



Bulletin

February 2026

FEBRUARY EVENT

Monthly Meeting: Monday, February 9, 2026

Mershon Hall at the Atlanta Botanical Garden

Gather at 7 p.m; program starts at 7:30 p.m.

Firelli Alonso on Preparing for AOS Exhibits

See below for details

Bring your blooming plants for our monthly ribbon judging

Firelli Alonso: From Bench to Best in Show—

Preparing for AOS Orchid Exhibits

Dr. Firelli Alonso, a retired Senior Director at Pfizer, Inc., led the Bio-Therapeutics and Vaccines Outsourcing group in Worldwide Research and Development. With 40 years of experience in research, development, and cGMP production of biological products and vaccines, as well as 20 years in outsourcing, project management, and technology transfer, Dr. Alonso's expertise spans viral vectors and vaccine development, recombinant proteins, and monoclonal antibody production.

Beyond her professional endeavors,

Dr. Alonso is dedicated to orchid culture and judging. She currently serves a second term as President of the Atlanta Orchid Society, has been an American Orchid Society Student Judge at the Atlanta Judging Center since 2022, and elevated to Accredited Judge in June 2025. Dr. Alonso's judging experience includes judging at various orchid shows across different states, showcasing her passion for orchids.

Fi will talk about preparing plants for AOS exhibits, just in time for our upcoming show, March 13–15.



President's Message

Dear Atlanta Orchid Society Members and Friends,

February is an exciting and energizing time for the Atlanta Orchid Society as we move from winter care into learning, preparation, and show season momentum. I'm especially looking forward to our February 9 monthly meeting, where I'll be presenting "From Bench to Best in Show: Preparing for AOS Orchid Exhibits."

This program will take you step-by-step from growing orchids at home to presenting them confidently in an AOS-sanctioned exhibit. We'll cover plant preparation, grooming, staging, judging perspectives, and—most importantly—how exhibitors at every experience level can participate and succeed.

VOLUNTEER CALL TO ACTION
WE NEED YOU!

Our 64th Annual Atlanta Orchid Society
ORCHID SHOW
March 13–15, 2026

we will need many volunteers to help in a variety of roles, including:

- ✓ Setup and, especially, Takedown & Cleanup (absolutely critical!)
- ✓ Hospitality for vendors, judges, and guests
- ✓ Sales Table & Information Desk
- ✓ Ribbon Judging Clerks
- ✓ General Show Support

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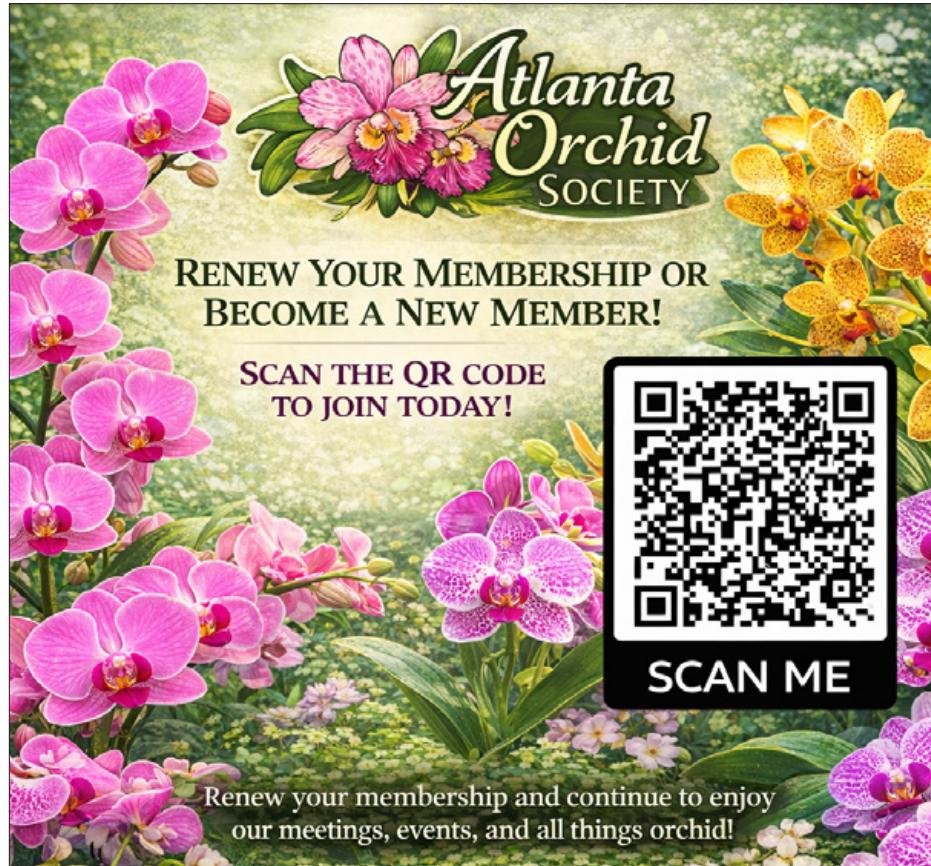
Social Media – [Firelli Alonso](#)

