



Bulletin

June 2025

JUNE EVENT

Monthly Meeting: Monday, June 9, 2025
Mershon Hall, at the Atlanta Botanical Garden
Gather at 7 p.m.; Program starts at 7:30 p.m.

Challen Willemssen: Orchids of Guatemala

Bring your blooming plants for our monthly ribbon judging

Challen Willemssen: Orchids of Guatemala

Challen Willemssen is a Guatemalan botanist, nature tour guide, and educator specializing in the flora of Guatemala, with a particular passion for orchids. He has spent over a decade studying, conserving, and showcasing his country's remarkable plant life.

His academic journey began at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, where he earned a degree in Environmental Studies with a focus on Ecology. After graduating, he gained valuable experience working at Harvard University's Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium and volunteering for the U.S. National Park Service. These experiences deepened his understanding of plant conservation and ecological research, ultimately leading him back to Guatemala. For more than ten years, he has served as an ecologist at Santuario Natural El Tular, a private reserve outside Guatemala City, and as a nature tour guide to different places across the country.

Challen's work extends beyond exploration and education—he is an advocate for native species and a vocal opponent of invasive plants. Drawing from extensive field experience, he maintains a personal collection of 2,500 rescued orchids and oversees the care of thousands of native orchid specimens at El Tular.

His expertise has been recognized internationally, and he has presented his research, conservation efforts, and photographs to audiences in Europe, the United States, and Guatemala. In 2023, he spoke with Tom Mirenda at the 7th Annual Andean Orchid Conference in Machu Picchu Pueblo, Peru. In 2024, he



was awarded a Conservation Grant from the American Orchid Society for his work at El Tular. In 2025, he received a similar grant from the Hilo Orchid Society for a conservation project in the Sierra de las Minas mountain range in Guatemala.

Beyond his presentations, Challen leads individuals and groups on immersive nature tours, guiding them to some of the most breathtaking orchid-rich destinations in Guatemala and beyond.

Mark Your Calendars for a Sweet Summer Tradition!

We're delighted to announce a special event coming up in July—our **Annual ABG Tour of the Fuqua Orchid Observatory**, a treasured opportunity to explore the beauty and diversity of orchids in a truly spectacular setting.

Following the tour, we'll indulge in another beloved tradition: our **Annual Ice Cream Social!** It's a wonderful chance to relax, connect, and enjoy a cool treat together.

To help us prepare, we'd love to know your favorite ice cream flavor! We'll email the link to a short form; please take a moment to fill it out. It only takes a minute, and responses are due by June 27, 2025.

We can't wait to see you there—and to share a scoop (or two!) with friends old and new!

President's Message

Dear Members of the Atlanta Orchid Society,

June is here, and with it comes the lush promise of summer blooms—and an exciting meeting you won't want to miss!

We are thrilled to welcome **Challen Willemssen** as our guest speaker on **Monday, June 9**. Challen is a Guatemalan ecologist, nature trail guide, and passionate orchid speaker who will be presenting "**Orchids of Guatemala**." His deep knowledge of Central American ecosystems and firsthand experience with native orchids promises to trans-

port us into the vibrant, mist-laden forests of his homeland. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the species we grow—and dream of growing—in their natural habitat.

As always, don't forget to **bring your blooming orchids** for Ribbon Judging! June is often a surprising month in the orchid room, and we'd love to see what you've been growing and blooming.

Continued on p. 3

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The Atlanta Orchid Society Bulletin

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Newsletter Editors: [Véronique Perrot](#) & [Mark Reinke](#)

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 Georgia](#).

Auction Report and More Auction news

The auction held on Saturday 24 May to disperse longtime AtLOS member and past-president Linda Miller's orchid collection raised about \$1300. It took the effort of many people, who collected the plant collection and orchid growing supplies from Linda's greenhouse in North Georgia (Bailey, Danny and Edison), set up before and cleaned up after the auction (large crews), auctioned the plants (Carson), and kept track of the bid winners (Danny). Vinh Nguyen, Roy Harrow and Barbara Barnett contributed additional plants to the auction.

