August 2026
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THE KEIKI EXPRESS

Newsletter of the Virginia Orchid Society
www.vaorchidsociety.org
virginiaorchidsociety@gmail.com

American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.
Affiliated Society

A Few Announcements

Our Upcoming Meeting Speakers

September 20, 2026 – Kim Fedderson "Growing Orchids from Flask"

October 18, 2026 – AOS Judging Outreach (Bring your best groomed plants for judging)

November 8, 2026 – (note the different Sunday of the month) – Chris Satch of NYBG
"Plant Physiology: How to bloom and grow them"

December 13, 2026 – Holiday Party with Orchid Bingo at Deep Run Community Center

January 17, 2027 TBA

February 21, 2027 Deb Boersma from Canada Orchid Expedition (a Zoom presentation).

March 21, 2027 TBA

April 18, 2027 Brandon Tam from Huntington Garden

May 16, 2027 TBA

Invitation to Attend our next Board Meeting this Sunday

The VOS Board Meeting Schedule

August 16, 2026
November 1, 2026
January 10, 2027
April 11, 2027

Everyone is welcome to attend our board meetings. Come see the "behind the scenes" work that is needed to keep the VOS running smoothly. Your comments are always welcome but remember that only board members are permitted to vote should the need arise.

Virginia Orchid Society 2026-2027 Officers:

President: Robin Maiorana

President Elect: Beth Kunberger

Vice President : Patrick Carey

Treasurer: Donna Poland

Membership Chair: Pam Tuggle

Recording Secretary: Meredith Brothers

Past President: Irina Neverova

AOS Affiliated Societies Rep: Daune Poklis

Hospitality Chair: Karen Collier

Facebook Administrator: Robert Rand

Library Chair: Robert Thiessen

Publicity Chair: Open and available

Endowment Chair: Debby Sauer

Education Chair: Linda Lawrence

Newsletter Editor: Ron Geraci

Webmaster: Ethan Gaddis

Judges Forum: Open and available

Show Chair: Irina Neverova

Out of Town Show Chair: Open and available

VOS Email Address: virginiaorchidsociety@gmail.com

Refer to your membership directory for the email addresses of the above members

President's Message

Rth. Tutu (C. Hawaiian Wedding Song 'Virgin' HCC/AOS x Rth. Chance the Chance Kiramaki)

Greetings,

How is your summer going? This hot weather can really be a strain on orchid care. This is where our in-house growers under lights have the advantage. This is one such orchid, Rth. Tutu as grown by Robert Rand. Excellent growing, Robert! He is the first to bloom my hybridization. Many of you have plants from our picnic last year at Chadwick's. I look forward to seeing all sorts of combinations of blooms!

I want to remind everyone of the board meeting this Sunday at 1:00. It is in the KEC building at Lewis Ginter. I will have a sign as to which room. You can send me requests for the agenda by Friday at 12:00 pm. All members are invited.

I want to thank Donna Poland for opening up her house for our picnic in June. Those that attended had a delightful time. It was great to see her grow tent and her lavish flower and vegetable gardens that were so well groomed. The food was excellent. Thanks, again.

I was asked to comment on how I knew Art Chadwick, our member and owner of Chadwick and Son, Inc. by a journalist, Ben Swenson. You can read his article in enformeva.com under An Orchid Oasis. We are fortunate to have Art as such an authority on orchids so close by. It is a good read.

I hope some can go to the Tidewater Orchid Society meeting. It would be great to hear Alan Koch speak on Miniature Catts for the Home Grower. Check out his orchid selection.

Beth says we have several members that have signed up to go to Jeff Morris' place. I look forward to seeing you there.

You saw the listing of our meetings on the first page. Keep this list handy on your calendar. Patrick is working hard to fill the slots for speakers. Get updates on our website. Thanks to Ethan.

Bye for now,

Robin

Invitation to Attend Tidewater OS's August 30 Meeting

The VOS is invited to their August 30 meeting at 1:00 in the administrative building at Norfolk Botanical Gardens. Their speaker will be Alan Koch whose topic is "Miniature Cattleyas for the Home Grower."

Attached to our newsletter transmittal is a listing of orchids he has available, either pre-ordered before the meeting, or online directly from Alan Koch (gcorchids@aol.com). For those attending the meeting he is offering discounts from the availability list. Orders of 3 or more plants receive for a 10 percent discount and orders over $150 for a 20 percent discount.

