



The Arizona Orchidist

Published monthly by
The Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.
Founding Editor- Clarence S. Lindsten,
1966
Volume 39 February 2002 Number 2

NEXT OSA MEETING

Meetings are held at the
Valley Garden Center
1809 N. 15th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona
Phone (602) 252-2120

The next regular society meeting will be
Thursday, February 7, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.
OSA meetings are open to all
plant enthusiasts

Refreshments will be provided
This month's beverages will be furnished
by: Norma Kafer
Edibles will be provided by:
Wilella Stimmell & Bev Tall

Janet Jurn,
Refreshment Coordinator
(623) 386-2741

NEXT OSA BOARD MEETING

The next OSA board meeting will be
Sunday, February 3, 2002 at 1:00 p.m.
Hosted by Rhonda Woodward
Please contact Rhonda at (602) 230-8877,
for directions to her home,
if you plan to attend
The meeting is open to all OSA members

GROWER ON CALL

Jim Johnson
(623) 878-8011
e-mail: jimni.az@netzero.net

February Program

Program Topic: "Vanda Culture"

Our February speaker is Martin Motes, President of Motes Orchids, Homestead, FL. If anyone has a vanda with shriveling roots and/or wrinkled leaves, bring the pitiful-looking plant to our February 7 meeting! Martin suggested combining a diagnostic clinic with his presentation.

This would also be an opportune time for members to bring their personal copies of Martin's book, *VANDAS: THEIR BOTANY, HISTORY, AND CULTURE*, and ask Martin to autograph their books.

Martin is a second-generation orchidist who has been growing orchids for more than 40 years. He is well-known as a major hybridizer of vandas, has traveled extensively in the Mediterranean, and has observed orchids growing in their native habitats in many countries. Martin has lived most of his life in Florida, but also spent 6 years in Ohio and 2 years as a Fulbright lecturer, in Yugoslavia. In his pre-Motes Orchids life, he was an assistant professor of English at Wright State University. (Don't be surprised if during Martin's presentation, he quotes poetry.) Martin has also served as Director of Horticulture Therapy at Grant Center Hospital and was a consultant for horticulture therapy to the Hospital Corporation of America.

There will be a silent auction of Motes Orchids' plants during our meeting.

Please give a warm OSA welcome to Martin and his wife, Mary.

W. Stimmell



Mark Your Calendars!
Plan to visit or work the OSA booth at
the Chinese Cultural Festival
February 15th through 17th





From the President's Desk

Lou Ann Remeikis

2002 is off and running and so is the OSA! The available slots for Community Service Programs have gone quickly. Wilella Stimmell, our Community Service Program Coordinator, has informed me that the calendar is full until Summer, 2002. Our programs are very much in demand and are appreciated by those groups lucky enough to get on our calendar.

February brings Chinese Festival Week, which we have been invited to participate in again this year. This is the Year of the Horse on the Chinese Calendar. February 15th, 16th and 17th are the dates for the festival, held at the Chinese Cultural Center. We will need all the help we can get! This festival is rich in Chinese culture, rituals, and food. Also, entertainment venues and vendor booths (such as OSA) are always of interest. We are going to have an assortment of orchids for sale at this event, and we need help with the sales booth. If you cannot spare a three hour shift of time to help, you might want to come to the festival to look around and see what OSA has for sale.

At the February meeting I will have a sign-up sheet requesting assistance at the Chinese Festival. Since we will be participating in all three days of the event, I will have the assignment sheet separated into two shifts per day. Please come to the meeting with an idea of what your schedule will be that weekend. If you sign up to help, we will be counting on you to be there.

I want to thank David Wehrli and Lois Sauer for keeping us up to date on Pearl Bays' recent health concerns. We all miss seeing Pearl at our meetings and hope she will feel well enough to join us for a meeting every now and then. We hope that everyone with health issues to face knows they are in our thoughts and prayers. If anyone knows of any OSA member who is "under the weather", please let me know so we can include an encouraging word for them in our newsletter. We have an ever-growing membership and it is very difficult to keep up with each member's ups and downs, so we count on YOU to let us know.

The Pacific Orchid Expo is scheduled for February 22nd-24th, in San Francisco at Fort Mason. Although OSA is not sponsoring a trip to this event, several of our members are going to be attending this orchid show and purchasing plants for future OSA silent auctions. This show is spectacular and a person can really go crazy with the variety of orchids available from the large number of vendors in attendance. This year will be a first for OSA member, Sarah Heberling, and I can guarantee she will come back completely impressed!