Many thanks to the people who helped, and to everyone who showed up and bid for plants! Check out page 3 for some pictures of the event.

If you missed this auction, there will be another auction this summer, held by the **South Metro Orchid Society on 16 August** (details below), and our annual auction is scheduled for 1 November.

South Metro Orchid Society auction details:

Registration: 10:30 am–noon

Auction starts at noon

Location: Mike and Mary Cawthon,
135 S Mt Carmel Rd,
McDonough, GA 30253,

Text Mary at 404-630-5624,
Mike at 678-499-3487, or

Joe at 404-353-4908 for details.

Cash and checks accepted

Please note: This is not a child or pet friendly event

EVENTS CALENDAR

June

9 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Challen Willemssen (visiting from Guatemala), on Orchids in Guatemala

14 – AOS monthly judging

July

12 – AOS monthly judging

14 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: ABG Greenhouses Tour and Ice Cream Social

August

9 – AOS monthly judging

11 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Carol Klonowski on Cymbidiums

16 – South Metro Orchid Society auction (see above for details)

September

5–7 – Kentucky Orchid Society Show (Louisville, KY) NOTE THE DATE CHANGE (was originally 26–27 September)

8– Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Helen Hull-Sanders on orchid pest control

13 – AOS monthly judging

19 – 21 –Alabama Orchid Society Show (Birmingham, AL)

October

11 – AOS monthly judging

13 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

November

1 – Atlanta Orchid Society Auction

8 – AOS monthly judging

10 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting



Auction in full swing, with Carson Barnes reeling out the plants' pedigree, at Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church (Photo by Penney Balmes.)



Auction wrap-up. (Photo by Penney Balmes.)



Some of the plants on offer at the auction. (Photo by Fi Alonso.)

President's Message

Continued from page 1

Whether you're showing off your first flower spike or an old favorite in full flush, your plants inspire and educate us all.

Orchid Growing Tips for June

As temperatures climb and daylight hours stretch, your orchids respond—and so should your care routine. Here are a few seasonal tips:

Light – Make the most of the longer days, but be cautious of direct sun. Shift orchids to brighter spots while protecting them from harsh afternoon rays that can scorch tender leaves.

Watering – Warmer weather often means more frequent watering. Be sure your orchids are drying out between waterings, especially if humidity is high. Good air circulation is your best friend.

Temperature & Humidity – Maintain humidity levels with trays, misting, or humidifiers—but don't forget the air-flow! Stagnant conditions invite fungal and bacterial problems.

Feeding – Growth is active now. A balanced fertilizer, applied at regular intervals, will support new roots and leaves. Remember: weakly, weekly!

Outdoor Time – If you summer your orchids outside, acclimate them gradually to avoid sunburn. Choose a shaded, well-ventilated area protected from heavy rain and pests.

Looking forward to seeing you and your orchids—blooming, budding, or just along for the ride—at our June meeting.

Warm regards,

Firelli "Fi" Alonso
President, Atlanta Orchid Society
2025

Judges' Corner: Monthly Judging at the Atlanta Judging Center, May 10, 2025

The monthly judging held on May 10, 2025, presented an opportunity to say thank you for recent donations to the Atlanta Judging Center from our area affiliated societies and judges. We are truly appreciative of this continuing support which makes the operation of our center possible. Donations were:

\$400.00 from the New Orleans Orchid Society

\$300.00 from the Atlanta Orchid Society

\$100.00 from the Memphis Orchid Society

\$350.00 from David Janvrin in honor of Lowell Jacks

\$320.00 from Charles & Susan Wilson in honor of Lowell Jacks

\$300.00 from Andy Braun in honor of Lowell Jacks

The monthly judging for the Atlanta Judging Center had 9 Accredited judges, 3 Associate judges and 5 students, comprising 3 teams to judge the 16 orchids entered.



