

Tips for Happy Orchids

by Carson Barnes

I've had some time to experiment, read, fail, learn, and to succeed with many kinds of orchids over the 51 years I've been growing them.

Way back when, one had to read books on them (I still have my early 1970s edition of *Home Orchid Growing* by Rebecca Northen) or attend orchid society meetings and ask around (as a shy teen, I rarely spoke up at meetings of the National Capitol Orchid Society, but Merritt Huntington of Kensington Orchids offered advice without being asked). Nowadays, we have the internet, Google, and plenty of information at our fingertips, a lot of which is correct.

How to know? That's where experiment, fail, and succeed come in. If people make recommendations on the kind of orchid about which you're asking, think first whether their recommendations can work in your conditions. Automated misting systems may not be the best solution for a windowsill grower; your outdoor conditions here in Georgia may vary from those experienced by an orchid pal just twenty or so miles away. Second, go ahead and try, and watch attentively for the results. It may take some time, except in cases of utter catastrophe!

Tip: don't try this with an expensive plant. I've gotten pretty good at growing orchids by now but occasionally one succumbs in my care.

All that said, here are some things I've noticed that work, or not:

Most orchids, with exceptions, like to dry a bit or completely between waterings, but some must remain sopping wet. Some hate fertilizer, some want so

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JUNE EVENT

Monthly Meeting: 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 12, 2023 **ABG Greenhouses Tour and Ice Cream Social**

Day Hall at the ABG; see below for details

Bring your blooming plants for our monthly ribbon judging

ABG Greenhouses Tour and Ice Cream Social

This month's meeting is the highly anticipated tour of the Atlanta Botanical Garden greenhouses. We will gather in Day Hall at 6:30 p.m. (yes, it is earlier than our usual meeting time), and leave for the greenhouses at 7 p.m. on the dot. The greenhouses do not have artificial lighting, so we have to visit them early enough before sunset to be able to see the plants well. The tour will be guided by Becky Brinkman, the ABG long-time

orchid collection manager, and will last about an hour.

After the tour, we will return to Day Hall for our ice cream social. If you are planning to come, please let Fi Alonso (FiAlonso@outlook.com) know, to make sure there will be enough ice cream. We will have our usual ribbon judging, so bring your blooming plants!

This meeting will not be broadcast on Zoom, for obvious reasons.

Two Major Events in the Atlanta Orchid World Are Coming Up!

First, the annual auction, to be held on Saturday, June 17, at Ogelthorpe Presbyterian Church. The church is at 3016 Lanier Dr. in Brookhaven, but the auction will be around the corner, off of Woodrow Way, in the meeting room. We have donated plants from several members, and from Orchid Inn, Sunset Valley Orchids, and Exotic Orchids of Maui. We also have two gift certificates from Carter & Holmes! There will be a lot of plants to be won!

We will gather at noon for a potluck lunch before the auction, so bring a dish to share! The auction will follow, starting at 1 p.m.

Second, the annual orchid show of the Atlanta Orchid Society will be held over the Labor Day weekend, Friday 1 until Sunday 3 September 2023, at Day Hall at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Come see the most spectacularly grown orchids in bloom competing for ribbon awards, as well as for possible awards from the American Orchid Society. There will be orchid vendors (Marble Branch Farms

and more). Ribbon Judging and AOS Show Judging will take place on Saturday morning, followed by AOS award judging immediately afterwards.

Of course, the monthly meetings of the Atlanta Orchid Society are always a great place and time to meet with orchid friends, see orchids in bloom, and maybe win a plant or two at a silent auction. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 8 p.m. in Day Hall. Come on out for a good time!



The AtlOS exhibit at the orchid show a few years back (photo by Jason Mills-Shoulta)

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Mark Reinke

The Atlanta Orchid Society Bulletin

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The Atlanta Orchid Society is affiliated with the American Orchid Society, the Orchid Digest Corporation, the Mid-America Orchid Congress, and the Garden Club of Geogia.

Answers to your Questions

You have some questions? Here is a list of people who may be able to answer some of them.

