



San Diego County Orchid Society

OUR PURPOSE: To promote interest in orchids and their cultivation, to educate by exchanging information and experiences related to successful orchid culture, and to support the conservation of orchids in the wild.

SDCOS meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of each month at Casa Del Prado in Balboa Park. Admission is free—everyone is welcome. We invite you to join the Society to receive the monthly newsletter and many other benefits.

Novice Class: 6:30 p.m., Room 104

General Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Room 101

If you would like to join the Society, please send your check for \$10* for Individual, \$12.50 for Dual membership, payable to SDCOS, to: Vivian Follmer, SDCOS Membership, 13127 Roundup, San Diego, CA 92129, Tel: 858.538.6187, E-mail: vivianfollmer@netscape.net

*(1/2 price after January 1)

HELP

I need help for two months with the mailing of the Orchid Society newsletter. I will be going on vacation in August when it is time to fold, label and sort the newsletters for mailing. I need someone to come this next month and learn how to do it so that you will be able to do this on your own the following month (Carmel Mountain Post Office is very particular).

If you are interested please call me at 858-675-0885 or e-mail me at: kuhlmann@utm.net.

There are over 600 members in the San Diego County Orchid Society, I hope one person is willing to help out, otherwise everyone will receive the newsletter late (after the meeting). Anyone who has a spouse or children to help fold can make this an easy task.

Thank you.

[Marjorie Kuhlmann](#)

TKO Exotics Dispersal Sale

[Peter Tobias](#)

Due to legal difficulties, the sale of TKO Exotics' plants and equipment which was announced at the Awards Banquet last month is indefinitely delayed. The Conservation Committee hopes to have better news in the future.

Members and Advertisers

If you have monthly meetings, classifieds, or announcements related to orchids, make sure the information gets to the editors by the Second Tuesday of each month for publishing in the next issue of this newsletter.

To contact the editor, please email Michael Orser at editor@sdorchids.com.

Advertisers please contact Marjorie Kuhlmann at 858.675.0885 or kuhlmann@utm.net under the same deadline.

San Diego County Orchid Society

BOARD MEMBERS

President	Gary Pierwola
First VP	George Kenner
Second VP	Duncan Werth
Secretary	Siv Garrod
Treasurer	Barbie Mays
Directors 1998-2001	Ben Machado
1999-2002	Loren Batchman
2000-2003	Sam DeMaria
Past President	Fred Weber

HELP HOTLINE

The **SDCOS** offers this service to members who seek cultural information about their orchids. Here are some friendly hobbyists with a great deal of experience about certain types of orchids, and who have kindly volunteered to answer your questions.

Cattleyas, Oncidium/Odonts, Vandaceous,
Greenhouse grown, West SD County
Forrest Robinson - 619.270.6105

Species, all types, Indoor and Outdoor
[Ann & Paul Tuskes](#) - 858.274.5829

Paphiopedilums
Ann Tuskes - 858.274.5829
Bob Hodges - 619.461.4915

Phalaenopsis, Cattleyas and Dendrobiums
Alma Marosz - 619.583.0334

Vandas, Ascocendas
Edith and Leno Galvan - 619.441.7503

Encyclias, Epidendrums, Laelias
Tom Osborn - 760.787.0282

Pleurothallids
Don van Kekerix - 619.224.4938

Cymbidiums
Loren Batchman - casa@orquideas.com
Sam DeMaria - 619.295.2951

Northeast County, all types
Dave Reid - 760.728.7996

San Diego West County, all types
Jean Beck - 619.435.8211

San Diego Central, Outdoor, all types
Jim Wright - 619.276.5295
Fred Tomaschke - 619.276.3225
San Diego East County, all types

James Masst - 619.443.2800
Bud Close - 619.444.8839

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Genie Hammond - 619.426.6831
Ed Marty - 619.470.7175

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E-mail: gmarcopulos@compuserve.com

Contact: George Marcopulos

Public Hours: Presently closed for restoration

Business Hours: 8 am-5 pm

Collection: 48 genera, 1,200 species, 2,400 taxa

Largest Genera: Masdevallia, Dracula, Pleurothallis,
Scaphosepalum, Restrepia

Noteworthy Aspects: High-altitude species only. Collection
contains some species not often seen.