The Atlanta Orchid Society Bulletin

Volume 67: Number 2 – February 2026

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](#).



EVENTS CALENDAR

February

9 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Fi Alonso on preparing for AOS orchid exhibits

14 – AOS monthly judging

March

7 – Greater Area Mobile Orchid Society Show (Mobile, TN)

9 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

13-15 – Atlanta Orchid Society 64th Show

April

11 – AOS monthly judging

13 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

May

9 – AOS monthly judging

11 – Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting

President's Message

Continued from page 1

Whether you're aiming for competitive exhibits or simply want your orchids to shine, this talk is designed to educate, encourage, and inspire.

Show Season Is Almost Here! We are now just one month away from our biggest fundraiser of the year—the 64th Annual Atlanta Orchid Show, running March 13–15, 2026, at Day Hall, Atlanta Botanical Garden. A successful show depends entirely on our volunteers, and we truly need all hands on deck. Check out page 4 for details.

Volunteer Opportunities Include:

Setup and, especially, Takedown & Cleanup (*absolutely critical!*)
Hospitality for vendors, judges, and guests
Sales Table & Information Desk
Ribbon Judging Clerks
General Show Support

Volunteering is one of the most rewarding ways to support AtlOS—it's fun, educational, and a great way to meet fellow orchid lovers while sharing our passion with the public. You can sign up at the February 9 meeting if you're attending in person, or reach out by email to Danny Lentz, Paul Reavis, or me directly.

February Orchid Growing Tips

As winter slowly gives way to spring, keep these seasonal reminders in mind:

Light: Days are getting longer—gradually increase light, especially for Cattleyas and Vandals, while avoiding sudden changes.

Watering: Many orchids are initiating new root growth. Water a bit more often, but continue letting media dry appropriately.

Humidity & Air Movement: Indoor heating dries the air—maintain humid-

ity and good air circulation to prevent fungal issues.

Fertilizing: Resume light feeding as new growth appears, using a balanced fertilizer at reduced strength.

Pest Watch: Inspect plants regularly—warm indoor conditions are prime time for pests.

Thank you for your continued enthusiasm, generosity, and support of the Atlanta Orchid Society. I look forward to seeing you on February 9 and working together as we prepare for another outstanding orchid show!

Warm regards,
Firelli "Fi" Alonso
 President, Atlanta Orchid Society



2026 Atlanta Orchid Show: *The Art of Orchids*

March 13–15, 2026, Day Hall, Atlanta Botanical Garden

As always, we will need as many helping hands as possible to make our annual orchid show a success. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at the **February 9 society meeting**, or you may contact:

Show Chair: Danny Lentz — dblgongora@bellsouth.net

Show Co-Chair: Firelli “Fi” Alonso — FiAlonso@outlook.com

We look forward to working together to put on another outstanding show in 2026!

Volunteer Opportunities

Setup — Thursday, March 12

On Thursday morning, we will need several volunteers to help set up tables, install table skirts and back drapes for exhibit areas, and prepare the hall for the show. Throughout the day, additional help will be needed to:

- Set up the society display
- Handle plant entry and registration
- Set up the supply table
- Assist vendors with unloading and booth setup
- Run miscellaneous errands as needed

Judging Clerks — Saturday Morning, March 14

We will need **up to 8 clerks** on Saturday morning to assist with ribbon and AOS judging. Clerks help locate plants for judges, record results, and place ribbons. This is an excellent way to learn what judges look for—**no prior experience required**.

Membership & Supply Tables

Volunteers are needed at the society booth to:

- Answer questions from the public
- Process new memberships and renewals
- Sell supplies

Coverage is needed from Friday morning through Sunday afternoon, and we encourage many members to participate.

