



AUGUST EVENT

Monthly Meeting: 7 p.m. Monday, August 9, 2021

From the comfort of your living room via Zoom!

Virtual Visit of the ABG Greenhouses

with George Guenther

Details of the Zoom meeting will be emailed a few days before the meeting

A word from the President

Hello Orchid Enthusiasts!

We are sorry to report that our live Greenhouse Tour and Ice Cream Social must be canceled this month due to the resurgence of the pesky Covid variant. Instead, George Guenther will be giving us a virtual tour through our Zoom platform you are all familiar with by now. The meeting will start at 7 p.m., a bit earlier than our usual time. I suppose we can all enjoy our ice cream while George guides us through the glasstop jungle of the behind-the-scenes greenhouses of

the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. Lucky us to have expert George locate all the special orchids in bloom for us to see. Be sure to look for the Zoom link from Danny. Send pictures of your beautiful blooms to Danny as usual for the Zoom meeting.

We have live speakers lined up for September and October with our annual show still planned for November. Stay tuned for updates as we roll with the changes in this terrible pandemic. Masks will be highly recommended

for live meetings unless they are mandated, then we'll have to require masks for those present. Live meetings will be broadcast over Zoom so if you don't feel you should attend a live meeting, you can always participate over Zoom.

Thank you for your understanding as we navigate through these troubling times. Looking forward to seeing your faces on Monday.

~HB

Judges' Corner

The Atlanta Judging Center met on July 10, 2021 and evaluated 13 plants submitted for AOS award consideration. Two plants received awards.

Blc. Petite Stars 'Nilva's Amorcito,' a cross of *Bc.* Richard Mueller x *Laelia rubescens*, received an HCC of 79 points. Exhibited by Bailey Santwire, one of our students.

The other award went to a cut inflorescence of the species *Platanthera ciliaris* 'The Spirit of First Nations' exhibited by David Mellard. This plant received an AM of 83 points.

Photos by Charles Wilson, certified judge with the Atlanta Judging Center.

Doug Hartong
Chair, Atlanta Judging Center



Brassolaeliocattleya Petite Stars 'Nilva's Amorcito'



Platanthera ciliaris 'The Spirit of First Nations'

ATLANTA ORCHID SOCIETY

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Monthly Ribbon Judging – David Mellard

Newsletter – Véronique Perrot &

Mark Reinke

Orchid Digest Rep – David Mellard

Show Chairs (2021) – Danny Lentz &

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Website/Social Media – Danny Lentz &

Jeremie Carroll

The Atlanta Orchid Society Bulletin

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Newsletter Editors: **Véronique Perrot** & **Mark Reinke**

The [Atlanta Orchid Society](http://atlantaorchidsociety.org) is affiliated with the [American Orchid Society](http://americanorchidsociety.org), the [Orchid Digest Corporation](http://orchiddigest.com), the [Mid-America Orchid Congress](http://mid-america-orchid-congress.com), and the [Garden Club of Georgia](http://gardenclubofgeorgia.org).

Minutes of July Meeting of the Atlanta Orchid Society

The July 12th, 2021 monthly meeting of the Atlanta Orchid Society was called to order by Helen Blythe-Hart, President, at 8 p.m. The meeting was held at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens and was also webcast via Zoom. HB welcomed two guests. Barbara Barnett discussed

the upcoming Birmingham show which will be held Sept 17-19th. HB discussed society ribbon judging. HB hosted a Q&A session with those present. Ribbon judging took place. The meeting was then adjourned.

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Join the Atlanta Orchid Society

Membership in the Atlanta Orchid Society is \$30 for individuals or \$45 for households. Yearly membership runs January 1-December 31. Anyone joining in the third quarter will get a 50% discount on the current year's membership. Anyone joining in the fourth quarter will purchase a membership for the following year. You can join at one of our monthly meetings, contact the society's Treasurer (see page 2) for a membership application, or complete an application online at our website: www.atlantaorchidsociety.org

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EVENTS CALENDAR

August

9 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting, Mershon Hall, ABG: Ice Cream Social and Greenhouse tour
14 – AOS monthly judging: contact **Doug Hartong** to check if judging is actually taking place

September

11 – AOS monthly judging:
13 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting, Mershon Hall, ABG: Eric Sauer on Maxilarias

November

19-21 – AtIOS Orchid Show

HOME REMEDIES FOR ORCHID ISSUES

Helen Blythe-Hart

Those of us that started out growing orchids on our windowsills invariably get an orchid with an issue. The first thing to do is to try and identify the problem, then to find a remedy that we can literally live with. As windowsill growers, we don't want to bring toxic chemicals into the home environment although greenhouse growers with more plants and potentially more problems can spray sprinkle or spread the heavy hitters, close the door and go home.

PEST OR DISEASE?