It is a pleasure to welcome so many new members to our family. Liz Greenwood, Gene and Eloise Koonce, Jennifer Schmitt, Dave and Laurie Armstrong (Jeff's folks), Tim Michels (Julie Rathbun's grandson), and Sally Griffith (President of the Yuma Orchid Society) all joined OSA within the last month! Please make them feel welcome when you see them at our meetings. I doubt that we will see Sally Griffith too often since she lives in Yuma, but we are happy to have her on board and hope she will find her OSA membership beneficial to expanding her knowledge of orchids!

This is a perfect place to thank Norma Kafer for her cash donation to help stock soda and sundries for the gift shop at the Arizona State Veteran's Home. Norma's donation will supply them with two or three months worth of soda. Ainsley and Bryan LaCour regularly donate soda, and I know Wilella Stimmell has done the same. Anyone wishing to assist with our donations to this cause can bring their contributions to any of our meetings or can donate cash towards the purchase of the needed items. Your donations can be given to either myself, Wilella Stimmell, or any of OSA's Board Members.

OSA now has a new Librarian – Norma Kafer. After “twisting her arm” (sort of), Norma accepted my appointment to this position. Norma is, at times, out of state during the hot time of the year; however, this will not interfere with access to OSA’s library. I am happy to allow any OSA member access to the resources available in our Library maintained at the Valley Garden Center. At present, I am updating the Library inventory so Norma doesn’t have a mess to straighten out. If anyone has outstanding Library books, magazines, articles, or video tapes, I would appreciate you informing Norma or myself. This will allow us to account for anything not currently found in the Library. Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated!

I look forward to seeing a lot of you at the February meeting. I think you will find it very informative, as we are fortunate to have Martin Motes as a speaker! Martin, I am sure, will present a program no one will want to miss.

Until then...Happy Growing...and ...
Happy Valentine’s Day too!

Lou



Welcome to OSA's Newest Members!

 Dave & Laurie Armstrong

 Liz Greenwood

 Sally Griffith

 Gene & Eloise Koonce

 Tim Michels

 Jennifer Schmitt

The Arizona Orchidist is published monthly by the

Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.

Direct inquiries to our website at:

[Http://welcome.to/orchidsocietyaz](http://welcome.to/orchidsocietyaz)

Or to any of the board officers or trustees

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The Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization dedicated to community service and the study of orchids. It is affiliated with the American Orchid Society, The Orchid Digest Corporation, the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., and The Nature Conservancy.

Thank you for your
 January Raffle Table Donations

 Jeanette Socaciu, August Lorenzini,
 Joe Freasier, Wilella Stimmell, and OSA

On January 11, NORMA KAFER, JULIE RATHBUN, and I journeyed to Yuma. When we arrived at the hotel where we would spend the night, we discovered that the Federated Garden Clubs of Yuma had pre-paid for our accommodation. Since we arrived in early afternoon, we had time to scout out the location of the Civic and Convention Center, where we would be presenting our orchid program at the Home and Garden Show on January 12.

The Civic and Convention Center at 1440 W. Desert Hills Drive, has a large golf course on one side and a well-manicured park on the other. It was a pleasant surprise for us to see so much green grass in Yuma! The entire complex is aesthetically beautiful.

Val Colvin, AFGC Youth Chairperson, Sally Griffith, Yuma Orchid Society President, and SallyAnne Scott, AFGC Western District Director, made our program team feel very welcome when we arrived the following morning at the Civic Center. Since we had helpers to unload our display plants and repotting supplies, we had no need to press our hauling cart into service.

We were pleasantly surprised to note from the large attendance at our seminar and from the many questions asked, that there is so much interest in growing orchids, in Yuma. At the end of our program, we repotted a few of our own plants while members of the audience watched and asked questions about our choice of potting medium, size of pots we used, and other basic repotting tips. We also encouraged growers in need of culture sheets, to "raid" the culture sheet boxes that we always have

available wherever OSA makes an appearance. They happily obliged. We greatly appreciated the fact that Sally Griffith, YOS President and new OSA member, selected only one culture sheet for each genus. She stated that she would make copies of the various sheets for YOS members.

After we returned to Phoenix, we received thank-you messages from the worker bees of the Federated Garden Clubs of Yuma. Apparently the growers who attended our program, enjoyed our presentation, and the garden club members who sent us the thank-you messages, appreciated our efforts on their behalf. A good time was had by all! And we hope that after having seen our presentation, Sally and other YOS members will have the confidence to present the orchid seminar at next year's Yuma Home and Garden Show.

