



Hilo Orchid Society Newsletter

April
2024

Next Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 13, 2024
Time: 1:30 Informal "talk story"
2:00 Meeting starts
Place: Kamana Senior Center,
127 Kamana St., Hilo
Speaker: Julie Goettsch
Topic: Millions of Orchids:
How the Big Island became the
Orchid Isle

Do you know why our beautiful island has the nickname "The Orchid Isle"? This month our own Julie Goettsch will tell us the story of orchids on the Orchid Isle: what orchids were here before mankind, what orchids came here next and who brought them, and the fascinating story of Vanda Miss Joaquim that was grown here by the millions.

Julie grew up in Santa Ana, CA and first came to Hawaii in 1969 as a teacher. After a stint teaching in Okinawa, Japan, she returned to Hawaii, married a submariner from Colorado, and went to Colorado with him, where she became a school principal and then worked for IBM Global Services in Boulder, CO. Julie started growing cattleya orchids in Colorado in her living room window. 18 years ago, she retired and returned to Hawaii.

Julie says she loves Hawaii, the Orchid Isle, the town of Hakalau, her 4 Persian cats, her orchids, koi, scuba diving, macro underwater photography, her Tesla, and travel.

If you're curious about the story of the Orchid Isle, don't miss this meeting!



2024 Photo Contest

We're holding another orchid photo contest this year. The only rules are that the photo must feature one or more orchids, and **you must be the photographer** (you don't have to be the grower). You can submit photos all year until October. So please send in your photos! Email them to info@hiloorchidsociety.org and mention that they're for the photo contest. The winning photo will be chosen by our members at the November meeting. The winning photographer will receive two tickets to our annual Holiday Party in December.

Show Art Winner



Joalene Young won our contest for artwork for the 2024 Hilo Orchid Show, which has the theme Orchid Hula. The artwork will be used on the show T-shirts, posters, and elsewhere to publicize the show.

As the contest winner, Joalene will receive a free booth at the show and a 70th Annual Orchid Show T-shirt featuring her design. And she receives our thanks for this beautiful work of art.

Beginners Corner

Water

The single most common way that beginning orchid growers kill their plants is by overwatering. How often should you water? An expert might answer, "When the plant needs it." But this is not very helpful for the beginner who can't tell what the plant needs. Here is some more specific advice.

How to Water. In nature, most orchids are epiphytes, growing on trees with their roots exposed to the air. When it rains, the orchid's roots are drenched, and then they dry out in the sun and wind. This is the natural cycle that most orchids need: wet-dry-wet-dry. When you water an orchid, you should absolutely drench the potting medium, letting the water pour through copiously. Then you should let it dry out before watering again.

There are some orchids that don't like to completely dry out. These include terrestrial orchids, such as paphiopedilums and cymbidiums. But no orchid should be kept constantly soggy.

Water the potting medium, not the leaves. Although it doesn't hurt to get the leaves wet, you don't want to leave pockets of water standing where leaves join the stem or, especially, in the crown of a growth. Phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums, in particular, will develop rot from standing water. Standing water isn't a problem for orchids outdoors, since the wind quickly dries the plants.

How Often to Water. In nature, the wet-dry cycle may repeat every day, but in the unnatural condition of growing in a pot, it can take anywhere from a few days to a week before the potting medium dries out enough to water again. Clay pots dry out faster than plastic ones, and small pots dry out faster than large ones. The potting medium also makes a difference. Cinder holds less water than bark; sphagnum moss holds more. One way to tell if the plant is ready to be watered: stick your finger down into the potting medium (below the surface). If it feels damp, don't water.

This general schedule, for plants growing indoors potted in bark, works for me:

- Twice a week: small plastic pots (less than 3 inches) and medium-size clay pots (up to 4 inches).
- Once a week: medium to large plastic pots and large clay pots.



Hose with a water-breaker nozzle (not mine, but the same idea)

Outdoors, your orchids will get watered when it rains, which around Hilo is usually more than enough. However, if it hasn't rained for three or four days, I water my outdoor orchids with a hose that has a nozzle and a water-breaker attachment that breaks the water into small, gentle streams (see photo) so the plants don't get blasted by water.

When in doubt, don't water. Most orchids have pseudobulbs or fleshy leaves and can easily survive dry periods; but if you overwater and the roots rot in the soggy compost, the plant is doomed. If a plant looks desiccated, with shriveled leaves, and you have been watering it regularly, don't water it more! Instead, unpot the plant and look at the roots. Chances are the plant is shriveling up because it has no live roots to absorb water. Experts recommend sealing the plant in a humid plastic bag until it grows new roots. When I've tried this, the whole plant promptly rots and dies. A better plan is to put the plant in an empty pot with no medium, water regularly, and hope for the best. If the plant produces new roots, then you can repot it in some medium.

When to Water. Most orchid books advise against watering in the evening, citing the danger of fungal or bacterial rot. Fortunately, indoor growers can ignore this advice, as it is intended for people with greenhouses who water with a hose. Outdoor growers can also ignore this advice, since the wind will dry the plants. In other words, water whenever it's convenient.

