

New Orleans Orchid Society's Newsletter



August 2015

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Treasurer: Alice Barrios
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Meeting Notice:

Tuesday, August 18, 2015
City Park Garden Study Center
7:30pm

Program:

Hot Lips, a look at the inheritance of lip color and structure in the Cattleya alliance. Jean Allen-Ikeson of Windsor Greenhouse

Orchid Basics Group Program:

TBD
7:00pm

President's Message

Prez Sez,

We are back to our regular program format this month. We have a speaker coming in from Canada that we are sharing with Baton Rouge, Jean Ikeson. Our topic is "Hot Lips: A Look at the Inheritance of Lip Color and Structure in the Cattleya Alliance". We will have our monthly table judging and raffle as usual.

While Arne and I were on our trip to the Carolinas, I bought raffle plants from both Woodlands and Carter & Holmes Nurseries, so we'll have some different kinds of raffle plants for a few months. About half of them were species and half of them were hybrids, a couple were primary hybrids.

Linda and Rolf Wilhelm live just outside Charlotte, N.C. Their driveway is ¼ of a mile long ... downhill. They have several acres populated with chickens, ducks, and three dogs. There used to be a turkey and a pig named Bubbles. The turkey now is happy at a petting zoo after causing too much havoc amongst the other animals and Bubbles has gone on to the Great Reward.

Linda is in the process of downsizing and was moving red-tagged plants over to one side of the two greenhouses for her August sale. (I sent out a notice about that. Woodland is giving 15% off, see the website www.woodlandorchids.com, but you pay shipping.)

They took Arne and me on an excursion to the UNCC (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) greenhouses. They have a nice collection of orchids and are doing what Richard is doing in the City Park Conservatory, adorning a tree with orchids. They have taken it a step further, adding false limbs, then covering them in cork and orchids. To hold up the false limbs they've added a pergola-like structure and hang orchids from those arms as well.

If you have never been to Carter & Holmes, I highly recommend it. Even though they have scaled back part of their operations, they still have 14 greenhouses of orchids to browse through. I called ahead and gave my credit card number, so they would begin to pull the pre-ordered plants that we would be bringing home. When we arrived in the afternoon, they treated us almost like royalty. The receptionist, J'mica, announced, "the New Orleans Orchid Society is here!"

Gene Crocker was in the shipping room. I went in to shake his hand and introduce myself. He was in New Orleans in March 2013 to speak to us and he remembered me, not just me, but my name as well. He made several recommendations on crosses. I bought one of them.

As we were walking in one of the greenhouses Gene introduced us to Mac Holmes, the next generation to take over the family business. He is a very nice young man who asked if we'd like to see the cattleya stud house. This is one of the stud greenhouses that are usually locked to the public, where they keep the plants that are so good that they use them for hybridizing. He brought us through and introduced us to several of the blooming catts as we stepped past workers dividing and repotting plants.

As they were packing up the plants to take with us, we asked about restaurants in the area and Mac was only too happy to give us the names of his favorites. He even marked on our complimentary map where they were.

Newberry, South Carolina is a lovely, picturesque small Southern town with a main street named "Main Street", something we do not have here in New Orleans. Their Downtown area has been redeveloped into boutiques and restaurants. A strong, sudden rain shower made us drive the two blocks we could have walked to dinner.

Early the next morning, our treasures packed securely, we headed back to New

Orleans' heat and humidity.

I highly recommend a trip at any time of year to Newberry, South Carolina and Carter & Holmes.

Carol

New Orleans Orchid Society Minutes July 21, 2015

Due to the high turnout and unusual nature of this month's meeting, it was decided to have refreshments before commencing the business portion of the meeting. Thank you, Max for the cake and coffee.

President Carol Stauder called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as published.

Reports:

VP – Konrad was not present, but he had provided Larry with information regarding speakers for upcoming meetings. Jean Allen-Ikeson will be speaking at the August meeting. The topic will be "Hot Lips: A Look at the Inheritance of Lip Color and Structure in the Cattleya Alliance." In September, Tin-Wein Yu and John Nelson of Louisiana Orchid Connection will speak about their recent trip to Madagascar. In October, Bill Thoms will speak about Bulbophyllums. Bill will send us a list of plants for sale before he visits, so that members may place orders.

Treasurer – Due to health issues, Alice is relinquishing her position as treasurer.

Secretary – Ann requested that new members see her at the break to complete a membership form. According to the society bylaws, this year's dues for persons joining after July 1 will be ½ the usual yearly dues, i.e., \$10.00.

Newsletter - Larry – no report.

New Member Chair, Yvette Montz – not present
Raffle Table: 7 plants and 1 door prize. Carol reminded everyone that you must be a member

and you must sign the registration book to be eligible to win the door prize.

Old Business:

Please see Molly if you would like to order a NOOS shirt. We need to have requests for at least 6 shirts before we can place an order.

Thanks to all who lent plants for our exhibit in the Baton Rouge Show. Thanks to all who helped to set up and take down – Ian Hiler, Konrad Becnel, Ed and Ethel Subervielle, Larry Hennessey, Carol and Arne Stauder.

Carol gave the final results on the profit from the NOOS Show.

New Business:

Audubon Garden Club requested a speaker. Patricia Sanders volunteered to speak.

A nominating committee for next year's officers has been appointed. Please call Molly to volunteer to serve as an officer. If you are asked to serve, please say "Yes". Without officers there is no NOOS.