With our September, Our Meeting Location:
Classroom 1 in the
Kelly Education Center
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
1800 Lakeside Ave., Henrico, VA 23228

A Reminder: An Invitation from Charlottesville Orchid Society

This Sunday August 16 is the deadline to respond to Beth Kunberger to let her know that you will be attending Charlottesville OS's annual picnic at Jeff Morris' greenhouse on September 6. Beth will forward our number of attendees to Jeff.

Please note that the best way to contact Beth is via a text message. She is finding that her voice mail keeps filling up with robo calls so she does not want to miss your acceptance.

Cattleya Hawaiian Tiding 'Mendenhall' x C. Sans Souci 'Mendenhall'

Cattleya Sans Souci 'Newberry'
A Carter & Holms photo

It's time for the big reveal. For those who were members in 2020 and attended our February meeting, Art Chadwick presented a hands-on examination of seed pods, flasks, and community pots. He brought two flasks of the above hybrid and allowed each of us to repot one seedling and take it home. It's time to share with everyone how well (or otherwise!) they have grown over the past six years. Please send the VOS a jpeg of your plant and let us see the progress. Given the time frame, there ought to be a few of the largest seedling achieving blooming size by now. Everyone's pictures will be included in the September newsletter.

Your newsletter editor's two plant that were the a few of the smallest seedlings.

Richmond Magazine's Sunday Story

For those who ventured onto the Richmond Magazine website to see their weekly Sunday Story that featured your newsletter editor (and two others with unusual plants), here is the Psychopsis Mendenhall 'Hildos' FCC/AOS who was not quite ready for her close up when the photo of both of us was taken.

How to Water Your Orchids

By Christopher Croom, San Diego County Orchid Society

Knowing how to water your orchids properly is something many orchid growers, especially beginners, take for granted. After all, how hard could it possibly be? You either open the valve on your hose or pump up the pressure sprayer, depress the handle, and give your orchids a squirt. Right?

While giving your orchids a careless squirt might seem to be all that watering entails, if you'd like to keep all of the orchids in your collection alive for as along as possible you'll have to learn about mindful watering. This is not the kind of watering you learn after visiting an ashram, taking a vow of silence and poverty, and eating only unseasoned rice for six months. This is the kind of watering you learn if you have the opportunity to work in an orchid greenhouse with a world-renowned orchid grower, or, barring that chance, by paying close attention.

When I worked for Andy Phillips, (of Andy's Orchids in Encinitas, California) I immediately noticed two things about watering: 1) when we sold orchids, we never recommended that customers mist their orchids, and 2) Andy always insisted on running the sprinklers and following up with the hose, by hand.

Why no mist? Because misting usually makes you feel extremely good, but after you go away and 20 minutes have passed and the mist has evaporated, the orchid is right back in its semi-miserable, sub-optimal growing environment. Misting reminds me of a plastic dashboard I used to have when I was two, replete with steering wheel and shifter. When Mom would drive, I would ride in the car with my toy dashboard in front of me and pretend that I was driving too. Was I really doing anything but playing pretend? Nope. Is misting playing pretend with your orchids? Certainly.

Misting also doesn't work that well because if you mist with water that is high in dissolved salts and other solids (like our tap water), when the water evaporates leaving the solids behind, they crystallize on the orchid roots and leaves and cause chemical burns, ugly leaves, and dead root tips. And once again, if the mist is being used to compensate for a poor growing environment, it does absolutely nothing once it evaporates. In short, everything you think you're doing with a mister you can actually accomplish by using humidity trays, a greenhouse, growing your orchids in close proximity to one another, or deploying a swamp cooler or humidifier in your growing environment.

As for sprinkler systems, these are fraught with problems. If you have a mister system that atomizes tiny water droplets throughout the air, you'll have to leave it on until next week to thoroughly soak every plant in your collection. If your sprinkler heads make larger droplets, this will decrease the amount of time you'll need to leave them on, but bear in mind there will always be dry areas that the sprinkler system chronically misses. If you want to find out the places that your sprinkler system doesn't reach, use it exclusively until you have a few clumps of dead plants. Those are the dry spots! In this way sprinkler systems can trick us into thinking we've watered all our plants when we've only watered the plants the system hits.