You are a member of the AtlOS but you don't get the monthly newsletter

▶ Email Danny Lentz (<u>dblgongora@bellsouth.net</u>)

You have a question about **the newsletter** or you would like to contribute to the newsletter

▶ Email the newsletter editor, Véronique Perrot (<u>nik.perrot@gmail.com</u>)

You have a question about the monthly meetings and the speakers:

▶ Email the V.P., Firelli Alonso (<u>FiAlonso@outlook.com</u>)

Note: if there is a location change on the day of the meeting, a member of the board will put a sign at the original site indicating the new location

You have a question about the AtlOS annual orchid show

▶ Email Danny Lentz (<u>dblgongora@bellsouth.net</u>)

You have a question about advertising for events:

▶ Email Maria Beug-Deeb (<u>buegdeeb@gmail.com</u>)

You are interested in joining the group order of potting media and fertilizer:

▶ Email Jon Crate (jon@fai.us)

You need a **name tag**:

▶ Email Jon Crate (jon@fai.us)

EVENTS CALENDAR

June

10 - AOS monthly judging

12 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

17 - Atlanta Orchid Society Potluck and Auction

July

8 – AOS monthly judging 10 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

August

12 - AOS monthly judging

14 - Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

September

1-3 - Atlanta Orchid Society Orchid Show at the Atlanta Botanical Garden

9 - AOS monthly judging

11 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

Tips for Happy Orchids

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much that their roots will make baskets to catch fallen leaves. Some grow in full sun in the tropics, others in shade so deep that photographing them *in situ* requires a flash. Most are poisoned by salt, yet a few species live happily within a few hundred meters of the ocean.

To reiterate: research is required, not only into what the internet or literary boffins say is needed, but into the natural conditions in which the plant grows if a species, or the artificial conditions in which a plant has been growing in the case of hybrids, before you buy it. The Atlanta Orchid Society has a library of books that can be checked out; many members have their own libraries and are generally happy to lend a book. Meetings are a great place to learn more about how to grow orchids well, so come on out, see who's grown a type that interests you, and ask them how they got their plant to be so happy!

Become an AOS Judge

The American Orchid Society Judging Program

is seeking highly motivated orchid enthusiasts to join the judging ranks

Work with other like-minded people in support of AOS awards programs and educational efforts

For more information contact us at judges@aos.org





JOIN THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY

12 issues of *Orchids*, the Society's monthly full color magazine chock full of insightful articles and tempting ads for plants and supplies.

10% off purchases from the Society's Bookstore and Orchid Emporium. Reduced or free admission to participating botanical gardens.

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Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting Ribbon Winners for May, 2023

Notes by Mark Reinke; photos by Danny Lentz



Cattleya warscewiczii forma coerula



Guaritonia Why Not



Cattleya Crystelle Smith 'BK Orchids'

Class 1: Cattleya Alliance

Blue: Cattleya warscewiczii forma coerulea – Carson Barnes

This species is from northwestern Colombia where it grows in the mountain ranges on either side of Medellín as well as along the Magdalena River just to the east of there. It can have some of the largest flowers of the genus, usually 7 to 9 inches in spread, but up to 11 inches in the largest forms. In addition, there can be 5 to 7 or more on a single stem, creating a breathtaking sight on a wellgrown specimen plant. In June of 2019, an example of the semi-alba form grown by Matthias Seelis on the Big Island of Hawaii received a Certificate of Cultural Excellence with an amazing 77 open flowers and 19 buds on 17 inflorescences, but with an average spread of just over 6 inches. The plant exhibited by Carson with five lovely blooms on a single spike is one of these relatively smaller types that bloom in May and June. The plants with the largest flowers are at their peak from July into August. The species was described in 1854 by Heinrich Reichenbach in honor of the Polish botanist and collector Jósef Warszewicz. Both of the letter w's in the name are properly pronounced like a "v." But for many years

most people have known this orchid as *Cattleya gigas*, a name given to it by Jean Linden in 1873 who mistakenly assumed he was the first to describe it.

The common color form is lavender, which can be a more intense shade than other large-flowered species, and often bears two distinct yellow "eyes" around the opening of the rather extended lip tube. There is also a pure white form. Many outstanding early collected plants have made an invaluable contribution to modern large flowered Cattleyas.

However, as a species, *C. warscewiczii* is not the easiest to grow and flower.



Cattleya walkeriana forma coerulea 'Manhattan Blue'

It prefers a high light level as it is often found growing in the tops of trees bordering streams in the wild. Arthur Chadwick recommends giving it as much light as possible in late January to early February to induce it to begin to grow early enough to produce strong flowering. It should be kept somewhat dry and cool in winter and only given more water as the growth begins to expand. Even as water is increased, the plants should still dry before being watered again. And then after flowering, water should be reduced again to discourage additional growth which can reduce or inhibit flowering the following year. This orchid generally doesn't make new root growth until after flowering so repotting should be done only at that time. I did not have this advice when trying to grow C. warscewiczii in the past and my efforts failed. I have recently obtained some new plants and will try again. Anyone who successfully flowers this species should feel a sense of accomplishment.