Los Angeles State and County Arboretum
301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 91006-2697

Tel: 626.821.3221, Fax: 626.445.1217

Contact: Julie Norman, Senior Arboretum Gardener

Public Hours: 9 am-4:30 pm, daily

Business Hours: 7 am-3:30 pm, weekdays

Collection: 207 genera, 1,550 species

Largest Genera: Paphiopedilum, Cymbidium, Cattleya,
Phalaenopsis, Dendrobium

Noteworthy Aspects: Tropical Greenhouse contains a large
species collection.

San Diego Zoo
2920 Zoo Dr., San Diego, CA 92112-1515

Tel: 619.231.1515, Fax: 619.685.3232

E-mail: mbostwick@sandiegozoo.org

Contact: Janette Gerrity, Senior Gardener/Orchidist

Public Hours: The Orchid Facility is open on the third
Friday of every month from 10 am to 2 pm. Special tours
outside of normal hours may be arranged in advance with
approval of the Horticulture Manager, Michael Bostwick

Business Hours: 6 am-3:30 pm, daily

Collection: 148 genera, 434 species, 781 hybrids

Largest Genera: Cattleya, Paphiopedilum, Phalaenopsis,
Epidendrum, Dendrobium

Noteworthy Aspects: Emphasis is on the species that
compliment the animal collections, particularly the Chinese
species orchids. The facility also serves as a Rescue Center for
the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in which they
accept orchids acquired via border confiscations. The orchids
are displayed in a greenhouse as well as outdoors where some
naturalize.

MINI SHOW COMING...

Submitted by [Michael Orser](#)

It is time again to seek out your prize winning, blooming orchids. Do you remember earlier this year when Cynthia Hill gave the Novice class on "how to get your orchids show ready?" Or do you have any tips on making a superb presentation? Why not email them to me (you can find my email address on the first page) so I can include it in the next newsletter?

Here's the nitty-gritty: The next mini show is July 27th - 29th. Friday is the registration date, Saturday and Sunday will be the show dates. Questions? Ask [Gary Pierwola](#). More to follow in the next issue!

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DATES TO REMEMBER...

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31					

June 2nd, 9:00 am
SDCOS Species Group Meeting
First Saturday each month
[Paul or Ann Tuskes](#) 858.274.5829

June 5th, 6:30 pm
Beginner's Class
Room 104, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park
[Gary Pierwola](#) 619.426.9108

June 5th, 7:30 pm
Annual Meeting
Room 104, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park
[Gary Pierwola](#) 619.426.9108

June 8th, 7:30 pm
Palomar Orchid Society Meeting
Second Friday each month
Vista Community Center
[Dave or Vera Stankey](#) 959.498.7122

June 12th, 7:00 pm
SDCOS Board Meeting
Second Tuesday each month
Balboa Park
[Siv Garrod](#) 619.483.8787

June 15th
Zoo Orchid Greenhouses Open House
Third Friday each month
[Janette Gerrity](#) 619.231.1515 ext. 4306

June 20th
Cymbidium Society Meeting
Third Wednesday each month
Carlsbad Women's Club
[Larry Phillips](#) 619.746.5518

July 27th - 29th
Mini Show
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Registration: FREE to SDCOS members
[Gary Pierwola](#) 619.426.9108

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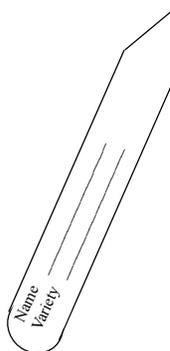
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## ORCHID QUIZ

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

**Orchids are** \_\_\_\_\_

(A) fun (B) a mystery (C) challenging

**Orchids make me** \_\_\_\_\_

(A) happy (B) romantic (C) relaxed

**I am interested in** \_\_\_\_\_

(A) growing (B) collecting (C) learning

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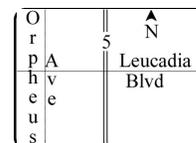
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## Welcome Our Newest Members!

submitted by [Vivian Follmer](#)

Please take time to give them a warm "hello!" from all of us.