Yes, you can get one drip irrigation nozzle and direct it into the pot of every orchid in your collection, but the amount of time and money required to do this will be on the staggering side, and you'll still likely have dry spots within each pot. So, the only real reason why commercial growers use irrigation systems is to save them a little time. If your collection is small enough to get away with it, water by hand. Your plants will be just fine and your wallet will be fatter.

Someone told me something horrid last weekend that I need to address here, because I've heard it more than once now, and this is quite possibly the worst orchid watering advice, if not the worst orchid advice in general. Here's what she said: "I bought an orchid a few weeks ago and I want to know if I'm watering it enough. It was sold in the store as an 'ice cube plant' and the directions said to leave one ice cube in the pot every week to water it".

Ouch. My friend was well on her way to an orchid funeral. Why? Because one ice cube can't possibly water an entire Phalaenopsis pot, especially when only administered once a week. Also, because Phalaenopsis (and most other orchids you buy at big-box stores) are hybridized from tropical, sometimes equatorial species and have no genes whatsoever to help them deal with 32 degree water! These are plants that die when they get too cold!

Continued on page 5

Twenty years ago on Martha Stewart's show I watched in horror as the orchid guy from the New York Botanical Garden dispensed the same advice about caring for Phalaenopsis, and since he was an expert (doubtless beholden to perpetuating the mythology that orchids are hard to grow), people believed him. A decade later, we now have Phalaenopsis being marketed as "ice cube plants" in stores that sell Phalaenopsis almost exclusively to the kinds of people who throw the whole plant away when the flowers fade or advertently start killing it the minute they bring it home.

So, how does one water one's orchids? Here are a few tips to help make sure each plant is properly saturated enough to get their drink:

1. Water thoroughly. If your orchid is potted, image you are filling that entire, empty pot with water (at least).
2. Water every plant from as many different directions as possible.
3. Remember that the roots are doing most of the drinking, so water the roots instead of the leaves.
4. Water each plant once to let the water absorb, and then hit it again with water a minute or two later to completely soak it.
5. Remember that when dry, white sphagnum moss takes more water to saturate it than green sphagnum moss. Water according to the absorptive characteristics of your media.
6. Mounted plants usually cannot be over watered unless it is very cold and humid out, and often not even then.

Photos from our June Picnic

Photos by June Pierson

Hungry again?! It was an enjoyable and satisfying afternoon at Donna Poland's house.

Donna's growing set-up.

NATIONAL CAPITAL ORCHID SOCIETY

2026 INTERNATIONAL SHOW AND SALE

NEW LOCATION!