Dendrobium devonianum 'Lynn' ACC/AOS



Dendrobium devonianum 'Saigonese' AM/AOS



Stanhopea candida 'Maneki Hill' AM/AOS

Accredited Judges: Barbara Barnett, Carson Barnes, H.B. Blythe-Hart, Aileen Garrison (Emerita), Lowell Jacks (Emeritus), David Janvrin, David Mellard, Charles Wilson, Susan Wilson; Associate Judges: Firelli Alonso, Andy Braun, Jon Crate; Student Judges: Scott

Elliott, Edison Gu, Ben Overlie, Sam Overlie, Paul Reavis.

Four awards were made to 4 orchids listed below. (Photos by Charles Wilson.)

Dendrobium devonianum 'Lynn,' HCC/AOS (78 pts), exhibited by Vinh Nguyen, Atlanta Orchid Society.

Dendrobium devonianum 'Saigonese,' AM/AOS (83 pts) exhibited by Vinh Nguyen, Atlanta Orchid Society.

Stanhopea candida 'Maneki Hill,' AM/AOS (83 pts), exhibited by Scott Elliott and Susan Hill (Maneki Hill Orchids).

Renanthera citrina 'Saigonese,' AM/AOS (82 pts), exhibited by Vinh Nguyen, Atlanta Orchid Society.



Renanthera citrina 'Saigonese' AM/AOS

Our next monthly judging (June 14) will conclude after judging with our semi-annual business meeting and will be held at Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall. Training program at noon (open to all) with formal judging at 2 p.m. Free and convenient parking.

Best regards,

Charles Wilson
Chair, Atlanta Judging Center

Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting Ribbon Winners for May, 2025

Notes by Mark Reinke; photos by Jennifer Schwab and Jon Crate



Cattleya purpurata h.f. striata

Class 1: Cattleya Alliance

Blue: *Cattleya purpurata h.f. striata* –
Bailey Santwire

May is peak bloom season in the northern hemisphere for this large and glorious species from the coastal region of southeast Brazil. Plants bloom on recently matured growths and the buds develop quite quickly when the time is right. Practically overnight clusters of three to five buds seem to jump out of their sheaths and prepare to open. A mature plant with many flowers can be a

truly stunning display. There are so many color variations of this species, that in its native Brazil, there are orchid societies entirely dedicated to growing only *Cattleya purpurata*. Its popularity has led to a sharp decline of the natural populations, with the remaining plants primarily in inaccessible places such as massive, tall trees or sheer cliff faces. Fortunately, it is an easy orchid to grow and an extensive gene pool remains in collections around the world. The plant Bailey is exhibiting is a “striata” form, typically with white or blush purple segments with deeper pur-

ple veins running through the two petals, offset by a rich purple to violet-colored trumpet lip. It would take a paragraph twice the size of this one to list all the recognized color variations. It is one of the tallest growing *Cattleya* species so not an orchid for small spaces, but where room allows, several different color forms would create a real show. The flowers of all forms are fragrant, but it is especially nice in the flowers of the “carnea” form, with stark white flowers and a lip painted in bright salmon pink. Give this species bright light, excellent drainage using an open medium and water regularly year-round, only cutting back slightly in winter to compensate for lower light levels and damp conditions.

Red: *Cattleya intermedia forma coerulea* –
Carson Barnes



Cattleya intermedia forma coerulea

*Cattleya luteola*

White: *Cattleya luteola* – Edison Gu

**White: *Cattleya Mareeba Tiger* x *aclandiae*
– Bailey Santwire**

Class 2: Cymbidium Alliance

No Entries

*Cattleya Mareeba Tiger* x *aclandiae*

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*Dendrobium treacherianum*

Class 3: Dendrobium Alliance

Blue: *Dendrobium treacherianum* – Edison Gu

This species from The Philippines is notably rare and challenging to locate. Andy's Orchids may have some specimens available; interested individuals are advised to call and inquire as per their website instructions. Also referred to as *Epigeneianum lyonii*, the above name is recognized by Kew and dates back to 1881. Given its remarkable beauty, it is surprising that this orchid is not more commonly found. This scarcity might be attributed to its difficulty to cultivate.