Let's start with the pests. I recommend getting a good magnifying hand lens or at the very least a set of high-powered reading glasses so you can see and identify the tiniest pests. Check out the American Orchid Society website for info on orchid pests or look at the pest section of any good book on growing orchids at home to help identify the critters, as this is by no means, a comprehensive article. **QUARANTINE IMMEDIATELY** any plants you suspect of issues, **IDENTIFY** then **TREAT** or send the lost causes to orchid heaven to protect the rest of your collection, hard as it may be.

PESTS

The most innocuous pests are probably **APHIDS**. Their translucent bodies and habit of lining up and down the flower spikes make them pretty easy to identify. If you notice shiny sticky honeydew on your leaves, suspect aphids as a probable cause. I take my plants to my kitchen sink and spray the little suckers off with warm water. Blasting isn't necessary, just enough water pressure to knock them off the bloom spike you've been waiting for all year!! You might have to repeat the

water spraying a time or two until they're all gone. Use the House Mix spray below if they persist.

Many times when you have aphids, you get **ANTS**. Ants love aphids!! You can also get ants without aphids. I have an old farmhouse and ants are just a fact of life. They love to burrow into the bark mix and set up colonies that can spread to other nearby pots. You might see a stray ant or two exploring around the pots or herding aphids, that's when to start being on the lookout for colonies. You'll know you have a colony when you water, the bark will erupt with a thousand ants trying to get to high ground with their eggs.

I take my plants to the kitchen sink and flood the pots with running water. I then squirt about a teaspoon of liquid Dawn-type dish soap onto my hand and rinse the soap off my hand slowly all over the pot, allowing the soap to envelop the plant and rinse down into the potting mix under the running water. I then rinse out the pot with plain water for a couple minutes and wait to see if more ants are still alive. If I still see live ants, I repeat the soaping process then rinse the pot well again to wash away any soap residue.

A more common pest of orchids is **SCALE**. Scale comes in several species and they're a bit tougher to kill. **SOFT BROWN SCALE** looks like little brown convex disks usually on the underside of leaves. They love *Phalaenopsis*!!! They're a lot easier to eradicate if you catch the infestation early, and your Phals will thank you. With scale, once the critters start feasting on your Phals, a yellow spot can start to show on the top of the leaf directly above the patch of scales. If you notice these yellow patches, check

the underside of the leaves immediately. Use the alcohol treatment described below to remove them. Then use the House Mix spray weekly until they're gone.

MEALY BUGS are actually in the scale family of orchid pest thugs. They look like white powderpuffs with little hairs poking out from underneath. These guys are crawlers and can destroy a flower spike in days. They seem to show up right when that special bud is just about to open especially on slipper orchids, but they'll destroy anything they get their mouthparts on. They hide in leaf crevasses, behind plant clips, and the back of buds and will also munch on the roots!! A drop of 70% alcohol turns them purplish. Wipe off as many as you can with alcohol on a cotton pad then spray House Mix weekly for 4-5 weeks.

A very bad actor in the scale department is **BOISDUVAL SCALE**. This one is tough. It loves *Cattleyas* and is notorious for hiding in the leaf axils, under sheaths and every little nook and cranny where it can feed unseen. It looks like furry white patches and white cigar-shaped chaff stuck in clumps to the plant. These jerks inject toxins into the orchid and can kill their hosts posthaste. You'll also start to see yellow patches on the top of the



Aphids and ants



Soft brown scale



Mealy bugs



Boisduval scale

leaves where the scale feeds underneath. With these guys you're almost better off pitching the plant as treatment may take several months, and the toxins can kill the orchid even with treatment. I know, I hate to throw away plants, but this one's truly criminal and could easily mass murder your whole collection of Cattleyas.

MITES are closely related to spiders and ticks and need some extra juice to kill them. These guys are tiny but pack a punch!! Evidence of mites can look like a wash of subtle pock marks across usually thin leafed orchids like *Oncidiums*, *Miltonias* or *Dendrobiums* but spider mites with their tiny silver webs can take over any plant.

You'll definitely need your magnifier to see these guys. Any plant I even suspect of having mites has the underside of the leaves immediately wiped with alcohol on a cotton pad. Looking at the cotton will show a number of uniform teeny reddish grains which, when looked at under magnification, reveal the culprits. I go ahead and wipe down all leaf surfaces with 70% alcohol on a cotton pad before using the MITEY MIX SPRAY. Repeated treatments will be necessary to control these creeps.

Root tips that seem to disappear overnight are likely munched on by snails, slugs or even roaches. I'd recommend re-potting the plant as these slimy guys like



Spider mites

to hide in the pots. A dilute drench of EPSOM SALTS can send these guys packing as well. Use 1-2 teaspoons of Epsom Salts per gallon of water and drench the pots. Next watering, use plain fresh water to flush out excess salts from the pot. 1 teaspoon of Epsom salts per gallon of water is great at greening up your plants, just flush pots with plain water next time.