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| June Anderson           | Amy & Bob Neveln        |
| Susanna Ball            | Maureen Nicks           |
| Roland Bulirsch         | Sylvia Nielsen          |
| George E Caldwell       | Karin Norberg           |
| Maria Chiodo            | Dorothy & Robert Norris |
| Ann Collins             | Lamar Olds              |
| Lee Deichler            | Ida O'neil              |
| Vera & Joseph Diperi    | Michael Padalino        |
| Celia & Tim Farmer      | Diane & Richard Pfeifer |
| Nancy Gibbs             | Joan Potter             |
| Linda & Mark Handy      | Yolanda Retes           |
| Naoma Hetrick           | Helmut Rohrl            |
| Patti & Steve Hetrick   | Susan Ronan             |
| Nancy & Jim Higgins     | Lucina & Pablo Santos   |
| George Huang            | Cozette & Garry Shirts  |
| Roxanne & Donald Kleine | Marge Spar              |
| Brad Kroeger            | Pat Stone               |
| Pat & Lou Labbe         | Virginia Swaringen      |
| Mark Lewandoske         | Dawn Tackett            |
| Michele Magnin          | Gay & Terry Tanber      |
| Rose & Don Martin       | Judith Tweed            |
| Marjorie Myers          |                         |

## SDCOS Board Meeting

May 8, 2001. Meeting called to order at 19:06

Submitted by [Siv Garrod](#)

Present: Gary Pierwola, Barbie Mays, Dave Mays, Ben Machado, Sam DeMaria, Paul Tuskes, Duncan Werth, and Siv Garrod.

### REPORTS

1. No minutes, the April meeting was canceled.
2. Treasurer - Barbie Mays - Report for March and April were presented, and approved by motion.
3. Acting first vice president - Ben Machado - Paul Bechtel will present a talk titled "Laelias of Mexico and their hybrids". He will also provide plants for the raffle.
4. Second vice president - Duncan Werth - At the novice class Paul and Ann Tuskes will do a presentation on the genus *Sarcochilus*.
5. Show chairman - Ben Machado - The show budget was presented. There are still a few adjustments but as it stands the show made a profit of close to 17K. The budget was approved by motion.

### OLD BUSINESS

1. None

### NEW BUSINESS

1. Sam DeMaria brought up some unresolved issues from the 2000 year show and the board will follow up.
2. Sam DeMaria also questioned the legality of the TKO's sale of plants and supplies for the conservation fund. The president will look into this issue.
3. The nominating committee for the next board is George Kenner (chair), Paul Tuskes, David Mays, Jacky Bechtel, and Helmut Rohrl. Paul will contact the proposed candidates and their names will be posted in the June newsletter.

Meeting adjourned 19:50

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## THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID

by H. G. Wells. (originally published in Pearson's Magazine, April 1905). Submitted by [Cynthia Hill](#)

The buying of orchids always has in it a certain speculative flavour. You have before you the brown shriveled lump of tissue, and for the rest you must trust your judgment, or the auctioneer, or your good-luck, as your taste may incline. The plant may be moribund or dead, or it may be just a respectable purchase, fair value for your money, or perhaps-for the thing has happened again and again-there slowly unfolds before the delighted eyes of the happy purchaser, day after day, some new variety, some novel richness, a strange twist of the labellum, or some subtler coloration or unexpected mimicry.

Pride, beauty, and profit blossom together on one delicate green spike, and it may be, even immortality. For the new miracle of Nature may stand in need of a new specific name, and what so convenient as that of its discoverer? "Johnsmithia!" There have been worse names.

It was perhaps the hope of some such happy discovery that made Winter-Wedderburn such a frequent attendant at these sales-that hope, and also, maybe, the fact that he had nothing else of the slightest interest to do in the world. He was a shy, lonely, rather ineffectual man, provided with just enough income to keep off the spur of necessity, and not enough nervous energy to make him seek any exacting employments. He might have collected stamps or coins, or translated Horace, or bound books, or invented new species of diatoms. But, as it happened, he grew orchids, and had one ambitious little hothouse. "I have a fancy," he said over his coffee, "that something is going to happen to me today."

He spoke-as he moved and thought- slowly.

"Oh, don't say THAT!" said his house-keeper-who was also his remote cousin. For "something happening" was a euphemism that meant only one thing to her.

"You misunderstand me. I mean nothing unpleasant...though what I do mean I scarcely know."

"Today," he continued, after a pause, "Peters' are going to sell a batch of plants from the Andamans and the Indies.

I shall go up and see what they have. It may be I shall buy something good, unawares. That may be it."

He passed his cup for his second cupful of coffee.

"Are these the things collected by that poor young fellow you told me of the other day?" asked his cousin as she filled his cup.

"Yes," he said, and became meditative over a piece of toast.

"Nothing ever does happen to me," he remarked presently, beginning to think aloud. "I wonder why? Things enough happen to other people. There is Harvey. Only the other week; on Monday he picked up sixpence, on Wednesday his chicks all had the staggers, on Friday his cousin came home from Australia, and on Saturday he broke his ankle. What a whirl of excitement-compared to me."