Red: Guaritonia Why Not - Fred Pippin

Red: Cattleya Crystelle Smith 'BK Orchids'
- Fi Alonso & Jon Crate

White: - Cattleya walkeriania forma coerulea 'Manhattan Blue' - Carson Barnes





Dendrobium hancockii

Class 2: Cymbidium Alliance

No Entries



Dendrobium devonianum

Class 3: Dendrobium Alliance Species

Blue: *Dendrobium hancockii* – Vinh Nguyen

It is obvious Vinh has a love of Dendrobiums and has diligently learned how to cultivate wonderful specimens of unusual and rarely seen species. This lovely grown example of Dendrobium hancockii is a perfect illustration of that fact. The species comes from Yunnan province in China where it has most commonly been found growing on rocks at elevations around 5000 feet. It may, however, be extinct in the wild due to overcollection for use in Chinese medicine, as well as for its bamboo-like appearance and honey scent. The plants produce a dense cluster of stems that narrow and branch freely as they extend. Both older and newer canes produce rich yellow flowers in spring, usually singly but occasionally two or rarely three per inflorescence. Plants like plenty of water in summer but should be allowed to dry between waterings in winter when they should also receive cool nighttime temperatures. Even in summer, a 90-degree day would be record breaking in its natural habitat, so this species is going to need a controlled environment in our climate.



Dendrobium hekouense



Dendrobium densiflorum

Red: *Dendrobium devonianum* - Vinh Nguyen

Red: *Dendrobium hekouense* – Stephanie Byrne

White: *Dendrobium densiflorum* – Bailey Santwire

White: *Dendrobium crystallinum* – Vinh Nguyen



Dendrobium Jairak Fire Horn 'ISO'

Hybrids

Blue: Dendrobium Jairak Fire Horn 'ISO' - Fi Alonso & Jon Crate

This hybrid that combines eight different species from the Spatulata section along with a bit of Den. bigibbum from the Phalaenanthe section comes in many unusual and interesting color configurations creating some of the most striking Antelope types in commerce. This plant is no exception with its almost "photo shopped" appearance. If it were to be awarded, I would not want to be the individual tasked with writing the official award description! All the species involved are considered warm to hot growing, so, sadly, growers with greenhouses that get cool in winter such as mine does, will likely fail with this beauty. However, with a bright indoor setting for that season, the Antelope types are not hard to grow, and love going outside in dappled sun for the hot, humid summer months. During that time, they should receive plenty of water, but it should be reduced in winter so that plants dry well in between each drink. A porous, fast draining mix is essential for a good root system. Watch the developing ends of new growths as plants in this section are a magnet for mealybugs.



Dendrobium Hawaii Stripes

Red: *Dendrobium* Hawaii Stripes - Fi Alonso & Jon Crate

White: *Dendrobium* Peng Seng – Fred Pippin



Dendrobium Peng Seng



Encylia bractescens

Class 4: Epidendrum Alliance

Blue: Encyclia bractescens - Bailey Santwire

Encyclia bractescens grows in the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean Sea watershed from Southern Mexico and Belize through Honduras and Guatemala, usually at fairly low elevations in humid and dry forests as well as the edges of pasture lands. It has a densely clustering habit with compact pseudobulbs topped by two or three narrow rigid leaves. The flowers come on thin wiry stems peaking in mid to late spring with as many as a dozen per inflorescence. Each bloom is between 1.5 and 2 inches spread with narrow, pointed segments that are yellowish to reddish purple and a rounded lip that is white overlaid with thin purple veins and can read as pinkish from a distance. While some Encyclia species are slow growers, E. bractescens can grow into a showy specimen relatively quickly, and when well cared for, can produce hundreds of blooms at once. The most noteworthy specimen awarded was the 'Nora' clone which received a Certificate of Cultural Merit from the Hawaii Orchid Society in April of 2010 with an astounding 4368 flowers and 4 buds on 312 inflorescences. That plant was grown by H&R Nurseries on driftwood that had been placed inside a wooden basket due



Prostechea cochleata

to the plant size. As with most species in this genus, mounted or basket culture works best as plants need to get plenty of air to their roots and dry quickly after watering. Bright diffused light and warm temperatures are preferred with plenty of water when actively growing and somewhat less in winter when plants in the wild survive on light rains and nightly dew.