Hospitality

Hospitality will be coordinated throughout the show and includes:

- Providing drinks and snacks
- Picking up and delivering lunches to the garden
- Setting up and cleaning luncheon and kitchen areas

Help is always appreciated to keep judges, vendors, and volunteers well cared for.

Takedown — Sunday Afternoon, March 15

Help is needed after the show closes at 4 PM to:

- Assist vendors with loading vehicles
- Break down and store tables and materials
- Sweep floors and remove trash
- Take inventory of unsold supplies
- Return equipment and supplies to storage locations

This is one of the **most critical volunteer needs**—many hands make light work!

Transportation

We will need a few volunteers with trucks, vans, or SUVs to help:

- Transport supplies to the Garden on Wednesday and Thursday
- Return supplies to storage locations on Sunday

Please let Danny or Fi know if you can assist.

Publicity

Help spread the word! 4" x 6" flyers and postcards will be available for distribution at the February meeting.

Society Display

We will need lots of blooming plants for the AtlOS exhibit. If you are unable to attend plant registration on Thursday, it may be possible to arrange an early drop-off with another member. This exhibit will be judged, and all plants must be properly identified.

Plant Registration

We will again use electronic plant entry this year.

- Blank entry forms will be emailed the weekend before the show
- Pre-entries may be emailed anytime up to 6 PM on Thursday, March 12 to Danny (dblgongora@bellsouth.net) or Carson (nubrainiac@hotmail.com)

- Early submission helps ensure correct naming and class placement

Plants entered in incorrect classes cannot be judged, so accuracy matters. Pre-entry is encouraged but **not required**—plants may still be entered on-site Thursday.

Plant registration will be reviewed at the February meeting. **Danny Lentz** and **Carson Barnes** will coordinate registration.

Volunteer & Judges Dinner

Friday Evening, March 13 (6 – 9 PM)
Magnolia Hall, Atlanta Botanical Garden

All volunteers, judges, and vendors are invited to join us after the show closes on Friday for a relaxed evening of food and camaraderie.



Have you ever considered becoming an American Orchid Society Judge?

We invite you to come learn with us

judges@aos.org

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

Monthly judging for the Atlanta Judging Center had 13 Accredited judges, and 4 students comprising 3 teams to judge all the 19 orchids entered:

Accredited Judges: Carson Barnes, Barbara Barnett, H.B. Blythe-Hart, Andy Braun, Aileen Garrison (Emerita), Doug Hartong, Lowell Jacks (Emeritus), David Janvrin, Randy Johnson (newly transferred from Houston Judging Center), Butch Lewandowski, Bailey Santwire, Charles Wilson, Susan Wilson; Student Judges: Scott Elliott, Benjamin Overlie, Samuel Overlie, Paul Reavis.

The below four awards were made (please note awards are not official till processed by AOS):

Clowesetum Somnis 'Maneki Hill' HCC 77 pts, exhibited by Scott Elliott and Sue Hill.

Cattleya Arthur T. Ramirez 'Maneki Hill' AM 84 pts, exhibited by Scott Elliott and Sue Hill.

Fredclarkeara Painted Leopard 'Maneki Hill' AM, 85 pts, exhibited by Scott Elliott and Sue Hill.

Clowesia Grace Dunn 'Maneki Hill' AM, 85 pts, exhibited by Scott Elliott and Sue Hill.



Clowesetum Somnis 'Maneki Hill' HCC/AOS



Clowesia Grace Dunn 'Maneki Hill' AM/AOS

Please join us 14 Feb 2026 for our next monthly judging at 1 p.m. at Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church, 3016 Lanier Drive NE, Brookhaven, GA. Education program begins at noon and will be a surprise presented by our wonderful veteran judge David Janvrin. Formal judging begins immediately following our education program. Open to all. Free and convenient parking.