"I think I would rather be without so much excitement," said his housekeeper. "It can't be good for you."

"I suppose it's troublesome. Still...you see, nothing ever happens to me. When I was a little boy I never had accidents. I never fell in love as I grew up. Never married...I wonder how it feels to have something happen to you, something really remarkable."

"That orchid-collector was only thirty-six, twenty years younger than myself, when he died. And he had been married twice, and divorced once; he had had malarial fever four times, and once he broke his thigh. He killed a Malay once, and once he was wounded by a poisoned dart. And in the end he was killed by jungle-leeches. It must have all been very troublesome, but then it must have been very interesting and exciting, you know-except, perhaps, the leeches."

"I am sure it was not good for him," said the lady, with conviction.

"Perhaps not." And then Wedderburn looked at his watch. "Twenty-three minutes past eight. I am going up by the quarter to twelve train, so that there is plenty of time. I think I shall wear my alpaca jacket-it is quite warm enough-and my grey felt hat and brown shoes. I suppose"

He glanced out of the window at the serene sky and sunlit garden, and then nervously at his cousin's face.

"I think you had better take an umbrella if you are going to London," she said, in a voice that admitted of no denial. "There's all between here and the station coming back."

When he returned he was in a state of mild excitement. He had made a purchase. It was rarely that he could make up his mind quickly enough to buy, but this time he had done so.

"There are Vandas," he said, "and a Dendrobe and some Phalaenopsis." He surveyed his purchases lovingly as he consumed his soup. They were laid out on the spotless tablecloth before him, and he was telling his cousin all about them as he slowly meandered through his dinner. It was his custom to live all his visits to London over again in the evening for her and his own entertainment.

"I knew something would happen today. And I have bought all these. Some of them-some of them-I feel sure, do you know, that some of them will be remarkable. I

don't know how it is, but I feel just as sure as if someone had told me that some of these will turn out remarkable."

"That one"-he pointed to a shriveled rhizome-"was not identified. It may be a Phalaenopsis-or it may not. It may be a new species, or even a new genus. And it was the last that poor Batten ever collected."

"I don't like the look of it," said his housekeeper. "It's such an ugly shape."

"To me it scarcely seems to have a shape."

"I don't like those things that stick out," said his housekeeper.

"It shall be put away in a pot tomorrow."

"It looks," said the housekeeper, "like a spider shamming dead."

Wedderburn smiled and surveyed the root with his head on one side. "It is certainly not a pretty lump of stuff. But you can never judge of these things from their dry appearance. It may turn out to be a very beautiful orchid indeed. How busy I shall be tomorrow! I must see tonight just exactly what to do with these things, and tomorrow I shall set to work.

They found poor Batten lying dead, or dying, in a mangrove swamp-I forget which," he began again presently, "with one of these very orchids crushed up under his body. He had been unwell for some days with some kind of native fever, and I suppose he fainted. These mangrove swamps are very unwholesome. Every drop of blood, they say, was taken out of him by the jungle-licees. It may be that very plant that cost him his life to obtain."

"I think none the better of it for that."

"Men must work though women may weep," said Wedderburn, with profound gravity.

"Fancy dying away from every comfort in a nasty swamp! Fancy being ill of fever with nothing to take but chlorodyne and quinine-if men were left to themselves they would live on chlorodyne and quinine-and no one round you but horrible natives! They say the Andaman islanders are most disgusting wretches-and, anyhow, they can scarcely make good nurses, not having the necessary training. And just for people in England to have orchids!"

"I don't suppose it was comfortable, but some men seem to enjoy that kind of thing," said Wedderburn. "Anyhow, the natives of his party were sufficiently civilized to take care of all his collection until his colleague, who was an ornithologist, came back again from the interior; though they could not tell the species of the orchid and had let it wither. And it makes these things more interesting."

"It makes them disgusting. I should be afraid of some of the malaria clinging to them. And just think, there has been a dead body lying across that ugly thing! I never thought of that before. There! I declare I cannot eat another mouthful of dinner!"

"I will take them off the table if you like, and put them in the window-seat. I can see them just as well there."

The next few days he was indeed singularly busy in his steamy little hot-house, fussing about with charcoal, lumps of teak, moss, and all the other mysteries of the orchid cultivator. He considered he was having a wonderfully eventful time. In the evening he would talk about these

new orchids to his friends, and over and over again he reverted to his expectation of something strange.