Red: *Prosthechea cochleata* – Bailey Santwire

White: *Epidendrum pseudoschumannia-num* – Bailey Santwire



 $Epidendrum\ pseudoschumannianum$



Miltoniopsis Eva's Paisajes Conocidos

Class 5: Oncidium Alliance

Blue: *Miltoniopsis* Eva's Paisajes Conocidos – Fi Alonso & Jon Crate

This cross was registered by Orquídeas Eva of Pereira, Colombia, which is in the central valley between the western and central cordilleras of the Andes Mountains. The name literally means "known landscapes" and may refer to the fact that the smaller plant size and flowers are so similar to the species Mps. roezlii that makes up nearly 7/8ths of its ancestry. Its immediate parent and one grandparent are both the yellow variant of that species known as variety xanthina. This particular example also has the faintest purple blush at the base of each petal, where in the normal form of the previously mentioned species there is a deep purple blotch. The daytime fragrance is outstanding and mixes the scent of roses, lemons, and spices. While Mps. roezlii is the warmest growing of the five species, 90-degree days are rare in its rainforest environment, so it will be happier not left outdoors in summer heat waves. There is no dry season in its habitat so regular, rather frequent watering with good drainage will produce the best results. Bright, but diffused light produces the best flowering. To look their best, Miltoniopsis plants require periodic grooming to remove the brown basal bracts on older growths as well as the many brown stems from previous blooms.





Aliceara Tropic Lily 'Hilo Spaceship'



Tolumnia Jairak Rainbow 'Plum Pretty'



Oncidium Tsiku Marguerite

White: *Tolumnia* Jairak Rainbow 'Plum Pretty' – Danny Lentz & Dianne Morgan

White: *Oncidium* Tsiku Marguerite – Fred Pippin



Paphiopedilum volunteanum



Paphiopedilum philippinense forma album

Class 6: Slipper Alliance

Species

Blue: *Paphiopedilum volunteanum* – Danny Lentz & Dianne Morgan

Kew lists this orchid as a variety of Paph. hookerae. It is from the Sabah province of northern Borneo whereas the typical form of Paph. hookerae is from western Borneo in the regions of Sarawak and western Kalimantan. Sabah might be best known in the orchid world as the location of Mount Kinabalu, the home of Paph. rothschildianum. Far more subtle, but with an amazing blend of colors and an iridescent shine, Paph. volunteanum spreads its variegated foliage over moss-covered rocks and in humus fills cracks and crevices between tree roots. often near waterfalls where humidity is especially high. The single blooms, while not of "exhibition form," blend rich green, chartreuse, violet purple and very dark purple in a way only nature could conceive. These rich colors are offering new opportunities for color in traditional "Maudiae" breeding. This species does best in continual warm, moist, and humid conditions with filtered light levels.

Red: Paphiopedilum philippinense forma album - Carson Barnes



Paphiopedilum Charlene

Hybrids

Blue: *Paphiopedilum* Charlene - Fred Pippin

We saw this plant last month when one bud had yet to open. It is a wellturned-out example of a cross between Paph. haynaldianum and Paph. liemianum with good color pattern and nice symmetry. It has inherited some of the best characteristics of both parents, the former from the Philippines and the latter from Sumartra, assuring they would never meet without the help of human hands! While there are no listed awards for this cross, I would think this plant could be a contender. This one would grow best with good, filtered light, warmth and regular year-round watering with only slight drying in between.

Red: Paphiopedilum Conco-bellatulum – Fred Pippin

White: *Paphiopedilum* Walnut Valley (syn. Newberry Sprite) – Fi Alonso & Jon Crate



Don't let the name fool you, the Orchid Digest is a non-profit membership-based organization dedicated to orchids. Designed to appeal to the mid-range to advanced grower, nothing beats the Orchid Digest. For just \$39/year you get 4 issues of full-color, in-depth articles about orchids. The magazine is large format and the fourth issue of the year is always an extra-special edition devoted to a single genus. For membership application forms contact David Mellard (404-237-1694) or visit www.orchiddigest.com to join online.