The following shows have been approved by AOS for 2026 for our affiliated societies:

7 March 2026 – Greater Mobile Area Orchid (AL), Andy Braun, Show Judging Chair

14 Mar 2026 - Atlanta Orchid Society - Bailey Santwire, Show Judging Chair

6 June 2026 – Memphis Orchid Society, Carson Barnes, Show Judging Chair

Best regards,

Charles Wilson
Chair, Atlanta Judging Center



Cattleya Arthur Ramirez 'Maneki Hill' AM/AOS



Fredclarkeara Painted Leopard 'Maneki Hill' AM/AOS

Atlanta Orchid Society Monthly Meeting Ribbon Winners for January, 2026

Notes by Mark Reinke; photos by Jennifer Schwab and Véronique Perrot



Cattleya Horace 'Maxima'

Class 1: Cattleya Alliance

Blue: *Cattleya Horace 'Maxima'* AM/AOS – Carson Barnes

Cattleya Horace 'Maxima' is a durable large-flowered cultivar, introduced in 1938, with six species origins from Venezuela and Colombia. It earned two AOS Awards of Merit and gained prominence after being used to create *Rlc. Golden-zelle* in 1982, demonstrating its ability to produce well-shaped progeny with varied colors. Over 300 first-generation hybrids and more than 2,500 total descendants have been registered due to its valuable traits.

Red: *Cattleya intermedia forma amethystina 'Aranbeem'* AM/AOS – Bailey Santwire



Cattleya intermedia forma amethystina 'Aranbeem' AM/AOS

Red: *Cattleya trianae forma coerulea* – Carson Barnes



Cattleya trianae forma coerulea



Cattleya loddigesii

**White: *Cattleya loddigesii* - Bailey
Santwire**



Cymbidium Showgirl



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Class 2: *Cymbidium Alliance*

Blue: *Cymbidium Showgirl* - Paul Reavis

Cymbidium Showgirl is a reliable heirloom hybrid, typically shared as divisions among friends rather than purchased commercially. Introduced in 1962 as an offspring of *Cym. Sweetheart* (1955), it descends from compact *Cym. floribundum* and thrives in various climates. The cross has many named varieties, with some duplicates and lost labels over time. While most awards are decades old, one form, 'Husky Honey', earned recognition as recently as 2007 with over 300 open flowers. More than 500 recent hybrids trace

their lineage to this orchid. For best results, provide ample water and fertilizer during warm growth periods and expose new growths to cool nights in autumn or winter. Outdoor growth in bright conditions, with protection only at the onset of freezing weather, supports flowering in 60-90 days. Flower longevity improves with occasional outdoor placement during mild weather. Use a deep pot with a well-draining, nutrient-rich mix for optimal growth.



Dendrobium Nobile hybrid



Class 3: Dendrobium Alliance

Blue: *Dendrobium* Nobile Hybrid – Margaret Cekis

This orchid, derived from *Dendrobium nobile*, has unfortunately lost its identifying tag, making accurate identification challenging given the extensive number of visually similar hybrids. Nonetheless, this does not diminish its aesthetic appeal or the satisfaction gained from cultivating it. As discussed in my presentation 'Decoding Dendrobium' at the recent meeting, *Den. nobile* originates from the mountainous regions of Southeast Asia, typically thriving at elevations of several thousand feet above sea level. This environment is characterized by pronounced seasonal variations, and successful cultivation requires careful replication of these conditions.

New growth begins in spring with rising temperatures and increased rainfall, completing by early autumn as precipitation decreases. For optimal flowering, mature growths benefit from cool night temperatures combined with warmer days to initiate bud formation. Flowers emerge from nodes opposite the leaves along the stems. In greenhouse environments, nighttime temperatures around 55°F during cooler months are ideal for promoting flower production, with blooms generally appearing from late winter into early spring.