Several of the Vandas and the Dendrobium died under his care, but presently the strange orchid began to show signs of life. He was delighted and took his housekeeper right away from jam-making to see it at once., directly he made the discovery.

"That is a bud," he said, "and presently there will be a lot of leaves there, and those little things coming out here are aerial rootlets."

"They look to me like little white fingers poking out of the brown," said his housekeeper. "I don't like them."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. They look like fingers trying to get at you. I can't help my likes and dislikes."

"I don't know for certain, but I don't THINK there are any orchids I know that have aerial rootlets quite like that. It may be my fancy, of course. You see they are a little flattened at the ends."

"I don't like 'em," said his housekeeper, suddenly shivering and turning away. "I know it's very silly of me-and I'm very sorry, particularly as you like the thing so much. But I can't help thinking of that corpse."

"But it may not be that particular plant. That was merely a guess of mine."

His housekeeper shrugged her shoulders. "Anyhow I don't like it," she said.

Wedderburn felt a little hurt at her dislike to the plant. But that did not prevent his talking to her about orchids generally, and this orchid in particular, whenever he felt inclined.

"There are such queer things about orchids," he said one day; "such possibilities of surprises. You know, Darwin studied their fertilization, and showed that the whole structure of an ordinary orchid flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant. Well, it seems that there are lots of orchids known the flower of which cannot possibly be used for fertilization in that way. Some of the Cypripediums, for instance; there are no insects known that can possibly fertilize them, and some of them have never been found with seed."

"But how do they form new plants?"

"By runners and tubers, and that kind of outgrowth. That is easily explained. The puzzle is, what are the flowers for?"

"Very likely," he added, "MY orchid may be something extraordinary in that way. If so, I shall study it. I have often thought of making researches as Darwin did. But hitherto I have not found the time, or something else has happened to prevent it. The leaves are beginning to unfold now. I do wish you would come and see them!"

But she said that the orchid-house was so hot it gave her the headache. She had seen the plant once again, and the aerial rootlets, which were now some of them more than a foot long, had unfortunately reminded her of tentacles reaching out after something; and they got into her dreams, growing after her with incredible rapidity. So that she had settled to her entire satisfaction that she would not see that plant again, and Wedderburn had to admire its leaves alone. They were of the ordinary broad form,

and deep, glossy green, with splashes and dots of deep red towards the base. He knew of no other leaves quite like them.

The plant was placed on a low bench near the thermometer, and close by was a simple arrangement by which a tap dripped on the hot-water pipes and kept the air steamy. And he spent his afternoons now with some regularity meditating on the approaching flowering of this strange plant.

And at last the great thing happened. Directly he entered the little glass house he knew that the spike had burst out, although his great *Phalaenopsis Lowii* hid the corner where his new darling stood. There was a new odour in the air—a rich, intensely sweet scent, that overpowered every other in that crowded, steaming little greenhouse.

Directly he noticed this as he hurried down to the strange orchid. And, behold! the trailing green spikes bore now three great splashes of blossom, from which this overpowering sweetness proceeded. He stopped before them in an ecstasy of admiration.

The flowers were white, with streaks of golden orange upon the petals; the heavy labellum was coiled into an intricate projection, and a wonderful bluish purple mingled there with the gold. He could see at once that the genus was altogether a new one. And the insufferable scent! How hot the place was! The blossoms swam before his eyes.

He would see if the temperature was right. He made a step towards the thermometer. Suddenly everything appeared unsteady. The bricks on the floor were dancing up and down. Then the white blossoms, the green leaves behind them, the whole green house, seemed to sweep sideways, and then in a curve upward.

At half-past four his cousin made the tea, according to their invariable custom. But Wedderburn did not come in for his tea.

“He is worshipping that horrid orchid,” she told herself, and waited ten minutes. “His watch must have stopped. I will go and call him.”

She went straight to the hothouse, and, opening the door, called his name. There was no reply. She noticed that the air was very close, and loaded with an intense perfume. Then she saw something lying on the bricks between the hot-water pipes.

For a minute, perhaps, she stood motionless.

He was lying, face upward, at the foot of the strange orchid. The tentacle-like aerial rootlets no longer swayed freely in the air, but were crowded together, a tangle of grey ropes, and stretched tight, with their ends closely applied to his chin and neck and hands.

She did not understand. Then she saw from one of the exultant tentacles upon his cheek there trickled a little thread of blood.

With an inarticulate cry she ran towards him, and tried to pull him away from the leech-like suckers. She snapped two of these tentacles, and their sap dripped red.