The species is indigenous to at least five provinces on Luzon Island, favoring altitudes between 2000 and 3500 feet above sea level. This suggests a preference for warm, but not excessively hot,

climates. During summer, the region experiences substantial rainfall preventing the plants from drying out, whereas winter sees reduced rainfall but maintains high humidity levels.

The plant's compact form features small angular pseudobulbs topped with two leathery leaves. Terminal arching inflorescences—a rare characteristic for *Dendrobium* species—can bear up to twenty star-shaped flowers, typically deep purple at the center and fading to pale rose or white towards the segment tips. Notably, the most profusely flowered awarded plant was exhibited in June 2005 in the San Francisco Bay area, displaying 375 flowers. Images of this and other award-winning plants reveal these orchids consistently grown in shallow pots across California, Hawaii, and Florida. Sources suggest that mounting the orchid is feasible, provided frequent watering and high ambient humidity during summer. Additionally, *Den. treacherianum* dislikes disturbance, necessitating a durable medium that does not decompose rapidly.

Red: *Dendrobium devonianum* – Vinh Nguyen

*Dendrobium devonianum*



Dendrobium unicum

Red: *Dendrobium unicum* – Edison Gu

**White: *Dendrobium hancockii* – Vinh
Nguyen**



Dendrobium hancockii



Encyclia cordigera variety *rosea*

Class 4: Epidendrum Alliance

Blue: *Encyclia cordigera* variety *rosea* – Jon Crate & Firelli Alonso

Encyclia cordigera is a showy species found from southern Mexico, through Central America, and across northern South America from Colombia to Suriname, typically below 3000 feet in elevation in seasonally dry forests. There are two distinct color forms: variety *rosea* with a magenta-flushed lip and dark brown segments, and the typical form with a white lip bearing a magenta spot or streaks in its center and more bronze to olive green segments. In cultivation, the *alba* form with a pure white lip and green segments can sometimes be found. The form described first is most common in Mexico and Panamá. In bright light, the flowers produce a rich and spicy fragrance. Mature, well-grown plants can produce 15

or more flowers per inflorescence. There are nearly four hundred registered crosses that have this species in their ancestry.

Encyclia cordigera tends to do best in a basket or pot with very large open medium. Bright but somewhat diffused light and intermediate to warm temperatures all year. May through October is when the plants need regular watering with reduced amounts in the balance of the year to mimic the nightly dew they receive in the dry season. For the flower size, the plants are fairly compact. The two strap-shaped leaves atop the rounded pear-shaped pseudobulbs are often shed in the second or third year.

Red: *Epidendrum* Pacific Prince – Firelli Alonso & Jon Crate



Epidendrum Pacific Prince





Miltonopsis Bertha Baker 'Florentine' HCC/AOS

Class 5: Oncidium Alliance

Blue: *Miltoniopsis* Bertha Baker 'Florentine' HCC/AOS – Firelli Alonso & Jon Crate

See last month's newsletter for detailed information about hybrid *Miltoniopsis* and how to grow them.

Red: *Cuitlauzina pendula* – Edison Gu

No surprise here, Edison has once again introduced us to an orchid species rarely seen in the hot steamy south and still quite uncommon even in cooler parts of the country. Orchidwiz 20.0 lists eight members of the genus while *Orchid-species.com* lists just two with the other six moved to either *Osmoglossum* or *Palumbina*. This species grows around 4500 to 7000 feet above sea level in the Pacific coastal mountains of Mexico, primarily in the states of Michoacan and Jalisco. It has flattened pseudobulbs common in the Oncidium Alliance and produces sharply pendent inflorescences with up to 15 flat flowers about two inches across that are white or blushed pink. They are described as long-lived and fragrant. It can probably tolerate summer daytime