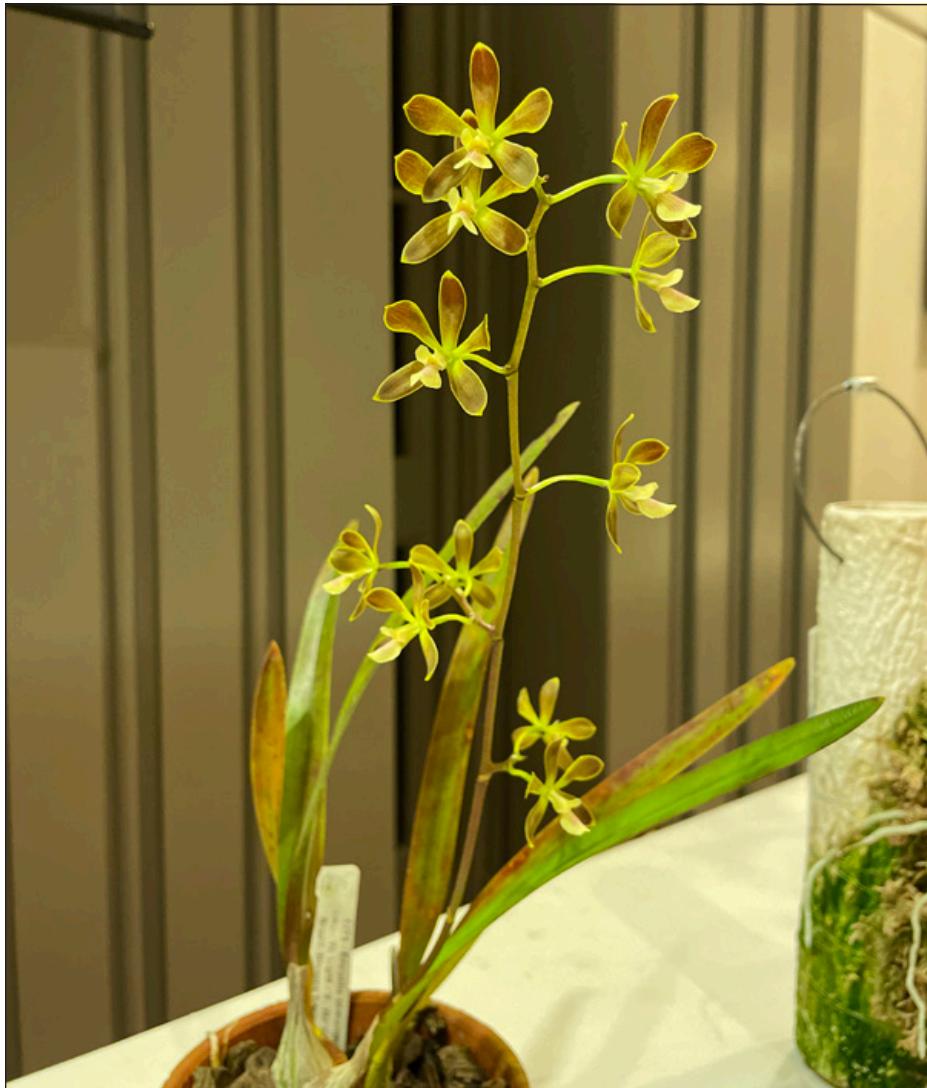
Growers without greenhouse facilities commonly keep these orchids outdoors from approximately May until the first frost, ensuring bright light while providing some protection from mid-day sun. Regular watering is necessary

until new growths are fully developed, accompanied by routine fertilization up to September. After this period, fertilizer should be withheld until after flowering occurs the following year. Watering can be reduced but not entirely stopped, with care taken to allow the medium to dry between waterings. Some leaf drop is expected during this phase. Members of this group are hardy to about 32°F, or slightly lower in some cases. Once buds have formed, plants brought indoors to a warm environment will typically produce open flowers within 60 to 90 days; in cooler settings, flowering may occur more slowly, but blooms will persist longer—sometimes up to eight weeks.

Red: *Dendrobium pendulum* – Danny Lentz & Dianne Morgan



Dendrobium pendulum



Encyclia osmantha



Dinema polybulbon

Class 4: Epidendrum Alliance

Blue: *Encyclia osmantha* – Larry Mayse

The plant exhibited is still a young example of this Brazilian species but is very well flowered for its size. A fully mature plant can have pseudobulbs taller than three inches and a branched inflorescence carrying up to 30 fragrant flowers, each up to two inches in diameter. It is native to southeastern Brazil in both the Atlantic coastal forest and the inland plateau region. The sepals and petals are yellow green overlaid with brownish purple except along the edges, while the lip is white with pink veins or a pink flush in the center. Note that the main photo shown in the online orchid species encyclopedia by Jay Pfahl is actually *Encyclia randii* and not the species in question. *Encyclia osmantha* does best in intermediate conditions but can tolerate cool

to hot temperatures for brief periods. It does well in moderately bright light and prefers a very free draining growing media with plentiful water from late spring to early fall and less frequent the balance of the year. In a controlled environment a basket or mount yield good results.

