that the catalog can be updated to include them.



Wanda Andrako and John Hutcheson at the repotting event.

Donations

If you have a favorite book on orchids and ROA does not have copy, consider purchasing a copy for our library. Your in-kind donation is tax deductible.

Directories

The 2009 Directories are now available. Please remember to pick yours up at the check-in desk at the July meeting if you haven't already done so.

- Barbi Partlow

Culture Questions

If you have a question about orchid care, please see Wanda Andrako, Buddy Harvie, or our speaker, Paul Sheetz for suggestions and answers.

Refreshments

The refreshment committee is looking forward to our July meeting, where the theme is red/white/blue. If someone wishes to help out and contribute some fun snacks please do so, any and all assistance is appreciated. Thanks from Mike and John.

Volunteers

We will need your support for the following events:

1. Plant auction, September 13th – contact Bill Akin
2. State Fair, October 1-4 – contact Bill Akin
3. Floral arrangements for the Science Museum's Kugel Ball, October 9th – contact Valli Laneve
4. Holiday Party, November 8th – contact Thuyen Trevino

About This Bulletin

The Richmond Orchid Alliance meets at the Science Museum of Virginia, 2500 W. Broad Street, Richmond, at 2:00 P.M. of the second Sunday of each month from January through November. Yearly dues are \$25.00 per individual, or \$30.00 for a joint membership. Dues should be paid to the ROA Finance Director, Judy Craggs, P.O. Box 8682, Richmond, VA 23226.

The Richmond Orchid Alliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Any donations to ROA are tax deductible. We are affiliated with Orchid Digest and a member of the American Orchid Society.

The ROA Bulletin is a publication of the Richmond Orchid Alliance and is distributed to the Society's members monthly, prior to all club meetings.

June - The need for Diligence

With June come the warm summer months (at least in most parts of the country) and with the summer's warmth comes a requirement for diligent observation of your plants. What starts out as a minor insect infestation can very rapidly become a major outbreak. The warmer the temperatures, the shorter the time between insect generations and it may seem to be only a blink of the eye between noticing that first insect and a full-blown insect assault. Take for instance aphids. When the weather is warm, female aphids give birth to live young, all themselves female and all pregnant – you do the math.

Also be on the lookout now for fungal and bacterial diseases that are favored by wet, warm conditions. This is the onset of Erwinia season in *Phalaenopsis*. Phals, while tropical, do not like constantly hot, humid conditions and, if stressed from perhaps late potting or a weakened root system, are subject to a particularly nasty bacterial infection called Erwinia. The disease appears first as a water-soaked, somewhat yellow-green or light tan lesion on the leaf and will progress to the death of the plant within days. Diagnosing the disease is not difficult because

the bacterial organism produces a really offensive odor – like those old cut-flowers you left too long in the vase) – often likened to spoiled fish.

If your plants develop this, be exceptionally careful. It's spread by splashing water (as is the fungus which causes crown rot) and by ANY liquid from the infected lesion. Simply dribbling any of this liquid on a healthy plant is almost guaranteed to infect the second plant. At a minimum, immediately remove the WHOLE infected leaf and then hope for the best. Bacterial diseases are exceptionally difficult to control and treat because the rapidly multiplying bacterial culture clogs up the plants transport systems and the damage is typically done before symptoms are visible. Cinnamon, while effective for crown rot, is worthless for the control of this bacterial infection. I know of nothing that works well in controlling this disease although soluble copper formulations like Phyton 27 may give some control.

Be on the lookout for water standing in the crown of *Phalaenopsis* and in the center of new growths. It is an invitation to some serious fungal infections. It's important to make sure that plants dry adequately between watering as well because roots damaged by being kept overly wet are susceptible to several root rotting fungi.



Ron McHatton
AOS Director of Education

Reprinted from the AOS
newsletter

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Andy's Orchids at CHAOS

Harry Phillips of Andy's Orchids in California spoke recently at the Charlottesville Orchid Society meeting on mounted orchids. Although he spent considerable time on orchid culture, the discussion generally returned to the benefits of growing orchids on a stick. His central point was that nature knows the best method for growing orchids, and most orchids are epiphytes – that is, they grow in the nooks and crannies of trees. By mimicking nature, the plant is happier and healthier.

Harry used *Phalaenopsis* as an example. In nature, they grow with the crown facing to the side and downward. They never have a problem with crown rot because water is unable to collect in the crown – the water all drains out or evaporates long before rot can set in. The inflorescence also does not need to be staked because it grows downward, and tends to have more flowers than when in pots.

Mounting an orchid starts with selecting the mount. Harry recommended a piece of hardwood that is

appropriate for the eventual size of your plant. He mentioned a *Cattleya skinneri* that he first mounted 18 years ago. He finally needed to re-mount the plant last year – effectively 17 years between “repottings.”

The next step is making sure that you orient the plant correctly – do the new growths appear higher or lower on the mount and do the leaves grow upwards or downwards in nature. Harry mentioned that the first plant he mounted was upside down – he had mounted the plant with leaves pointed upward, and did not listen to Andy's warning. He said the plant only has a few leaves remaining that are pointed up, all of the new growths are pointed downward as you would find them in nature.

Placing the plant on the stick with a little bit of moss (sphagnum if the plant likes it bit wet, green moss if it likes it a bit drier) and wrap 10 pound fishing line around the stick and plant so that the plant is held firmly but not wound overly tight which may injure the plant. The moss is just to help the plant retain moisture until it attaches itself to the wood.

Other culture tidbits:

- About three weeks before the plants are brought inside after summering outside. Spray the plant with a systemic insecticide like Bayer at one week intervals; this will break the birth cycle of the pests.
- Never use horticultural oil if the plant will be exposed to direct sunlight. While the oil keeps the pest from breathing, the plant will burn.
- He prefers hardwood to cork because the nooks and crannies in cork give pests a place to hide.



- Jim Creech

Address Changes

If you have moved, changed your telephone number or email address, please email Richmond Orchid Alliance with the change at ROA4U2@verizon.net or to P.O. Box 8682, Richmond, VA 23226.

We don't want your Bulletin to be delayed or not received. This is an important part of your membership.



5th Annual Merritt Huntington Memorial Symposium

Make plans now to attend the next annual Merritt Huntington Memorial Symposium to be held in Virginia Beach, VA on November 13-14, 2009. The setting will be the Cavalier Hotel and this year promises to be even better than before.

Speakers will be Walter Off, Hadley Cash, Bill Thoms and Norris Williams. So far Seagrove Orchids and Floradise Orchids have agreed to be vendors.

Friday evening will be a buffet pre-view party and Saturday will be three speakers along with a buffet lunch. Mark you calendar now for this great learning event. Call Bill Akin or Valli Laneve with questions.
- Bill Akin

ROA

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