On January 18, NORMA KAFER, JAY MUNN, JULIE RATHBUN, DAVID WEHRLI, and I presented a hands-on orchid program for the 8th grade science class at DESERT HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 5821 W. Beverly, Glendale. Linda Butcher, the science class teacher, is a dedicated educator. She mentioned that the class had not yet started their unit on Botany, and our program was the students' introduction to the unit. All the students seemed to enjoy viewing our large assortment of display plants and working with their seedlings. They asked a variety of questions which we attempted to answer, and they knew the answers to the standard questions about orchids that we ask each class.

The students will keep their phal seedlings in the classroom so that

the growth of the plants can be monitored as a class project.

School Program Follow-up: OSA member, Meaghan Socaciu, who was a student at Paramount Academy last year when we presented orchid programs at Paramount, has a bloom spike on the phal seedling she repotted in March, 2001. Way to grow, Meaghan! (FYI: Meaghan is 7 years old!)

OSA's Community Service Schedule will be available on the raffle ticket sales table at our February 7 meeting. Any OSA member interested in helping with future school programs, is invited to pick up his/her personal copy of our schedule. Please note that our schedule is full through May, 2002! And plans are being made for OSA to present programs either in the summer or fall, for adults at various libraries in AZ!

(A report on the program which will be presented for the Scottsdale Garden Club on February 4, and the program for the Tempe Outdoor Adventure Series, sponsored by the Tempe Parks and Recreation Department, which will be presented on February 12, will appear in our March newsletter.)

For Your Information: Because of our work with Arizona school children, OSA regularly receives invitations to participate in youth gardening meetings, sponsored by the University of Arizona Extension Service. Lucy Bradley, Urban Horticulturist for Maricopa County, specializes in school gardening and was the mastermind behind the youth gardening meetings. Last summer, Lucy attended the orchid programs OSA presented for

Community Service Report

by Wilella Stimmell, CSP Coordinator

Stewart Boys/Girls Club, 6629 W. Clarendon, Phoenix.

Lucy also was the mastermind behind "Ladies' Night", a semi-annual event to which the women who participate in the youth gardening meetings, are invited. On January 17,

Norma Kafer and I attended a gathering of the "wonderful women" (Lucy's term, NOT mine!) who either individually or as a part of a group, actively nurture and attempt to instill the love of plants in Arizona's youth. Many of the women present at the event, were unknown

to us. When Lucy introduced us, she commented on the "amazing work" OSA does with Arizona school children. One of the ladies asked us how we contact schools. She was surprised to learn that we don't do the contacting. Teachers and/or parents contact us!



Volunteers/ Donations/ Items Needed

The ASVH gift shop: Cans of soda pop and individual size snacks

School programs: 10 1/2" x 13 1/2" plastic grid sheets, clear, 7 mesh, from craft stores, empty containers for rock

Volunteers: Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 15-17

**Community
Service
Opportunities**

OSA Financial Report for 2001 Available at February 7 Meeting:

The notebook containing month-by-month expenses and income for the year 2001 was available for viewing at our Jan. 3 meeting and will also be available at our Feb. 7 meeting. The report for the month of December reflects year-to-date totals.

In spite of an unstable economy and the tremendous psychological downside following the September 11 attack on America, OSA's busy worker bees were able to match and exceed the income generated in the previous year. For NO compensation of any kind to encourage them to work harder at sales events in 2001, than in the previous year, our core of extremely dedicated volunteers worked harder than ever to ensure that our income would not suffer. (It should be noted that less than 12% of our income is derived from membership dues.)

Many charitable organizations were concerned that due to our slowing economy, donors would greatly reduce their contributions in 2001. OSA returned to the community through our school programs, scholarships, and support for other non-profit organizations, the same amount as we donated to those groups in the previous year!

Wilella Stimmell, OSA Treasurer



VIRTUAL GOODIES



<http://chulaorchids.com>

Harry Tolen, owner of Chula Orchids in California, and OSA supporter, finally has a website address easy enough to remember! Check out Harry's site for plants and supplies.

Chula Orchids is offering an internet special through March 1st.

<http://stampstore.org>

The American Philatelic Society offers a number of orchid stamps for the collector. Easy and specific searches make this site a breeze to navigate, browse, and purchase.