Paphiopedilum Conco-bellatulum



Paphiopedilum Walnut Valley



Phalaenopsis Chia E Yenlin 'Variegata

Class 7: Phalaenopsis

Blue: *Phalaenopsis* Chia E Yenlin 'Variegata' – Fred Pippin

The flower pattern of this showy hybrid is the result of five generations of breeding from the original mutant form of *Phalaenopis* Golden Peoker, without which the "Harlequin" types seen today could not exist. This clone takes things a step further with dramatically variegated foliage. The icing on the cake is that it is a compact multifloral with branching spikes of long-lasting flowers thanks to *Phal. equestris*, which constitutes more than a third of its genetic background.



Phalaenopsis No ID

Norman's Orchids, which markets this particular plant in the US, notes that the variegated leaf pattern is stable, which is not always the case with such mutations. They also describe it as easy and vigorous, so typical Phalaenopsis culture should provide satisfactory results.

Red: *Phalaenopsis parishii* 'Jumpin Jimmies' – Carson Barnes

Red: Phalaenopsis No ID - Margaret Cekis

White: *Phalaenopsis javanica* – Danny Lentz & Dianne Morgan



Phalaenopsis parishii 'Jumpin Jimmies'







Vanda garayi



Vanda Rumrill

Class 8: Vandaceous Alliance

Blue: Vanda Rumrill - Danny Lentz & **Dianne Morgan**

This cross between V. cristata and V. curvifolia was originally registered by James E. Rumrill of Towaco, New Jersey in 1973. There are quite a few James Rumrills of note in that part of the country, but I couldn't find any biographical information specific to this one. Looking at the list of hybrids he registered between 1969 and 1994, it is obvious that he was obsessed with making unusual intergeneric combinations in vandaceous and in other breeding groups, over 150 of which were given official names. Most could be described best as speculative or experimental, the results of which only lovers of the weird and unusual could appreciate. This cross, however, stands out as the only one of his registrations that has achieved general popularity. It also has accumulated at least 14 AOS awards, several of which are cultural awards for specimen plants with hundreds of flowers. I was able to see an impressive specimen in person recently at the Memphis Orchid Show, brought in by a member of the Springfield, MO, Orchid Society known for his exceptionally well grown vandaceous orchids. This particular plant was a mass of growths about 3 feet by 3 feet in size, literally covered in flowers. They were, however, a deeper shade of



Renanthera imschootiana 'Polka Pants'l



Renanthera citrina

red and not the bright orange-red shade of Danny and Dianne's plant. If they can grow this plant to specimen size it will be noticed from across the room! Both species involved tolerate cool to warm conditions and like plenty of water in summer with some lessening in the winter months. An open and quick draining medium is essential.

Red: Renanthera imschootiana 'Polka Pants,' AM/AOS - Carson Barnes

Red: Vanda garayi - Bailey Santwire

White: Renanthera citrina - Vinh Nguyen



Vanda Kulwadee Fragrance 'Purple Spots #331'

White: Vanda Kulwadee Fragrance 'Purple Spots #331' - Fred Pippin



Zygopetalum Artur Elle 'Tombstone'

Class 9: Miscellaneous

Blue: Zygopetalum Artur Elle 'Tombstone' – Fred Pippin

This rather typical Zygopetalum hybrid was registered by Wichmann Orchideen in the city of Celle, Germany in 1969. That town is the capital of the district with the same name, located in the province of Lower Saxony. Herr Artur Elle must have been well respected in orchid circles as there are a number of different hybrids in various genera named for him, including Onc. Artur Elle's 100th Birthday registered in 2014. Originally involving four different species over five generations of breeding, Z. Intermedium is now considered synonymous with Z. mackayi, reducing that number to three. Staying within that genus, the outcomes of various breeding combinations are somewhat limited, so that different clones of Z. Artur Elle look little different from much more current breeding. Luckily, in recent years there has been plenty of intergeneric hybridization with allied genera and new, exciting looks are making their appearance in this quick growing, free flowering orchid group. Give this orchid and similar hybrids dappled or filtered light, cool to warm, but not hot temperatures and heavy watering during growth. In small pots, good quality sphagnum will help keep them from drying too fast as the many vigorous roots fill the pot. Larger plants potted in an open medium can sit in a bit of water for a few days after each watering to make the chore less frequent. I have experimented with growing "zygos" under LED shop lights in my greenhouse left on 24/7 and had excellent results, with rapid re-flowering and little foliage spotting.





Bulbophyllum falcatum

Red: Bulbophyllum falcatum – Edison Gu

Red: Dracula inaequalis - Bailey Santwire

White: Lycaste lasioglossa - Carson Barnes







Lycaste lasioglossa