

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

# Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society

The purpose of the Society is to stimulate interest, provide education, and enable the exchange of information among those interested in all aspects of orchid culture.

VOLUME 73

ISSUE 7

JULY 2023

## Spotlight on Schomburgkias

Rafael Romero will be sharing his extensive knowledge about Schomburgkia hybrids at our 7:30 p.m. July 10 meeting.

Rafael, a native of Caracas, Venezuela, studied for two years at the United World College of the Atlantic in 1978. He later graduated with a degree in biology from Universidad Simon Bolivar in 1984.

He started working with orchids in 1986 with his wife and her father, Henrique Graf, owner of the largest orchid nursery in Venezuela. In 2003, they moved to Sarasota, opening the 7,000-square-foot nursery Plantio La Orquidea ([plantiolaorquidea.com](http://plantiolaorquidea.com)) which specializes in warm-growing species and hybrids from all over the world. Because of political troubles in Venezuela, in 2015 they decided to open a small lab in Sarasota where they are now producing plants.

Rafael also will be selling plants at the meeting and supplying plants for our raffle table.

– **LUANNE BETZ**  
Program Chair

## President's Message Spying native species, far and near

I like almost all orchids, but I love species, orchids that are found in nature. After catching orchid fever and acquiring numerous species, I realized how tricky they are to grow successfully.

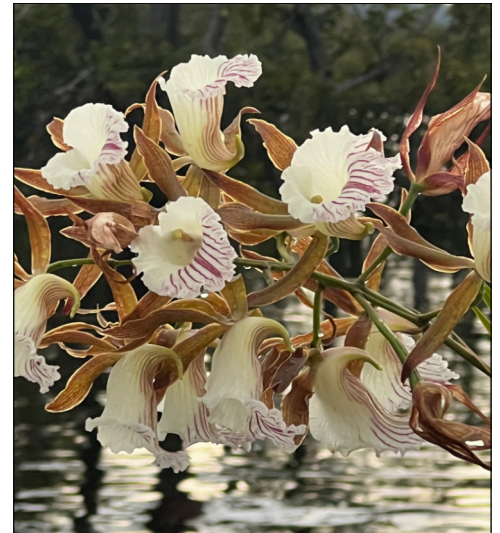


Unlike many hybrids, species usually bloom only once a year. If thrips or iguanas take the buds, sadly, that's it until next year.

Species require a growing environment similar to that found in their natural setting. Trust me, Masdevallias will NOT live in South Florida, but Vandas thrive in our climate. Researching the orchids' native distribution is essential for growing success.

Recently, some FLOS members and I returned from a trip up the Rio Negro in the Brazilian Amazon with the Orchid Conservation Alliance to observe those incredibly special plants in the wild. OCA offers financial support to orchid reserves in South America to purchase land to protect it from development.

Our group saw species new to us and many we can grow here. We observed *Epidendrum nocturnum*, *Prosthechea fragrans*, *Cattleya violacea* and *Oncidium cebolleta*, to name a few. We are now actively searching for a grower with *Galeandra devonianum*. After observing this beautiful orchid first hand, we realized that South Florida has perfect conditions to grow it here — warm, bright light with wet/dry seasons. But, it's not necessary to travel quite so far to see amazing wild orchids. Later this summer at the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Collier County, the "super" Ghost Orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*) will bloom. Follow its progress at



***Galeandra devonianum*, top, and *Cattleya violacea* spotted blooming along the Rio Negro in the Brazilian Amazon.**

[Corkscrew.Audubon.org](http://Corkscrew.Audubon.org) or view it with binoculars from the park's boardwalk!

If you are interested in seeing wild orchids, join FLOS and Captain Allen Cogar for a swamp walk at the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park this fall. I can't wait!

– **VICKI HALLOCK**  
President



# Growing Orchids With Olivier

## Making room for Phals in your collection

*This is the first in a two-part series.*

Some advanced growers tend to discount Phalaenopsis (“Phals”) because they are the “plain” orchid type that everybody has. After all, this is what most big box retailers carry.

I would encourage you not to ban “Phals” from your collection. After all, there is a good reason why they are so popular: the flowers are beautiful, among the longest lasting, and you can find so many varieties in colors and patterns. They are also very easy to take care of, be it outdoors or indoors.



***Phal. violacea* has lovely small and fragrant flowers.**

Phalaenopsis grow best in low light and even shade (many of the small species like *Phal. violacea* need real shade). Phals with mottled leaves (dark green or grey) also need shade.

Because they do not have a water-storage mechanism (like *Cattleya* or *Oncidium* bulbs), they should not be left dry for too long, although I personally grow them on the dry side with excellent results as it promotes root growth. Fertilizing schedule should be the typical “weekly, weakly.”

The vast majority of Phalaenopsis species need heat and they are well suited for South Florida. They are also perfectly happy in your air-conditioned home. A few small-flowered species are true hot growers (*violacea*, *bellina* etc.). Crown rot is a major concern for Phals. That is why, if you mount them, you should have them hang down so the water does not stagnate in the crown... just like

in nature! Also, if they grow outdoors and your media is wet & night-time temperatures fall below 60 F, you should be careful as it favors pathogens of all types. When you hear that night-time temps will drop below 60 F, make sure the medium is dry and surely not soggy!