Red: *Dinema polybulbon* – Véronique Perrot

White: *Epidendrum centropetalum* – Tim Cape



Epidendrum centropetalum



Oncidium Gold Dust

Class 5: Oncidium Alliance

Blue: *Oncidium Gold Dust* – Jaden McElvey

Oncidium Gold Dust is the well known *Onc. Twinkle* crossed back to the yellow flowered parent, *Onc. cheiroporum*. The other parent of *Onc. Twinkle* is *Onc. so-toanum*, which has pink flowers. In most of the resulting offspring, the two colors cancel each other out, resulting in primarily white flowers with a yellow callus. This cross was a partially successful attempt to add color back into the blooms, but in the case of this particular plant, primarily white flowers were again produced. There are other examples of the cross that did produce yellow flowers, as well as some that turned out orange or even pink. The appeal of this orchid is the profusion of bloom on a small plant. Well grown examples can have hundreds

of scented flowers at once, that last about two months, most often in winter. The species involved can adapt to cool to warm temperatures, but do not do well in summer heat, especially since they do not want to totally dry out between watering. If you have a controlled growing environment, mounting is a good way to keep the plant healthy for a longer period of time, but will require daily watering in warm weather.

Red: *Oncidium cheiroporum* – Larry Mayse



Oncidium cheiroporum



Paphiopedilum venustum forma album

Class 6: Slipper Alliance

Blue: *Paphiopedilum venustum forma album* – Larry Mayse

This rather small growing species with unique charm comes from Nepal, Bhutan and northeastern India, typically growing in rather dense vegetation at the base of cliffs or in bamboo thickets. The flowers have strong green venation on all parts, which in the typical form is overlaid with orange at the apical portion of each petal and on the pouch. In that form, there are also random purple dots on the petals. The plant exhibited is an albino form, also listed in many award records as *Paph. venustum var. measurestianum*, which lacks the spots on the petals and replaces the orange shading with yellow green. Both forms bear attractive mottled foliage, which in the standard form is purple on the reverse. As Carson mentioned at the meeting, *Paph. venustum* can grow in cooler conditions than

many of the mottled leaved species, as low as 40F in the winter months, but will still grow and flower in warmer temperatures as well. It will thrive in the shadier part of your growing area where other orchids won't and should receive frequent water in summer with somewhat less in winter, but without allowing the pot to totally dry out.

Red: *Paphiopedilum stonei* – Carson Barnes

Red: *Paphiopedilum Memnon* – Larry Mayse

White: *Paphiopedilum delenatii* – Lacretia Rocker



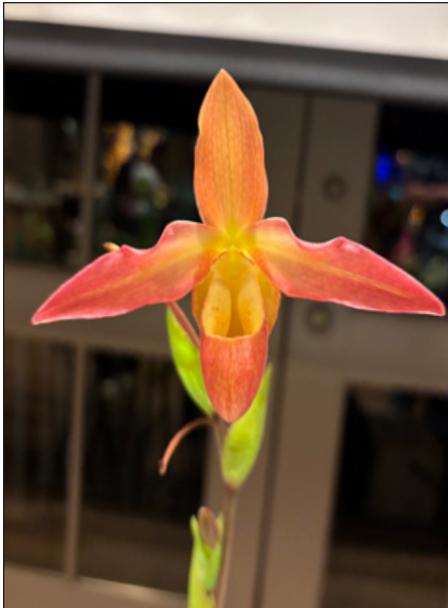
Paphiopedilum stonei



Paphiopedilum Memnon



Paphiopedilum delenatii



Phragmipedium Eric Young

White: *Phragmipedium* Eric Young – Jaden McElvey



Class 7: *Phalaenopsis*

Blue: *Phalaenopsis* Long Pride Leah – Jackson Smith

More than 60 registered *Phalaenopsis* hybrids include “Long Pride” in their grex names, all bred by Mr. Jui-Fang Liang in Taiwan. This particular hybrid showcases an appealing mix of yellow, pink, and white, and its compact form comes from the influence of smaller species among the eighteen in its lineage. The grower has enhanced its charm by displaying it in a hanging pot. Thanks to its complex background, this orchid is generally easy to cultivate and can bloom for many months. It thrives in filtered light at regular household or warmer temperatures, with a slight drying period between waterings.