Then the overpowering scent of the blossom began to make her head reel. How they clung to him! She tore at the tough ropes, and he and the white inflorescence swam about her. She felt she was fainting, knew she must not. She left him and hastily opened the nearest door, and, after

she had panted for a moment in the fresh air, she had a brilliant inspiration. She caught up a flower-pot and smashed in the windows at the end of the greenhouse. Then she re-entered. She tugged now with renewed strength at Wedderburn’s motionless body, and brought the strange orchid crashing to the floor. It still clung with the grimmest tenacity to its victim. In a frenzy, she lugged it and him into the open air.

Then she thought of tearing through the sucker rootlets one by one, and in another minute she had released him and was dragging him away from the horror.

He was white and bleeding from a dozen circular patches.

The odd-job man was coming up the garden, amazed at the smashing of glass, and saw her emerge, hauling the inanimate body with red-stained hands. For a moment he thought impossible things.

“Bring some water!” she cried, and her voice dispelled his fancies. When, with unnatural alacrity, he returned with the water, he found her weeping with excitement, and with Wedderburn’s head upon her knee, wiping the blood from his face.

“What’s the matter?” said Wedderburn, opening his eyes feebly, and closing them again at once.

“Go and tell Annie to come out here to me, and then go for Dr. Haddon at once,” she said to the odd-job man so soon as he had brought the water; and added, seeing he hesitated: “I will tell you all about it when you come back.”

Presently, Wedderburn opened his eyes again, and, seeing that he was troubled by the puzzle of his position, she explained to him: “You fainted in the hothouse.”

“And the orchid?”

“I will see to that,” she said.

Wedderburn had lost a good deal of blood, but beyond that he had suffered no very great injury. They gave him brandy mixed with some pink extract of meat, and carried him upstairs to bed. His housekeeper told her incredible story in fragments to Dr. Haddon. “Come to the orchid-house and see,” she said.

The cold outer air was blowing in through the open door, and the sickly perfume was almost dispelled. Most of the torn aerial rootlets lay already withered amidst a number of dark stains upon the bricks. The stem of the inflorescence was broken by the fall of the plant, and the flowers were growing limp and brown at the edges of the petals. The doctor stooped towards it, then saw that one of the aerial rootlets still stirred feebly, and hesitated.

The next morning the strange orchid still lay there, black now and putrescent. The door banged intermittently in the morning breeze, and all the array of Wedderburn’s orchids was shriveled and prostrate. But Wedderburn himself was bright and garrulous upstairs in the glory of his strange adventure. He had, at last, had the adventure his life had lacked all these years. He was a much happier and fulfilled man.

*Remember to put out your flag on Flag Day, June 14th!*

*-Michael Orser*

# 2002 BOD Nominations

Phone submission by [Paul Tuskes](#)

The Nomination Committee, comprised of George Kenner (chair), Paul Tuskes, David Mays, Jacky Bechtel, and Helmut Rohrl, conducted telephone interviews with various members they thought will serve the SDCOS in an honorable fashion for the following positions (so here are the nominations):

[Gary Pierwola](#)  
[Ben Machado](#)  
Ivan Harrison  
[David Graham](#)  
Rommy Reyes  
SOMEBODY

President  
First Vice President  
Second Vice President  
Board of Directors  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Remember to arrive for this historic event as we will vote this first Tuesday of June. It is our duty as SDCOS members to come to this, the Annual Meeting.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### (FAQ) About Orchids

From [The American Orchid Society](#)

How often should I water?

The simple answer: Allow the plants to approach dryness, gauged by pot weight or by the pencil trick (the point of a sharpened lead pencil will darken with moisture if the plant has enough water), and apply enough water that it runs freely through the pot. Never allow any potted plant to "sit in its own water." Flowering plants may require more frequent waterings to make up for the greater burden of the flowers. Plants will require less water when not in active growth (generally winter months), and more while growing (generally spring and summer months.) Increased frequency of watering will not make up for a poor root system. If roots are not plump and alive, repotting may be called for (see later), or the plant may have been recently repotted by the vendor, in which case it will require raised humidity to compensate for the lack of supporting root uptake. Last, plants [with] thinner, softer foliage will generally require more water than those with harder, more succulent leaves. Plants with pseudobulbs (as dendrobiums and cattleyas) generally like to dry out more between waterings than will those without (as phalaenopsis).

Do they need to be fed while they are in flower? What should I be feeding my orchids?