Where to Water. Outdoors, just water the orchids in place. Indoors, carry the orchids to the sink to water them, where you can really drench the pot. Then put them back and let them dry out again. Yes, it's a pain to do this, but it keeps the orchids happy.

Larry Kuekes

2024 Waimea Orchid Art Show

Heads up for our artist members: the Firehouse Gallery in Waimea is holding a show in May called “All About Orchids!” The exhibit will run from May 2-26. The gallery welcomes all mediums: paintings, sculptures and ceramics. Artists interested in participating need to enter their creations by April 28. More information is available online at www.waimeaartscouncil.org/category/call-for-art/

Peter Honeyman Injured

Peter Honeyman of Real Flower Jewelry was severely burned when his studio caught fire last month. He is recovering with his family in San Diego. An HOS member since 2000, Peter is a sweet man, and he makes lovely orchid jewelry from live orchid flowers. His sales booth has been by the entrance of the Hilo Orchid Show for several years.

If you would like to send him a card please bring it to the April meeting and Ellen Train will forward it to him, or you can sign a card at the meeting, or leave him a message on his website at <https://realflowerjewelry.com/contact/>

Orchid Isle Project

On March 21 another Orchid Isle Project was completed with the help of the Kea'au Boys and Girls Club. HOS members Angela Perry, Charlene O'Bryan, Peggy Gorresen, Debbi Cannoles and Ellen Train helped the keiki to tie about 50 orchids onto the trees at the Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Visitor Center's garden area (see photos). We are thankful to Mauna Loa, their employees Lana and Karen, and Boys and Girls leader Brandon Gonzales for this educational opportunity. It was fun for everyone.



Preparing the orchids to be tied to trees.



Tying an orchid to a tree so it can grow the way epiphytic orchids grow in nature.



Keiki from the Kea'au Boys and Girls Club participated in the Orchid Isle project

March Show and Tell Table

Photos by Dana Culleney



Cattleya amethystoglossa 'Okika' AM/AOS



Cattleyanthe Naranja en Flor



Cattleya intermedia



Dendrobium spectabile



Paphiopedilum concolor

AOS Special Annual Awards



Left: Masatoshi Miyamoto Cattleya Alliance Award: *Cattleya tenebrosa* 'Isabel Rosalia' FCC/AOS, grown by Ben Oliveros
 Right: Mario & Conni Ferrusi Award: *Masdevallia tovarensis* 'Princess Leia' CCE/AOS, grown by Caleb Houck



Left: Milton Carpenter Award: *Aspasium* Gloria Barfield 'Okika' AM/AOS, grown by Glen Barfield
 Right: Martin Motes Orchid Breeder's Award: *Rlc.* Princess of Hawaii AQ/AOS, grown by Matthias Seelis

Orchids magazine just published the winners of the American Orchid Society's special annual awards for the best orchids in various categories, such as best Cattleya, best Phalaenopsis, etc. The awards were listed as 2022 awards, but in practice the orchids considered were awarded in both 2022 and 2023 (I think the AOS is catching up here).

Amazingly, of the 21 national awards, our growers in the Hilo Orchid Society won four of them. That's spectacular! Here are the awards they won:

- Masatoshi Miyamoto Cattleya Alliance Award for best Cattleya: won by Ben Oliveros, owner of Orchid Eros, for *Cattleya tenebrosa* 'Isabel Rosalia' FCC/AOS.
- Mario & Conni Ferrusi Award for best

Masdevallia, Dracula or Dracuvallia: won by Caleb Houck, owner of Jungle Mist Orchids, for *Masdevallia tovarensis* 'Princess Leia' CCE/AOS.

- Milton Carpenter Award for best intergeneric hybrid within the Oncidium alliance: won by Glen Barfield, owner of Okika, for *Aspasium* Gloria Barfield 'Okika' AM/AOS.
- Martin Motes Orchid Breeder's Award for breeder & exhibitor of the best AQ (Award of Quality) or AD (Award of Distinction): won by Matthias Seelis, owner of Shogun Hawaii, for *Rlc.* Princess of Hawaii AQ/AOS, which he hybridized and grew.

Congratulations to Ben, Caleb, Glen and Matthias. We're very proud of you.



Dendrobium (Purple Zip x King Zip) Faii's Finest' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids



Left: *Dendrobium* Lim Tee Hooi 'Island Sun' AM/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids

Center: *Masdevallia* Cheryl Shohan 'Sweet Sister' AM/AOS, grown by Okika

Right: *Masdevallia veitchiana* 'Metawee Meesangnil' HCC/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids



Left: *Paphiopedilum* Fanaticum 'Cloud City' AM/AOS, grown by Jungle Mist Orchids

Right: *Paphiopedilum* Lady Henrietta 'Slipper Zone Smiling Pink' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids



Left: *Paphiopedilum* Macabre Hawaiian 'Slipper Zone Red Warrior' AM/AOS, grown by Lehua Orchids

Right: *Rodrurnia* Nalo 'Emi' HCC/AOS, grown by Island Sun Orchids

Hilo Orchid Society Officers and Trustees

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