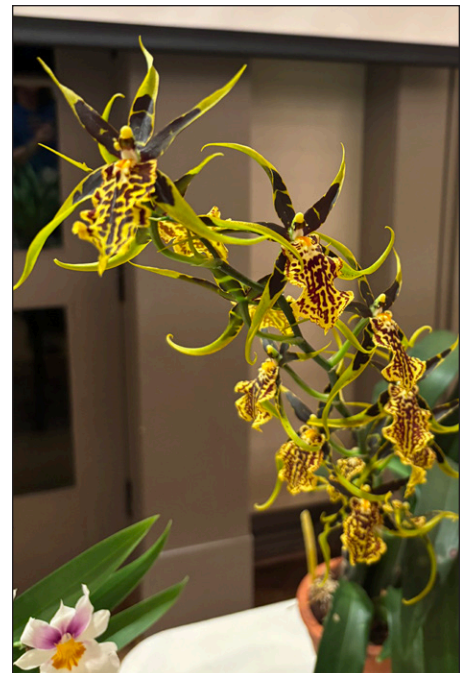
Cuitlauzina pendula



heat to some extent, but in the wild habitat, nights are 20 to 30 degrees cooler throughout the year, so it will likely suffer outside in summer in Atlanta, where nights may barely drop below 80 degrees during hot spells. It should get regular watering in summer but kept somewhat on the dry side the balance of the year with only light watering or misting.

If you wanted to give this orchid a try, better to ask Edison who his secret sources are, as I wasn't able to find any grower who listed it for sale.

White: *Brasidostele* Gilded Tower 'Mystic Maze' AM/AOS – Emma Dahl



Brasidostele Gilded Tower 'Mystic Maze' AM/AOS



Brassia gireoudiana

**White: *Brassia gireoudiana* – Bailey
Santwire**



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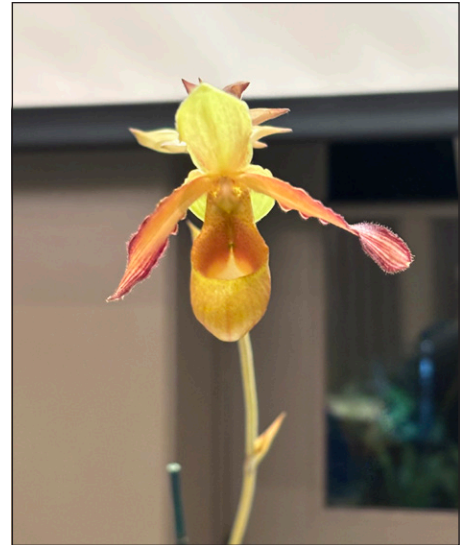
*Phragmipedium x richteri*

Class 6: Slipper Alliance

Blue: *Phragmipedium x richteri* – Carson Barnes

This species is a natural hybrid of *Phrag. pearcei* and *Phrag. boissierianum*, found in Ecuador and Peru. It forms medium-sized clumps and produces successive flowering inflorescences from mature growths, often blooming for months, typically in the first half of the year. Carson's plant is on its eighth flower with another bud forming. This orchid grows well in cool to warm conditions, prefers a deep pot with moisture-retentive, well-draining medium, and should not dry out. It can be placed in shallow water to simplify watering.

Phrag. x richteri has been used as a parent in about three dozen registered crosses, including several created by

*Phragmipedium lindleyanum variety kaieteum*

Graham Ramsey, current president of the Western North Carolina Orchid Society. He has the advantage of living at about 3000 feet above sea level on a ridge above Asheville, where summer the mild summers are especially suited to *Phragmipedium*.