The simple answer: Yes, if anything, flowering plants need extra feed. Your plants will need to be fertilized with a product appropriate to the media in which they are grown. In general, plants in a bark-based mix will need a fertilizer high in nitrogen ( usually in a 3 - 1 - 1 ratio), while a balanced food will do for all others (usually a 1 - 1 - 1 ratio.) If in doubt, feed with the same balanced fertilizer you use for your other container plants. Orchids will do far better with too little fertilizer than with too much. The old adage, "feed weakly, weekly" is very appropriate. Feed every week with a dilute solution. It is far easier to

remember than "Did I feed last week, or not?"

When should I repot?

The simple answer: When fresh rooting activity is expected (generally in the spring) or is very evident, generally every one or two years. Fresh rooting activity is best shown by the nice green root tips on plump white roots. Often, the main "flush" of rooting will come from the base of the plant (in the case of phalaenopsis), or from the developing newest growth (in the case of dendrobiums and other orchids with pseudobulbs.) Orchid plants need repotting for one or a combination of two main factors: Potting mix breakdown, often evidenced by dead roots; or plant overgrowing the pot, growing over the edge. In the first case, a larger pot may not be required, simply replacement of the growing media. In the second case, the plant may require dividing or may simply be shifted into a larger pot. Fresh media should always be used. A good general rule of thumb is to pot for the bottom of the plant, the root system, and not for the top, the foliage. Freshly repotted plants should be placed in a shady, humid area until continued new root growth is observed. In general, if in doubt, pot in the spring.

What is the best potting material?

The simple answer: Whatever your vendor or source recommends and stocks is best. Orchids, in general, will grow satisfactorily in many different potting mixes if watering and fertilizing are adjusted appropriately. That is, if the basic requirements for moisture, root aeration and support are accommodated, the most readily available media in your particular area is probably the one that has proven to work the best. Orchids are grown today commercially in a variety of media, from straight fir bark, to sphagnum moss, to the increasingly popular peat-based mixes best exemplified by Pro-mix. Watering frequency is generally inversely proportional to the porosity of the media used; in other words, the faster the mix drains, the more often you'll have to water. Complicating the answer is the knowledge that many, if not all, of the most often seen potted flowering orchid plants in garden centers and other sales venues have been potted into larger containers in fresh

media almost immediately prior to shipping. This is for very practical reasons: the container and fresh mix look more attractive to consumers, and the plant can be grown in the smallest possible pot until the last minute, keeping bench space fully utilized. Such plants need to be carefully watered with the increased water needs of the flower spike balanced against the lower potential uptake of the disturbed root system.

Where do I cut the flower spike when it is finished?

The simple answer: In most cases, cut at the base of the spike with a sharp, clean tool. Of all of the more commonly available orchids, only phalaenopsis -- the moth orchid -- will rebloom from its old spike. When most orchids have finished blooming, the spike should be cut off with a sharp and clean blade as close to the base of the spike as is practical. Phalaenopsis will generally rebloom given a little extra care. The spike should be cut between the scar where the first flower was and the last node on the stem. One of the lower nodes will then initiate and generally produce flowers within eight to 12 weeks. Younger or weaker plants may not rebloom. It is also a good idea to cut the spike off entirely by midsummer to allow the plant to grow for next year's bloom.

What is the best orchid for the home?

The simple answer: Phalaenopsis. Many homes have insufficient light levels for the reflowering of most orchids. However, there are a few orchids that prefer lower light and will reflower under home light conditions. Home light means light provided by a slightly shaded south window, or an east or west window. One of the most widely available orchids of the mass market types is also the best for the home -- the phalaenopsis or moth orchid. These plants will grow easily under the same conditions enjoyed by African violets. Another good choice, but usually only for those already initiated in orchid appreciation, are the paphiopedilums or lady's-slipper orchids. These, like phalaenopsis, have relatively attractive foliage, and will reflower in home conditions giving weeks of floral display. Both need to be kept evenly moist. Don't allow to fully dry out, and regularly fertilized with a weak dilution of just about any available fertilizer.

Where can I get a wider variety of plants?

The simple answer: At an orchid nursery. Orchids are available today in many garden centers and home supply centers that, even as recently as 5 years ago, would never have stocked such "exotic" items. However, they will not have the wide range of types available from the traditional orchid nurseries. When you are ready to have a broader range of types, you will want to visit an "old fashioned" type orchid nursery, or "farm," that specializes in orchids. There you will find the wide range of the orchid family more completely represented, as well as expertise and supply items not always available at the everyday garden center. The AOS Almanac's Orchid Source Guide is an invaluable tool in locating the orchid nurseries in your area, as is the Internet.