People always chase after that which is rare and unusual. Truly blue orchid flowers are very rare. We often use the term “blue” euphemistically for orchids that are really lavender or violet especially if there is a vague bluish cast to the color. This confuses non-orchid gardeners when they look at one’s favorite blue cattleya or blue doritaenopsis. This situation is not confined to orchids, “white” daylilies are really cream as are “yellow” clivias and sweet peas that are also cream, and “red” daffodils are orange. What we are seeing here are really the wishes of the flower grower and the nearest approximations to these wishes become the equivalent of reality.

Among the epiphytic orchids that have really blue flowers are some of the forms of *Vanda coerulea* and *V. coerulescens* and their many hybrids. While there is considerable variation in the “blue” color of these and their hybrids one can find some exquisitely colored flowers. *Acacallis cyanea* is another plant which can produce very blue flowers, although its hybrids, unfortunately, tend towards the lilac or violet shades. Blue of course also appears on the lips of several of the hybrids of the *Zygopetalum* alliance although here too they are often muddied with purples.

Blue coloring is achieved in either of two ways, the color can be due to anthocyanin flavonoid pigments and these are water soluble chemicals that are stored in the central vacuoles of the cells. Getting a good blue color is relatively complicated because not only does one need the correct flavonoid but its color can be modified by cofactors and also the acidity (pH) of the fluid in the central vacuole. A second way of achieving color is structural. Here the reflected surface of the cell is constructed so that light of certain wavelengths is allowed to pass through and other colors are reflected. In this case blue light. It is not known if any of the orchids use this second method of achieving blue. *Ophyrus speculum* and other European bee orchids that have “mirrored” blue patches

on the labellum resembling insect wings should be investigated for this type of color.

Among the terrestrial orchids are several genera that do have truly blue flowers. One of the best known is the African genus *Disa* which contains a group of species, formerly called *Herschelianthe*, that can have very blue flowers, some of which are gentian blue. The South African *Disa graminifolia* has flowers the color of dark fountain-pen ink and some of the other Herschelianthean disas in this group can be equally blue. One related species, *D. baueri*, is more variable in color but some nice large dark blue flowers have been reported from northern Malawi. One I saw in central Malawi had lavender-blue tones. Other South African *Disa* species such as *D. longicornu* and *D. maculata* have flowers with a beautifully soft, clear, egg-shell-blue color. Despite the fact that disas are widely cultivated few people have attempted the true-blue species.

Other true blue orchids do exist and some of the bluest belong to the terrestrial genus *Thelymitra*, although there are some species in this genus that bear flowers of other hues as well. There are several peculiarities to this genus. The flowers are regular and instead of a lip they bear a simple petal, one of the very few orchid genera to do this. In addition the flowers close at night or on cloudy days. While many flowers from other families do this there are relatively few orchids that close at night. The outside of *Thelymitra* tepals is colored green and when the flowers are closed they are difficult to find. When they open up they are stunning. For this reason the Australians have given them the common name of “Sun Orchids”.

There are about 50 species of *Thelymitra* and they range from New Zealand in the South through New Guinea and up into the Philippines. Most of the species are known from Australia. The species are distinguished on the structure of the column, because the relatively simple

flower shape yields few other useful characters. A number of the Australian species are adapted to Mediterranean type climates and spend the dry summer months as dormant, underground tubers.

Australia has several other genera that also have true-blue flowered species. *Cyanicula* has several blue species and one of the two varieties of *Epiblema grandiflorum*, the var. *cyanea* can have quite stunning flowers.

None of these species appear to be cultivated outside of Australia. Those originating from western Australia look as if they would need a dry summer dormant period and might grow well outside in Southern California, the southern Iberian peninsula or near Cape Town, South Africa.

Suggested Literature for Additional Information:

Hoffman N. and A. Brown (1998) *Orchids of Southwest Australia*. University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia. 462 pp.

Linder H.P. and H. Kurzweil (1999) *Orchids of Southern Africa*. A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam. 492 pp.

Orchid Digest, Jan.-Feb.-Mar., 2002. p. 49-50.

◆ Editor’s note:

The original article contains several color photographs of the “blue” orchids discussed. I will make my copy of *Orchid Digest* available to view on the raffie ticket sales table at February’s regular meeting.



A quick recap on potting.

When to repot:

- 1) When the media is decaying
- 2) The plant is too large
- 3) If you really feel like it

The best time to repot is when the plant is actively growing. New growths should just be coming along (about 2-4" tall on cattleyas), or roots should have long, healthy green tips.

Repot into media that suit your conditions, which is based on experience. Not enough experience? Use what the plant came in, unless you find other media work rather better for you.