Red: *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum* – Edison Gu

White: *Phragmipedium lindleyanum* variety *kaieteum* – Carson Barnes

*Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*

*Phalaenopsis NOID*

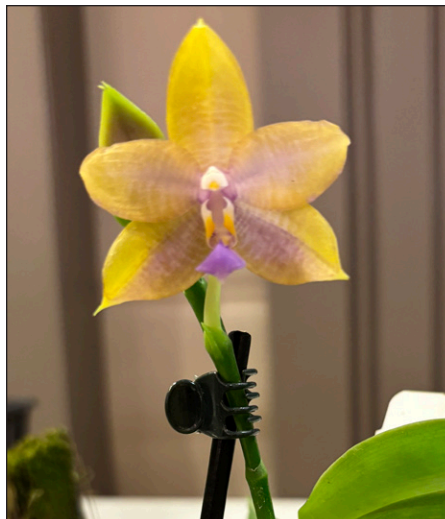
Class 7: Phalaenopsis

Blue: *Phalaenopsis NOID* – Tim Cape

Red: *Phalaenopsis Mainshow Blue Elf* x *Mainshow Blue Tint* – Bailey Santwire

This new hybrid is also breaking new ground in terms of flower color with a yellow base color overlaid with faint bars of violet that intensify a bit towards the center of the bloom and marry nicely with the lip which has a midlobe of violet and side lobes in white edged with intense yellow. Both of these parents have a parent in common called *Phal.* KS Blue Ludde that hints at this result but doesn't quite achieve it. The originator of the cross is Miuco Chen who runs Mainshow Orchids in Taiwan. This must be a fairly new venture as his first cross under the Mainshow label was registered in 2021. I see that Peter Lin of Texas (not Peter T. Lin of California) is importing some of Mainshow's latest creations to sell on the Big Leaf Orchids website. The

two newest seedling crosses available both use parents with cutting-edge color combinations. The expectations are high as you will pay \$55 per plant for a seedling in a two-inch pot.

*Phalaenopsis Mainshow Blue Elf* x *Mainshow Blue Tint*

Become an AOS Judge

The American Orchid Society Judging Program is seeking highly motivated orchid enthusiasts to join the judging ranks

Contact us at judges@aos.org

White: *Phalaenopsis parishii* – Vinh Nguyen

*Phalaenopsis parishii*

*Renanthera citrina*

Class 8: Vandaceous Alliance

Last month I erroneously listed the owner of the white ribbon winner in this group, *Vanda garayi* as Carson Barnes. The actual exhibitor was Bailey Santwire.

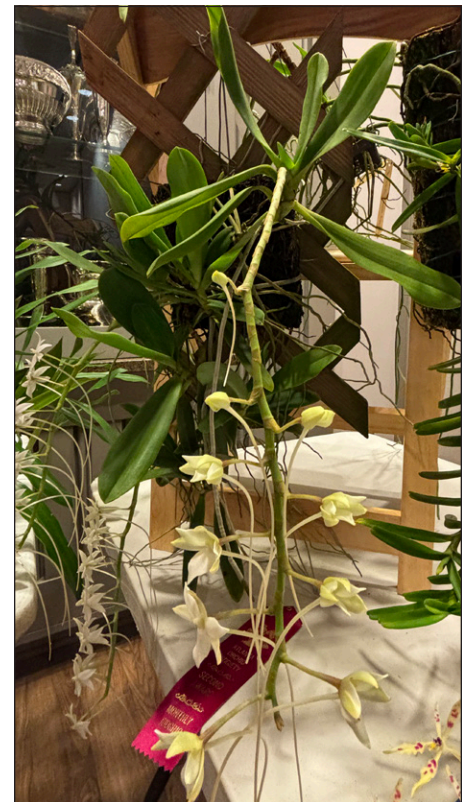
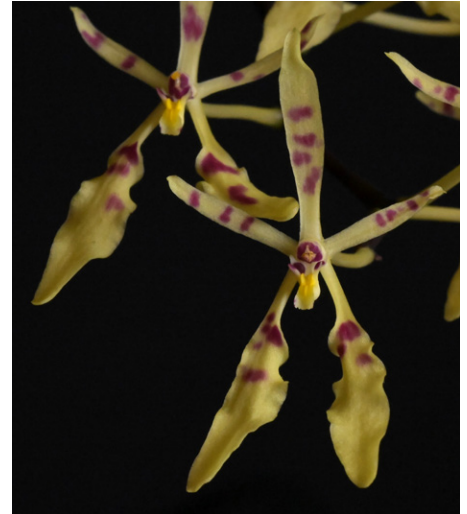
Blue: *Renanthera citrina* – Vinh Nguyen