Can I grow orchids from seed?

The simple answer: Yes, but...Orchid seed is very fine and dust-like, without the nutritive endosperm present in almost all more-commonly-grown flowering plants. For this reason, orchid seed can only be grown under a very specialized set of conditions usually beyond the capability of home growers. Orchid seed must be grown in a sterile culture, not unlike that used in hospitals. If you are willing to put the time and effort into this process, not to mention the three or more years required before your plants would flower, it is certainly one of the most interesting aspects of orchid culture. On the other hand, with orchids so reasonably priced these days, why not just get flowering size plants and let the experts do the work for you?

My orchid's leaves are wrinkled and leathery...Why?

The simple answer: Lack of water or dehydration. The next step is to determine why the plant is not getting sufficient water. First, look to the roots. If the roots appear healthy, white or green and plump, and medium is in good shape, suspect underwatering, especially if the roots are white and the pot is very light. If, on the other hand, the roots are in poor condition, suspect root loss. If the plant has no roots, it cannot take up any water, no matter how much you give it. In this case, the cause may be root loss owing to overwatering or medium deterioration, or a recently repotted and poorly established plant. The immediate solution is to raise humidity in the plants' vicinity to reduce stress on whatever roots there may be, and then deal with whether to repot or to simply wait until the plant establishes in the fresh medium.

Can I grow orchids out-of-doors?

The simple answer: Yes, in some areas.. Especially if you live in a frost-free or nearly frost-free area, there are a wide variety of orchids that will grow very happily with light shade out-of-doors year round. Where winters are cold, orchids can be grown on the patio or under trees in the warmer months when frost does not threaten. This is often a wonderful solution for orchid growers in colder climates, and enables the plants to grow so much better than they would if left indoors all year. Growers in frost-free areas and cooler summer nights (below 60 in August and after) can grow cymbidiums, one of the finest of all garden orchids. Where summer nights are warmer, many varieties of vandas and cattleya types are appropriate.

How are orchids judged? What do those letters after their names mean?

The American Orchid Society (and other national groups) has established a series of criteria of excellence by which orchid plants are evaluated. Individual orchid plants ("cultivars" or "clones") may receive flower quality awards such as the First Class Certificate (FCC/AOS, 90+ points), Award of Merit (AM/AOS, 80 - 89 points), or Highly Commended Certificate (HCC/AOS, 75 - 79 points). Other awards may be given for achievement in culture, Certificate of Cultural Merit (CCM/AOS), or for botanical novelty, the Certificate of Botanical Recognition (CBR/AOS) and the Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM/

AOS). While there are other flower awards that may be encountered, these will be the most commonly seen. Such awards are the purchaser's assurance of a high level of flower quality, whether in the plant itself or of its parents. Plants are judged at monthly judgments held at Centers around the country, or at AOS-sanctioned orchid shows, of which there are over 250 annually around the world.

## Huntington Library & Gardens Fourth Annual Orchid Festival

Submitted by [Michael Orser](#)

You folks don't know how spoiled you are! I went to the show in San Marino last month. They had three separate displays, and three vendors. The Huntington Gardens are nothing to scoff at, there are many things to see, as well as many fine works of art (did you know that they have the famous Blue Boy painting?). But I was surprised to see that our Mini Shows have much more to offer by way of diversity and members sharing such vast amounts of knowledge!



Membership Chairman - [Vivian Follmer](#)  
[San Diego County Orchid Society](#)  
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### Learn How to Grow Fabulous Orchids

Hands-on class includes: choosing the right orchid for you; 5 keys to successful growing; common pitfalls; astonishing tales of the birds and the bees. Plus, you'll pot up your own orchid plant to take home!

**SATURDAY, JUNE 16 1 - 4 PM**  
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Space is limited. To register, call 619.544.9700,  
or e-mail: [OrchidAddicts@hotmail.com](mailto:OrchidAddicts@hotmail.com)

## Orchids on National Public Radio

Monday, June 4, 11:00 a.m.

Orchids will be the featured topic on Monday, June 4, for the interview program "These Days" on San Diego national public radio affiliate KPBS. Author Eric Hansen joins the radio program to talk about his book, "Orchid Fever: A Horticultural tale of Love, Lust, and Lunacy" and to discuss the fascinating world of orchids and orchid growers.