Spider mites and mealybugs are a concern as well. Once spider mites take hold of your Phals, it is not easy to get rid of them. You need to treat repeatedly until the mites are gone. Remember that mites are spiders; so, you need a “miticide”, not an “insecticide” to kill them. Isopropyl alcohol 70% (pure) kills them on contact but will not get rid of the infestation as some will hide between leaves. Also be careful as Isopropyl alcohol will kill your flower buds as well.

I either mount my phals (and then I must water them every day but the presentation is quite attractive and you do not have to worry about crown rot and repotting) or I grow them in pots. I use transparent plastic pots with a majority of moss mixed with some charcoal and perlite for drainage. The transparent plastic pots allow me to see if the medium is wet or dry and to monitor root growth.

I usually let my Phals fully dry and then drench the pot really well, but you will find many people telling you not to let them dry out. As always, different people have different techniques. So, you can figure out what works best for you. One thing is certain: if you keep their roots wet or soggy at all times, the root system will rot and the plant will perish. So, err on the side of caution. If uncertain about when to water next, wait a bit longer!

*Olivier Turina became a FLOS member in 2014 and a board member in 2020. Find Olivier's tips on growing orchids at [Orchid House - Fort Lauderdale, Florida](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8) on YouTube.com.*

If you like species, you may be surprised to learn that the vast majority (like 90%) of the Phalaenopsis species have small flowers, some of which are fragrant (*Phal. violacea* is the most fragrant of all). Those small flowered species bloom in the summer because heat and length of day triggers their bloom. Many also have spikes that will rebloom for many years. The larger species bloom in the spring instead because they need a drop in night-time temperatures in the fall to start spiking.

Their spikes typically don't rebloom but you can trigger a rebloom by cutting off the spike above the second or third eye. Reblooming is not guaranteed and also, you will usually get fewer flowers and the presentation might be awkward. Personally, I think it is best to just aim for a brand-new spike the next year.

Hybrids can bloom more than once per year. Many large flowered Phal hybrids will bloom in the spring but they can have an extended blooming season.

### Book of the month

#### **“Encyclopedia of Cultivated Orchids” by Alex Hawkes**

An illustrated, descriptive manual of the members of the orchidaceae currently in cultivation.

– OLIVIER TURINA  
Library Chair

### Keiki Club News: July meeting on tags

The Keikis will resume meeting in July and will be gathering at the party room at Jill Smith's condo.

Olivier Turina will be giving his very informative tag presentation and that's something we all need to hear once a year. Although the subject matter seems to be a bit dry, Olivier makes it relevant, humorous and practical.

After the presentation there will be a small group of graduates who will be receiving their Keiki diplomas and then refreshments will be served.

Watch your inbox for the invitation. RSVPs will be a must. See you there!

– JILL SMITH  
Keiki Club Chair



## June Ribbon Awards

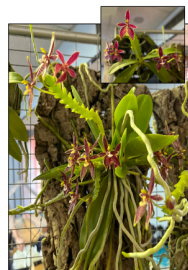
Orchid	Grower	Ribbon
<i>Ctsm. Durval Ferreira (pileatum x vinaceum)</i>	Olivier Turina	Culture
<i>Phal. cornu-cervi 'Red'</i>	Allen Cogar	Culture
<i>Aerides houlletiana</i>	Donna & Scott Peplin	Culture
<i>Epi. oerstedii</i>	Claire Garrett	Blue
<i>Den. Lorrie Mortimer</i>	Mark & Sherrie Smith	Blue
<i>Rhy. coelestis</i>	Olivia & Steve Turowski	Blue
<i>Van. Thailand x tessellata x Mimi Palmer</i>	Doreen Christensen	Blue
<i>Phal. cornu-cervi 'Red'</i>	Allen Cogar	Blue
<i>Onc. 'Raspberry Chocolate'</i>	Mark & Sherrie Smith	Blue
<i>Ctsm. denticulatum</i>	Mercedes Rodriguez	Blue
<i>B. Yaki 'Black's Best'</i>	Roderick Lewis	Blue
<i>Den. wassellii</i>	Craig Barry	Red
<i>Mokara OOmiai Gold 'Orange'</i>	Anja Hessert	Red
<i>B. David Sander</i>	Roderick Lewis	Red



*Den. wassellii* Craig Barry  
*Aerides houlletiana* Donna & Scott Peplin



*Catasetum Durval Ferreira* Olivier Turina  
*Onc. Raspberry Chocolate* Mark & Sherrie Smith



*Phal. cornu-cervi 'Red'* Allen Cogar



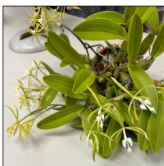
*Ctsm. denticulatum* Mercedes Rodriguez



*Vanda Thailand v. tessellata x Mimi Palmer* Doreen Christensen



*Den. Yaya* Mark & Sherrie Smith



*Epi. oerstedii* Claire Garrett



*Ctsm. denticulatum* Mercedes Rodriguez



*Rhycostylis coelestis* Steve Turowski



*Brassavola* David Sander Roderick Lewis



*B. nodosa* Doreen Christensen

## Graphic and photos: JOHN WRENCH

# American Orchid Society News

## AOS Reciprocal Admission Program

Being an American Orchid Society member has its benefits. Did you know that as a member, you receive free and discounted admission to more than 345 botanical gardens, conservatories and arboreta nationwide? For more information, go to [AOS.org](http://AOS.org).