Red: *Phalaenopsis schilleriana* – Jaden McElvey

White: *Phalaenopsis* Mini Mark – Jaden McElvey



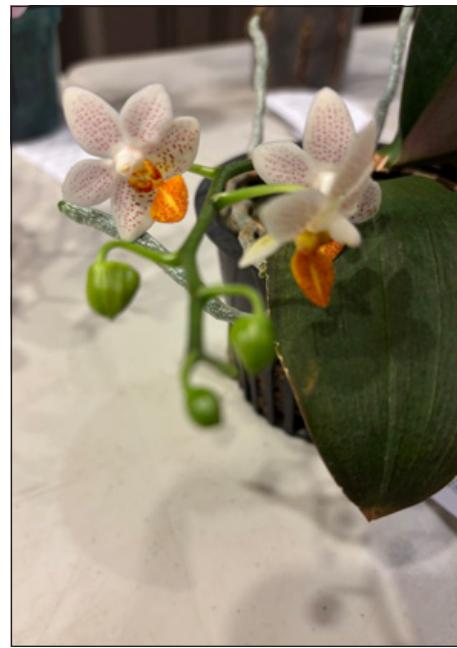
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Phalaenopsis schilleriana



Phalaenopsis Mini Mark



Vanda Muang Thong



Angraecum leonis

Class 8: Vandaceous Alliance

White: *Angraecum leonis* – Larry Mayse

Blue: *Vanda Muang Thong* – Carson Barnes

It is uncommon to see a large-flowered Vanda that is primarily white and in this example a bright purple lip adds to the beauty. *V. Muang Thong* was registered in 1994 by T. Orchids of Bangkok Thailand. They have produced not only a large number of new Vanda introductions but also large-flowered Cattleya and Dendrobiums based on the Phalaenopsis Section, all of which thrive in the hot climate of that city. This beauty has a total of eight species in the family tree including *V. curvifolia* which was formerly classed as *Ascocentrum*. The largest contribution of genes, however, is from *V. sanderiana* and more than likely the alba form was used to create this nearly white flower. Hybrids such as this one thrive best in bright light, warmth, and high humidity in small baskets with little or no growing medium around the large thick roots. They need daily watering year-round with twice daily recommended in hot, dry weather.



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Tsubotaara Melinda Marie 'Blue Sapphire'



Elcoplectris calcarata

Class 9: Miscellaneous

Blue: *Tsubotaara Melinda Marie 'Blue Sapphire'* HCC/AOS – Larry Mayse

A *Tsubotaara* is a hybrid of *Aganisia*, *Pabstia*, and *Zygopetalum*. The Melinda Marie 'Blue Sapphire' variety features improved color and form, with flat, regularly shaped flowers neatly painted with violet-blue. Blooms emerge with new growth and fade before growth matures but can last about eight weeks with good care. These plants prefer medium light, frequent watering with slight drying, and should not be exposed to high temperatures, despite some heat tolerance from *Agn. cyanea*.

Red: *Elcoplectris calcarata* – Bailey Santwire

Red: *Masdevallia minuta* – Larry Mayse



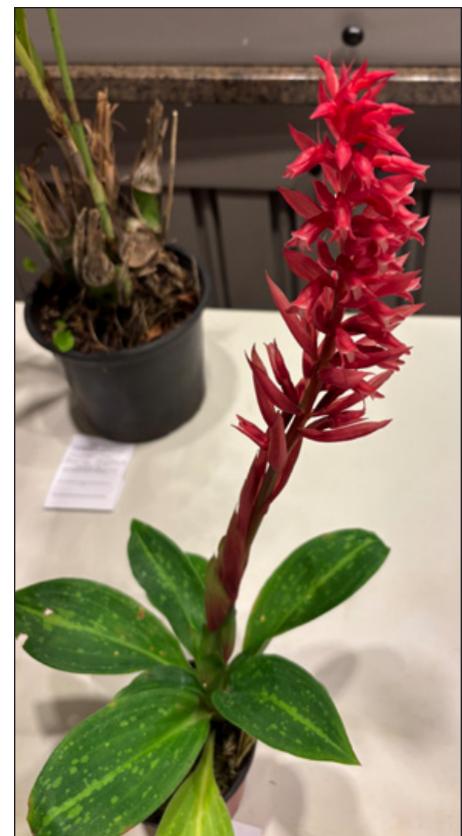
Masdevallia minuta



Mormodia Barnabas Collins

**White: *Mormodia* Barnabas Collins – Bailey
Santwire**

**White: *Stenorrhynchos speciosum* – Bailey
Santwire**



Stenorrhynchos speciosum