FIRST DEFENSE AGAINST PESTS

Your best friends to defend your orchids are VIGILANCE first, ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL 70%, dish soap like DAWN, FORMULA 409, and VEGETABLE OIL. Since scale pests have a waxy coating that keeps them from drowning in water, detergents that can break down their waxy defenses are perfect to allow the oil to penetrate and suffocate them. As soon as you notice pests, I recommend taking a cotton pad soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol, and rubbing as many of them off the plants as possible, taking special care to find the ones hiding. I sometimes carefully use a toothpick to probe into the cracks and get the alcohol in there without breaking the orchids leaf's skin.

Next, I apply the House Mix or Mitey Mix spray to all surfaces of the leaves to kill the crawlers. You'll have to repeat the treatments once per week or two for several weeks until no trace of them can be seen. At least 2-3 treatments or more are required as impenetrable eggs hatch and can re-infest the plants. You'll have to start again from zero if they are allowed to take hold again.

HOUSE MIX SPRAY

In a quart jar, add 1/2 cup of Dawn 1/2 cup Formula 409, (or skip the 409 and add 1 cup Dawn) 1 cup of 70% isopropyl alcohol and 1/4 cup of vegetable oil. Stir well. This is the house mix base. Fill the remainder of the jar with water, keep well mixed. I have spray bottles labeled with HOUSE MIX full of this around for general use as well as a dropper of alcohol. Even though non-toxic, the mix might still be an irritant, so wear a mask when spraying.

MITEY MIX

This one is non-toxic but can be quite irritating to the eyes and nose when making or spraying since it's a very strong red pepper infusion. The capsaicin from the

peppers kills the mites without harmful chemicals. I add about a 2.5 ounce jar (or 1/2 cup) of red pepper flakes to a pot and add 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer for an hour. You can also do this covered in the microwave, but allow it to steep and cool overnight. After cooling, I put on my latex gloves and strain out the flakes from the red pepper juice using a coffee filter held in a strainer. Carefully squeeze the flakes to get the concentrated juice. Discard flakes or use them around your garden plants to prevent cutworms. I add this red pepper juice to the House Mix base before topping off the jar with water. I recommend using a mask when spraying plants so you won't sneeze yourself into a stroke. Spray weekly for 3-5 weeks as necessary.

A word about NEEM as a non-toxic pesticide: This is derived from the oils of the tropical Neem tree. It's been touted as a miracle spray but be cautious as some plants, notably *Phalaenopsis* do not tolerate the spray well and can become disfigured when sprayed with Neem. This is also true of full strength Formula 409. You can test your plant by spraying an inconspicuous area and see how the plant tolerates it over the next several days. If your orchid tolerates the Neem oil, you can alternate it with the House Mix spray or the Mitey Mix spray if you have mites.

There are some manufactured products like Safer Soap and Wilders Hot Pepper Spray that can be used with the same masking precautions listed above.

OTHER ORCHID PROBLEMS

While this article isn't meant to be a comprehensive on orchid pests and diseases, there are some ordinary products that can be used to help orchids in distress from disease:

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE(H₂O₂), 70% ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL, CINNAMON, LISTERINE, and old fashioned diluted liquid LYSOL.

Once you have determined that your orchid has a disease and not merely a pest, you can try the remedies below.

Leaves that show wrinkled furrows mean that the plant can't take up the water. It looks virtually the same if the plant is under-watered as over-watered since, the water either isn't available to

hydrate the plant, or the roots are rotted and unable to take up water resulting in the same wrinkled leaves.

If you see whole yellowed leaves dropping off your Phals, it could be crown rot that needs immediate attention. A leaf that turns yellow and dries up before falling off may just be the orchids' natural process of shedding the oldest leaves after absorbing the nutrients in the leaf. Check around the base of the plant, near where the whole yellow leaves fell off, for any black moldy looking patches.

Crown rot happens more often with sphagnum moss when the plants are over-watered, when water is allowed to puddle in the top of the crown, when the plants are sopping wet at night, or if there's poor air circulation. Best to water plants early in the day as sunlight is needed to move the moisture through their systems. Watering after dark prevents the plant from taking up the water, and the wetness can cause problems like rot of the crown, collar or roots of the plant.

Again, be VIGILANT for any issues with your windowsill pals. Hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) poured on the black rot can help. I use a toothpick to scrape off some of the black rot so the H_2O_2 can penetrate and kill the fungus. You might have to repeat this treatment a few times over the next couple weeks. For root rot, cut off bloom spikes—yes, I know, it's hard—then remove the plant from the pot. Cut off all soft roots and soak what's left of the roots and base of plant in H_2O_2 for about 30 minutes. Repot in moistened mix, then put the entire plant with pot inside of a clear loosely tied plastic bag to make a mini "hospital" greenhouse to increase the humidity while the plant recovers. Keep it in a

shady place for a month or two until it recovers and starts to grow new roots.