Place plant into a pot that will be large enough to support the plant for the next year and a half to two years. Estimate how large the plant will be, and try to find a pot that will fit the new growths at that point in time. My personal preference is to repot on a clean sheet of newspaper. For our purposes, the surface will not carry any plant pathogens if it is exchanged between plants. Wash hands or wear gloves between plants to prevent transmission of viruses. Tools for cutting should either be single use (like razor blades), or flame-sterilized using a propane torch. Blades should be heated to the glowing point to guarantee destruction of viruses. Blades may also be immersed in a saturated solution of TSP (trisodium phosphate, available at hardware stores- but make SURE it's really trisodium phosphate as it is getting harder to find). Chemical disinfection is not absolute, as viruses can be protected even by very thin layers of plant "slime" on the blade. Disinfect pots either by soaking in 10% bleach overnight in a covered bucket (plastic pots) or by baking in the oven at 375 degrees for 2 hours (clay).

Remove the plant from its pot. Sometimes pots must be broken to extract the plant. Inspect the root mass, look for rotting, decayed, or dead roots. Remove anything that looks very bad as you go

along, either by pulling or cutting. Examine the media, particularly if using bark or other organic media. Smell it, roll it between your fingers to determine if it is decomposing. Remove all organic media when repotting, unless it is in very good condition. It is not necessary to remove inorganic media, as it will not decay.

If dividing the plant, examine it from all angles, and decide where to make cuts. Each division should have at least one new growth, and three or more bulbs (two or more if it is a vigorous grower). Make cuts with a sterile blade, and set each division aside.

When potting, it is important to place the plant at the correct level. Place the plant low in the new pot, putting the most room between the new growth and the rim of the pot. This gives the plant room to grow- plants don't grow outwards from dormant pseudobulbs, they grow outwards from the new growth! Seat it low- it is easier to bring a plant up in its pot than seat it deeper.

The media you use should be compatible with your growing area. Don't use cork if you water too much. Use a grade (particle size) of bark, cork, sphagnum, perlite, or charcoal that is compatible with the size of your plant- smaller plants get finer bark. Materials that hold more water (sphagnum) may be used if you don't like to water as much, or you grow dry indoors, or you have plants which require lots of moisture (phrags, etc.). Position the plant in its pot, and back-fill with media. You may have to rock the plant forward, putting the new growth deeper inside the pot, to compensate for the growth pattern of many orchids, which is for each new growth to be higher out of the pot than the last one. If the entire plant is too low, grab something that won't break off, and pull the entire plant up just a little while rapping the pot so media settles in underneath it. When satisfied, rap the entire pot on the bench to settle the media, and add more if required. Repeat until all divisions are

consumed. Don't be afraid to start over- take the whole plant out, and start from the beginning if it doesn't look right. When finished, accurately copy the entire tag, and add one to each division. Labels should not be brittle from the heat and sun. Pen fades. Pencil marks last.

Some tips:

Phals often grow tall and leggy, with a large portion of their "stem" exposed, where the new roots come from. If you don't have enough humidity with ANY orchid, particularly phals, and the new roots are exposed to the air, their tips will die. With enough root tip death, the plant will follow. If the phal is ailing, mound up sphagnum moss at its base to keep new roots moist. Do NOT bury it so deeply the crown will stay moist, which will rot the plant.





Cattleyas often put on robust new growths that stray just outside the confines of their pot. The longer the new roots get (sticking out in the air), the harder it is to successfully repot them without damage. Get a jump start on your under potted cattleyas, and throw them in a new pot before they're more than an inch long- they'll grow better. If you grow dry (like inside a house without enough humidity), add sphagnum moss. Top-dress your pots with sphagnum as an indicator as to when to water again. Sphagnum will turn ugly colors as accumulated salts build up, indicating when you should repot and discard the old media. Particularly valuable plants should get two tags- one in the side where it belongs, and a second that is put in the bottom of the pot before you add any media. If you lose the first tag, the second one will still be there when you repot. It's extra work, but pays for itself with just one lost tag.





OSA February 2002 Calendar



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 <i>OSA Meeting</i> <i>7:00 p.m.</i>	8	9
10	11	12	13  <i>Wayne Baker</i>	14  <i>Bob Gordon</i> <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 <i>Chinese Cultural Center</i>	16 <i>Chinese Cultural Center</i>
17 <i>Chinese Cultural Center</i>	18	19  <i>Jim Johnson</i>	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28  <i>Del Pace (29)</i>		



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