



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

March
2024

Next Meeting

Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024
Time: 1:30 Informal "talk story"
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speakers: Eric Guttormsen
& Larry Kuekes
Topic: Orchids at the Zoo

Hilo's zoo is called the Pana'ewa Rainforest Zoo and Gardens because it features plants as well as animals. For years, our own Eric Guttormsen has led the effort to mount orchids on the trees at the zoo for zoo visitors to enjoy and to see how orchids grow in nature.

This month, Eric and Larry Kuekes will tell you all about the orchids at the zoo and how Eric and a group of volunteers have been adding to and maintaining the diverse collection that has made the Hilo zoo one of the best places on the island to see orchids growing on trees.

Eric and Larry are orchid hobbyists, not commercial growers. Larry is a past Hilo Orchid Society President. He grows a diverse orchid collection in a small shade house, and he is a self-described "species nut."

Eric makes frequent trips to Thailand where his interests include not only the orchids but the elephants. He grows orchids on his property in HPP, but his real passion is getting orchids for the zoo.

If you want to see what's going on at the zoo (plus a video of a tiger stalking Eric), don't miss this meeting!



Please Pay Dues – Last Chance!

Your membership dues for 2024 are due by March 31. If you have already paid, thank you.

New members who joined in September 2023 or later are considered paid through 2024 and do not have to pay. Also, if you joined at our Orchid Show at Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium last July, your membership runs through the end of 2024 and you don't have to pay.

For the rest of you, if we don't receive your dues by March 31, we have to drop you from our membership list. Please don't make us do that!

Dues are still only \$20 for individual membership or \$25 for family membership. In return, you get a year of interesting speakers, newsletters, and activities, plus the chance to get together with folks who share your interest in these beautiful and fascinating plants.

You can pay at the meeting, or fill out the form on page 5 and mail it in with your payment (address is on the form). Thanks!

Orchid Isle Project

Our Orchid Isle Project strives to make this island live up to its nickname the Orchid Isle by placing orchids where both residents and visitors can enjoy seeing them. On Thursday, March 21 from 1:30 to 3:30 pm, we will be working at the Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut visitor center. Twelve keiki from the Boys and Girls Club will be joining us in tying orchids to trees. We're looking for six adults to work closely with the keiki (and if you don't know how to mount an orchid on a tree, we'll show you).

If you're interested, please contact Ellen Train at pecetrain@gmail.com. Mahalo!

Hilo Hawaiian Hotel Event

The Hilo Hawaiian Hotel will be hosting an orchid event in late March where the public will be able to see and get information about orchids as well as purchase them from local growers. Stay tuned for more info.

Beginners Corner

Note: This month I am starting a column on growing orchids for beginners called Beginners Corner. I wrote some of this material years ago for the Connecticut Orchid Society newsletter, now lightly edited for re-use in Hawaii. I'm going to call these "classic columns", which sounds better than "retreads." But I think you'll enjoy them, even if you're not a beginner.

Showing Off

When I started growing orchids, I lived in Connecticut. I joined the Connecticut Orchid Society, and I came to the meetings, but I was reluctant to bring in any of my orchids to the show table. The one or two that I might have in bloom seemed insignificant compared with the spectacular displays brought in by some of the other members. And, now and then, when reviewing the show table, orchid judges like Ben Berliner or Phil Jesup would sometimes make a critical comment, such as "that cross combines the worst features of both parents." I didn't want to risk being criticized in public.

Then, after a while, I realized that these knowledgeable growers only made such remarks about each other's orchids, and they were just ribbing each other, or certain other long-time growers whom they obviously knew. For plants brought in by novices like me, they had nothing but compliments.

Encouraged, I started bringing in my plants if I had any in bloom. It was immensely gratifying, while looking at the other show table plants, to see or hear someone admiring a plant I had brought in. When the person reviewing the show table would mention one of my plants, sure enough, they always said something nice.

Once I brought in my Slc. Jewel Box 'Dark Waters', AM/AOS, and the guest speaker, Hermann Pigors from Oak Hill Gardens, selected it and a few other plants from the show table as examples of well-grown orchids. I thought this was ironic, since this was the first time I had gotten the plant to bloom in three years, but it was covered with flowers, and if he wanted to praise my culture I wasn't going to contradict him. In fact, it made my day.



Then there was my *Paphiopedilum niveum* (above) which I kept bringing in every time it bloomed, twice a year, until I figured everyone must be sick and tired of it. I debated whether to bother bringing it in again, but decided I might as well. At that meeting the guest speaker, Norito Hasagawa from Paphanatics, who was speaking on Paphiopedilum breeding, admired my little *Paph. niveum*, telling me it had unusually large flowers for the species (which I didn't know), and asked if he could have a piece of it when I next repotted it, a highly flattering request.

So, if you haven't been bringing in your orchids to show off, please do. You never know what might happen. I promise it'll be an ego boost for you. After all, you've slaved for a whole year to get your orchids to flower, probably only to find that your spouse or friends couldn't care less about them. This is your chance to show off your orchids where they will be genuinely appreciated. Even one extra orchid enhances the display, and if enough people bring one, the result is spectacular.

Just one caution: please don't bring in your plants if they have scale or mealy bugs or little fire ants. You don't want to infest someone else's plants.

Oh – about the disparaging remarks. After previously having explained that he used the term "toads" for large, round, hybrid paphiopedilums, Ben Berliner pointed to a large red Paph I had brought in and called it a "semi-toad". I didn't mind. I figured it was a way of saying, "Welcome to the club."

Larry Kuekes

February Members Choice

Photos by Larry Kuekes



Left: 1st place: *Cattleya maxima*, grown by Lise Dowd and Steve Forman



Left: 2nd place: *Lycaste macrophylla*,
grown by Sherry Partlow



Left: 3rd place (tie): *Cattleya*
(unnamed), grown by Ellen Train

Right: 3rd place (tie):
Phragmipedium Giganteum, grown
by Dana Culleney





Cattleya hueddemanniana h.f. *coerulea* 'Frank's Gift' HCC/AOS, grown by Gabriel Oliveros



Paphiopedilum Wonderful Fred 'Slipper Zone Boldly Upright' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids

HILO ORCHID SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please print this form, fill it out, and mail with your dues payment to:

Hilo Orchid Society
P.O. Box 4294
Hilo, HI 96720

Dues are \$20 for individual membership, \$25 for family membership.

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email for receiving newsletter: _____

Check one:

- Individual membership (\$20)
 Family membership (\$25)

Check one:

- I grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.
 I do not grant permission to publish this information in the Hilo Orchid Society Directory.

Signature: _____

Optional:

Are you interested in volunteering to help with any of the following activities? Check as many as you like.

- Monthly meetings
 Annual Orchid Show
 Orchid Isle Project (mounting orchids on trees in public spaces)
 Orchids at the Zoo
 Serving as an officer

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

President – Ellen Train pecetrain@gmail.com
Vice President – Tom Miranda biophilialk@gmail.com
President-Elect – Kathy Gollaher
Treasurer – Rick Kelley
Recording Secretary – Lise Dowd lisedowd@aol.com
Corresponding Secretary – Larry Kuekes

Past President – Karl Mendonca
Trustee 2023-2024 – Kathryn Duval
Trustee 2023-2024 – Greg Luetticke-Archbell
Trustee 2024-2025 – Sandra Dixon
Trustee 2024-2025 – Cyndi Helton

Hilo Orchid Society
P.O Box 4294
Hilo, HI 96720



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Visit us on the web at
www.hiloorchidsociety.org