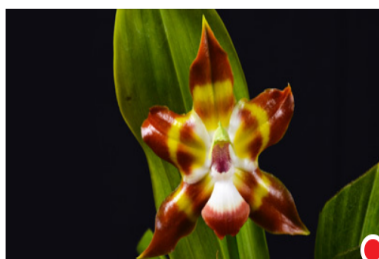


### AOS Greenhouse Chat with Ron McHatton

Ron McHatton

Tuesday, July 11th, 2023  
8:30 – 9:30 pm EST

Join Dr. Ron McHatton as he answers your questions about all things orchids. Please send your question and pictures to Sandra Svoboda at [greenhousechat@aos.org](mailto:greenhousechat@aos.org) by July 8, 2023.



### Beautiful Soft-leaved Orchids

Tim Culbertson

Thursday, July 20th, 2023  
8:30 PM EST

Join Tim Culbertson as he takes us on a tour of lovely orchids that we don't typically see in collections. These easily-grown genera include *Pescatorea*, *Cochleanthes*, *Bollea*, and *Huntleya*.

# Claire's Quick Tip

## My orchid toolbox

With repotting season in full swing now, tools that make work easier and more efficient are to be cherished. Here are some items in my orchid toolbox (actually it is a drawer!) and an explanation of how I use these tools. You probably already have some of these things around the house, and if not, most are easy to acquire.



drainage at the bottom of pots.

**Tweezers:** My favorite tool! I use tweezers to pluck out old potting media from orchid roots. Be sure to choose tweezers with round tips, not pointed or slanted tips which can damage roots. I find that straight tweezers work better than angled tweezers.

**Drywall saw:** This tool will help you cut through compacted media and thick rock-hard rhizomes. FYI: to avoid injury, be careful and know where your fingers are before pushing or pulling this aggressive hand tool through the media.

**Butter knife or frosting spatula:** Orchid roots love unglazed clay pots and their roots stick like glue to the surfaces. To avoid having to smash the pot to extract the orchid, a blunt metal knife, without a serrated edge, comes in handy. After soaking the pot, I use the knife to loosen external roots. Then I slide the knife along the inside circumference of the pot to pop out the root ball like a cupcake from a greased baking tin. FYI: this technique does not work on pots with many holes – those pots will have to be sacrificed at repotting time.

**Hammer:** Any size hammer will make quick work breaking clay pots. Also I use it to break up broken clay pots into smaller shards to use as

**Pruning shears and scissors:** It is helpful to have several pairs so you don't have to stop to sterilize after each plant.

**Tool sharpener:** I wish I could honestly say that I use this tool as often as I should to keep my cutters sharp....

**Wire cutter:** Protect your scissors and shears by using a dedicated tool to cut wire.

**Needle nose pliers:** This tool is helpful for bending rhizome clips and wire hangers.

**Propane torch:** This is the gold standard for sterilizing cutting tools. I always keep an extra propane cylinder in stock so I never run out in the middle of repotting.

**Plastic knives:** After soaking dirty pots to soften dirt and debris, use heavy duty disposable knives with a serrated edge to scrape off stubborn roots before soaking pots in the disinfecting solution of your choice.

**Battery operated sprayer on wheels:** For growers with large collections that require multiple gallons of pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers, this tool is a great time (and back!) saver.

*Claire Garrett has been a FLOS member since 2011 and has received one FCC (91 points), one HCC and five CCM awards from the AOS. Send questions to [clairegarr@aol.com](mailto:clairegarr@aol.com).*

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**Olivier Turina, P.A.**  
Realtor, GRI  
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**Diana Waterous Centorino**  
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Washington, D.C. and Nebraska Bars*

1230 Southeast 4th Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316-1912  
Tel 954.462.7760  
Fax 954.462.7761  
DWC@dianawaterouscentorino.com



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**Kathy Homann, Debby Johnson and Fran Renguso.**

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2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Olivier Turina (Membership)  
Recording Secretary: Jill Smith  
Corresponding Secretary: Karen Fleisher  
Treasurer: Brian Boyle

Regular Meetings: Second Monday of each month.  
Time: 7:30 pm. Place: Christ Lutheran Church Social Hall,  
1955 East Oakland Park Blvd. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306  
Directions: From I-95 take East Oakland Park Blvd., go  
2.4 miles, turn left on NE 20th Ave. Or take US-1 (Federal  
Hwy.) to Oakland Park Blvd. west for two blocks, turn  
north on NE 20th Ave. Park in the rear of the church  
which is on the NW corner of Oakland Park Blvd. and  
NE 20th Ave.

**Fort Lauderdale Orchid Society**  
P.O. Box 4677, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338