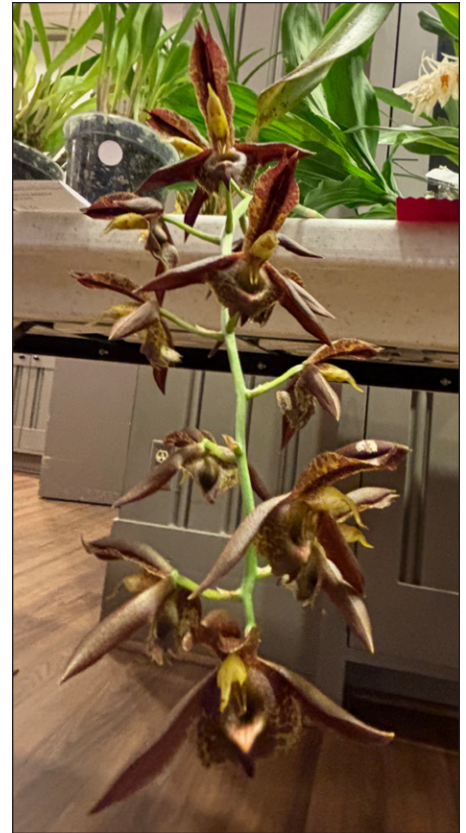
Renanthera citrina is a relatively small species originating from northern Vietnam, which was not described until 1997. It thrives in open dry forests where the trees are anchored to weathered limestone. The genus encompasses at least twenty-three species, although only a few are commonly cultivated in this country. Well-established specimens may produce 25 or more flowers per inflorescence during the spring. Each flower consists of slender yellow segments randomly adorned with red-purple spots. This species requires ample water from May through October, with roots needing good air exposure; they are frequently grown mounted on tree fern slabs, as demonstrated by Vinh. During the remainder of the year, rainfall is minimal in its natural habitat and tem-

peratures are cool, yet humidity remains high, resulting in regular dew and fog. Therefore, plants should be watered less during this period but should not be kept dry for extended durations. Very bright light and cooler nights during winter are likely essential for optimal flowering.

Red: *Aerangis Elro* – Vinh Nguyen

White: *Vanda mariae* – Carson Barnes

*Vanda mariae**Aerangis Elro*



Catasetum Dragon's Teeth 'Rolf's Flight of Fancy' AM/AOS

Class 9: Miscellaneous

Blue: *Cyrtopodium punctatum* – Bailey Santwire

Bailey was unsure if the plant is *Cyrtopodium punctatum* or *Cyrt. paniculatum*. Based on my research, it is likely the former due to its taller inflorescence of up to 50 inches and showy bracts below the panicle. *Cyrt. punctatum* is a widespread orchid found from Florida to South America, excluding Chile. It grows both epiphytically and terrestrially in seasonal forests and open savannas, forming large clumps. The inflorescences emerge from new growths that form spindle-shaped pseudobulbs topped by long leaves, which are shed at the end of the growing season leaving sharp spines.

This species adapts to warm conditions year-round or cooler nights with mild days in winter. Watering should be regular from flowering to midfall but reduced in winter, with varying recommendations for the rest period. It is not suitable for small spaces.

Blue: *Catasetum* Dragon's Teeth 'Rolf's Flight of Fancy' AM/AOS – Bailey Santwire



Cyrtopodium punctatum



Propetalum La Jolla Delight 'Hilo Orchid Farm' AM/AOS

Red: *Propetalum La Jolla Delight* 'Hilo Orchid Farm' AM/AOS – Barbara Barnett

White: *Masdevallia veitchiana* – Edison Gu



Masdevallia veitchiana