Carol stated that she and Arne would be visiting Carter & Holmes and Woodland Orchids during the last week in July. She offered to pick up and bring back plants ordered by society members, thereby saving them shipping costs. Please let Carol know what plants you would like to order.

Program: This month's program consisted of a workshop. Attendees were divided into small groups. Each group circulated among tables devoted to specific topics, such as repotting, pests and diseases, Cattleyas, miniatures, Vandas and Phals.

After the completion of the workshop, there was the raffle for plants and door prize.

Final count: 30 members and 16 guests present.

Next meeting: August 18

August Program Information

Topic: Hot Lips, a look at the inheritance of lip color and structure in the Cattleya alliance.

Speaker: Jean Allen-Ikeson lives in Dundas, Ontario, Canada about an hour north of Niagara Falls, although she was born in Houston, her parents were married in New Orleans and her oldest son lives in Covington! She operates Windsor Greenhouse where she grows mainly Cattleya, Paphs, Phrags, Sarcochilus, and Australian Dendrobiums in a 1000 sq' greenhouse. She wrote the special issue for Orchids magazine on Sarcochilus 2011. Jean is also on the Editorial Board of the American Orchid Society and is an accredited AOS judge and training coordinator in her judging center in Toronto.

Energy Is Feeding My Plant

by
Frank Zachariah

Some of you recognize that real estate adage, "What 3 factors determine the price of a piece of property?"

The answer? "Location, Location, Location!"

We orchid folks have a comparable truism, "Why won't my orchids bloom?"

You will get lots of advice:

"Use more fertilizer ... Water more ... Let it get dry ... Less fertilizer ... Cooler temperatures ... Smaller pots ... Pray!"

But there is one factor you must get correct.

The answer? 'Light, Light, Light!'

Growing orchids is both an art and a science. We can have valid debates over which flower is more beautiful. That's the art. Experts, on the other hand, are in complete agreement over the amount of light needed to flower. That's the science part.

Where do plants get their nutrients to grow? In other words, what is 'Plant Food'?

Plants get 97% of their food by capturing the energy of the sun. (Fertilizer is only 3%.) They convert that energy into sugar and then consume that sugar to make their different parts.

A bag of dog food tells us how much to feed a puppy. We can be too kind and guilty of overfeeding, but no one gives their puppy half of the recommended amount. Unfortunately, some of our orchids are on starvation diets – not from lack of love, but because we don't have the right facts.

To grow healthy, blooming orchids we face two problems. First, how can we tell how much light a plant receives? Fortunately there are now phone apps that will accurately 'read' the light level. They are very easy and free. (I use LuxMeter.)

One reading only gives us a partial picture. To measure light we need both the reading (intensity) and the duration (length of time). A simple rule I remember is that old Dr Pepper commercial. At '10, 2, & 4' I take light readings, add them together, and divide by 3.

Like this:

10 AM: 2,500 foot candles (fc)
2 PM: 5,000 fc
4 PM: 7,000 fc
 $(2,500+5,000+7,000)/3 = 4,833 \text{ fc.}$

I take readings from several locations in my greenhouse. Full sun readings at my house are 19,000 foot candles. In the Deep South, it is unsafe to put most orchids in full sun. I have my cattleyas and dendrobiums in a greenhouse with 6,000-7000 fc. They are healthy and flower well. My phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums summer at 2,500 fc with extra afternoon shade.

Can you grow them in more light? Yes, if you can decrease the temperature. Can you grow them in less light? Yes, but remember that the less light they get, the less 'food' they will have.

Just a few feet can be a huge difference because of a tree or the corner of a building. In our urban landscapes, trees present a serious dilemma. The shade from a tree can be the tipping point between an orchid that blooms and an orchid that is surviving. Now you have a terrible choice. I call it, 'Killing the Grandma.' You have to decide which is more important: That tree or your flowers? If you want both, you may have to take some real estate advice and find a better location.

The light requirements for different orchids are worked out pretty exactly. AOS recommends:

Cattleyas = 3,000-5,000 fc (mine are 6,000-7,000 fc)

Dendrobiums = minimum 5,000 fc

Phalaenopsis = 1,500-2,500 fc (species may be more)

Oncidiums = 2,000-6,000 fc (depending on species)

Vanda = 5,000 fc to almost full sun

Now for the second part of the problem. The sun produces lots of wavelengths of energy. One part of that spectrum is light energy. Another is the wavelengths of heat energy. These are sometimes confused and thought to be the same, but it is the heat energy that causes damage in our greenhouses. You can do a simple experiment and measure the sun's foot candles on a winter's day and again in the summer. They will be the same. That is why, when the temperatures are lower in the winter, we can increase our light intensity.

To keep their collection from cooking in the summer, some people will put up so much shading that their plants no longer have sufficient energy to bloom. There is a better

solution. Increase circulation by opening up the greenhouse or putting in more fans. It is simple in theory but may be difficult to carry out. Go to a meeting at your local orchid society and see how others are doing it. The alternative – to grow your prize plants in too much darkness is frustrating, unhealthy, -- and fixable.

This is not to discount the fact that some orchids need a chill to set buds or some require a dry dormancy. But, until you satisfy their energy needs, your orchids will be unable to reach sexual maturity -- and we don't grow cattleyas for their leaves. Download a free light meter app. Make sure your orchids are properly 'fed'. Then you too can boast of lots of beautiful flowers.