Montgomery County Fairground,
Building 6, Hall 3

16 Chestnut Street, Gaithersburg, MD

SEPTEMBER 18–20, 2026

Friday 12pm–6pm • Saturday 10am–6pm • Sunday 10am–3pm

$10 admission per person

Children 12 and under – FREE

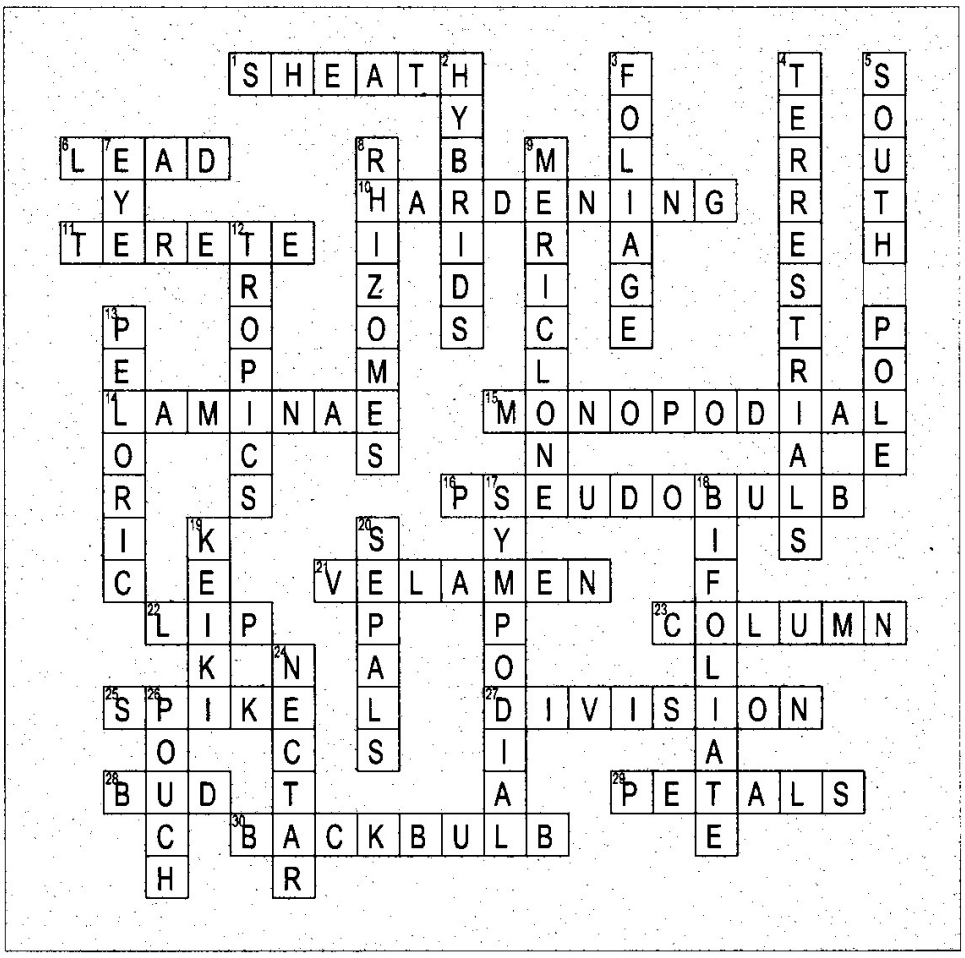
Bredren Orchids (Florida)
Ecuadorquideas (Ecuador)
Ecuagenera (Ecuador)
Florida Orchid House (Florida)
Hamakua Orchids (Hawaii)
J&L Orchids (Connecticut)
Jairak Orchids (Thailand)
Magic Oasis Orchids (Canada)
Miranda Orchids (Brazil)
Mundiflora (Ecuador)
Monster Island Orchids (New York)
Oceanside Orchids (California)
Orchid Classics (Virginia)
Orchid Nerd (New Jersey)
Phrao Orchids (Thailand)
Taida Orchids (Taiwan)
Ten Shin Gardens (Taiwan)
Tropical Exotique (Thailand)
Wade's Orchids (Pennsylvania)
Waldor Orchids (New Jersey)
White Plains Orchids (New York)

NCOS Show vendors and ticketing fees subject to change

The Answers!

WHAT'S AN ORCHID? - A BRAIN TEASER!

COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY



ACROSS

1. THE PROTECTIVE COVERING OF BUDS
6. NEW GROWTH
10. MATURATION OF NEW GROWTH
11. LEAVES WHICH ARE ROUND IN CROSS-SECTION
14. LEAF BLADE EXCLUSIVE OF PETIOLE
15. GROWS VERTICALLY
16. THICKENED STEM OF A CATTLEYA
21. SPONGY LAYER OF CELLS WHICH COVERS ROOTS
22. MODIFIED PETAL (aka LABELLUM)
23. THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF A FLOWER
25. SHORT-STALKED FLOWERS ON AN UPRIGHT STEM
27. CLUMP OF GROWTHS CUT FROM MOTHER PLANT
28. A FLOWER BEFORE OPENING
29. THE THREE INNER SEGMENTS OF A FLOWER
30. OLD PSEUDOBULB OFTEN WITHOUT LEAVES

DOWN

2. OFTEN MADE BY MAN, SOMETIMES NATURAL
3. COMMON NAMES FOR LEAVES
4. THEY LIVE IN THE GROUND
5. ORCHIDS AREN'T FOUND HERE - BRRR! (THINK GEOGRAPHY)
7. INCIPIENT BUD OF A VEGETATIVE GROWTH
8. CREEPING STEMS MADE FROM SUCCESSIVE SHOOTS
9. PLANTLET PRODUCED BY MERISTEM PROPAGATION
12. MOST EPIPHYTES GROW HERE
13. PETALS COPY-CAT LIP
17. GROWS HORIZONTALLY
18. TWO LEAVES
19. OFFSHOOT FROM A PLANT STEM OR FLOWER SPIKE
20. THE THREE OUTER SEGMENTS OF A FLOWER
24. SUGARY SECRETION
26. ANOTHER NAME FOR THE LIP ON A PAPH