Remember to practice good hygiene by sterilizing your cutters before moving into another plant. I do this with alcohol or by running the blades of my cutters over the flame on my gas stove for about 10 seconds. I sprinkle some powdered cinnamon on the cuts to help seal and protect the open wounds.

Any spots or sections that look watery are a little more tricky. Tiny watery dots that appear on leaves may be treated with a spray of 10% solution of liquid Lysol or 1/2 strength Listerine mouthwash. Rinse the potting medium after applying. Translucent brown patches that grow quickly can devastate your collection. Isolate the plants immediately and cut off the brown patch with a full 1/2-3/4 inches of un-diseased leaf. Spray H_2O_2 on the infected leaf and plant then sprinkle powdered cinnamon on the cut. Keep watching the plant for the next few days. If the brown continues to grow you may have to use a more powerful horti-

cultural disinfectant like PHYSAN 20 to stop the rot. Use the Physan 20 outside and bring the baby inside after it dries in the shade.

Leaves that grow in a wrinkled "accordion" pattern are a result of too little water and/or humidity. Usually this happens on thin leafed orchids like Oncidiums and Miltoniopsis. It won't harm the plant (except if it traps the bloom spike) just give your baby a little more water or bump up the air moisture with a humidifier. By the way, Oncidiums are known for getting tiny spots all over their leaves. Its very difficult to prevent as a home grower or if you put your plants outside. Be sure to check for mites as the spotting can look similar. I learn to live with it.

Lastly, any roundish patches with black in the middle surrounded by a drier ring are likely to be sunburn. As the sun changes its angle when it moves seasonally across the sky, sunlight may hit your plants and burn them even though they may have been on that window for months. I know it's hard to look at the blackened patch but resist cutting off the leaf as the leaves are the orchid's power plant. Snipping off the leaf will reduce the ability of the plant to generate flowers. The plant will eventually outgrow the blackened patch. Try putting up a sheer curtain or move the plant farther away from the window.

These are some of the more common issues you'll encounter early in your Orchid Days. Refer to the American Orchid Society for tons more info. Keeping your plants well watered, fed and potted will go a long way to preventing pests as stressed plants are magnets for pests and disease.

Happy safe growing!!



Oncidium leaf spots



Brown rot



Accordion leaves

Ribbon Judging Report

We weren't able to get photos and write-ups for the ribbon judging plants table last month, but here are the winners:

Cattleya Alliance

Bl. Miya's Fascination 'Odoms Wild-fire,' grown by Lentz/Morgan

Dendrobium Alliance

1. *Den. Samarai* (*Den. striatotes* x *antennatum*), grown by Jon & Fi
2. *Den. Luwin Park* x *Den. tangerinum*, grown by Jon&Fi

Encyclia Alliance

- (no first place this month)
2. *Encyclia garciniana*, grown by Danny & Dianne

Oncidium Alliance

1. *Burrieara Francine* 'Roseglow,' grown by HB
2. *Oncidium phytochilum*, grown by Vinh Nguyen
3. *Oncostele Wildcat*, grown by Maria

Slipper Alliance

1. *Paph. QF Mini* (*thaianum* x *leucochilum*), grown by HB
2. *Phrag. fischeri*, grown by Danny & Dianne
3. *Paph. Shin Yi Heart* x (*Hsinying Nightfire* x *Laserlight*), grown by Danny & Dianne

Phalaenopsis Alliance

- Species:
1. *Phal. bellina*, grown by Danny & Dianne
 2. *Phal. violacea*, grown by Danny & Dianne
 3. *Phal. tetraspis*, grown by Jason Chen
- Hybrids:
1. *Phal. NOID* grown by Faye Banks
 2. *Phal. Shenandoah Fire* grown by Danny & Dianne
 3. *Phal. Queen Beer*

Vanda Alliance

1. *Vanda (Neofinetia) falcata*, grown by Barbara Barnett
2. *Vanda Hollis Presnell* (*V. Paki* x *V. Bill Burke*), grown by Véronique
3. *Vandacostylis Walnut Valley*, grown by Maria

Miscellaneous:

1. *Clowesia dodsoniana* (?), grown by Jason Chen
2. (Tie) *Stanhopea jenischiana*, grown by Vinh Nguyen
2. *Bulbophyllum carunculatum*, grown by Jon & Fi
3. (Tie) *Ornithocephalus* sp., grown by Danny & Dianne
3. *Crespidum calophyllum*, grown by Danny & Dianne