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# THE KEIKI EXPRESS

Newsletter of the Virginia Orchid Society
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American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.
Affiliated Society

## Outreach Judging:
## Experience what AOS judging is all about

### Sunday, October 18 from 2 pm to 5 pm
### In Classroom 1 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

One of the ways that the AOS judges give back to the community is to participate in outreach judging. Beginning in 2013, AOS judging centers began offering AOS-sanctioned outreach judgings as part of their ongoing commitment to engaging the AOS affiliated orchid societies and the orchid growing public with the process of orchid judging. This service, both practical and educational, is only available to AOS-affiliated orchid societies.

Outreach judging is a great opportunity for the society members to experience what judging is all about. A team of AOS judges will attend our November meeting, explain the judging process, and review the society's show table to see if there are any worthy candidates. This is a great way for the society to learn and understand what characteristics make a flower or plant awardable.

Please note: You do not have to be an AOS member to exhibit a blooming orchid at an outreach judging and there is no entry fee. **We do require that your plant has a correct species or hybrid name and be free of pests. It's also a good idea to clean your plant up a bit (wipe off the leaves, and remove any dead leaves or old inflorescences), and possibly stake the inflorescence, so that the flowers are shown to their best advantage**.

Plants are judged for different types of AOS Awards, as described in the following pages. It could receive a quality award, or a botanical award for a species, or you could receive an award for your fabulous growing ability. Should your orchid receive an award, a fee is charged to cover administrative expenses with an easy way to Pay for Awards online.

A note from AOS Judge Ken Meier: We ask your society members to bring their plants to the show table where the judges will select plants to demonstrate the judging process. Some of these plants may actually be awarded. Because our purpose is more of an outreach program and centered around education, we have found that our time judging is limited. We may not be able to judge all the plants that people want to see judged or plants that have potential award quality. This needs to be mentioned to your society members so there are no surprises or disappointments if we are not able to judge their plant(s). All the plants will go through a pre-screening process by our judges. Plants that have AOS award potential will be judged first, followed by those plants that may have an educational value regarding judging. If we do not get to all the plants, members are welcome to bring those plants to our December judging at The National Capital Judging Center, 12470 Old Frederick Road, Marriotsville, MD 21104.

The screening process will be done at the beginning of the meeting while I introduce the members to the judging center, the judges, and the various AOS awards. I'll also be commenting on the judging process as it unfolds.

## 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: Open and available

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

Greetings to all,

I hope you are enjoying this fall weather. It is crazy that we are still having some summer days of heat. I hope you are having success with bringing your orchids in from their summer outdoor vacation.

I want to thank everyone that came to the picnic at Art Chadwick's greenhouse. Beth did a great job of planning and cooking the barbecue. The food was delicious. We had a good time socializing with the members of CHAOS and Peninsula OS. Art gave the history and tour of his greenhouses. Repotting was enjoyed by all that brought plants. Right many of us came home with new orchids including the free giveaway bulbophyllum. We had a total of 43 that day and the weather cooperated.

I hope you are grooming your best orchids for Sunday. We want to impress our AOS judges. I look forward to seeing our show table. This is also a time to ask the judges questions about your orchids, judging process and any other questions you may have.

It was decided that the donation to the AOS in Dr. Burke's name will go towards research on taking virus out of historic Cattleyas. We are still working on the details.

As a reminder, I will bring a copy of the last minutes of the general meeting and board meeting to view. We are still working on getting it on the website.

We want to welcome our new members. There is a VOS members only Facebook page. If you are interested, let me rmyorana@gmail.com or Robert Rand robertrand41@comcast.net. know because we have to send you the link for you to access the Facebook page.

We will not have Zoom this Sunday due to the nature of the meeting.

After the October meeting, the 2026-2027 Membership List will reflect only those that have paid their dues for the year. This is the end of the grace period. You can pay by cash, check or square at the October meeting. The updated Membership List as well as a new password for our Members Only tab on our website will be sent soon after our meeting.

I look forward to seeing you Sunday.

Best wishes,
Robin

## Upcoming November 8th Meeting

Chris Satch of NYBG - "Plant Physiology: How to bloom and grow them"

Chris will need a ride from the airport to Lewis Ginter on the morning of our meeting on November 8th. If you are willing to give him a ride, please contact Patrick at patrickdcarey@yahoo.com.

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

# AOS Orchid Show Judging

Your AOS judging experience begins as you enter the judging place. You will see a veritable hive of activity as people buzz around setting up tables, chairs, computers, projectors and photography equipment. There are a number of different things all happening at once.

**The Clerk:** Is the person responsible for making sure the judging process goes smoothly. They provide the judges with the necessary documents, record a list of all plants presented, maintain a list of the awarded plants, complete the measurements of awarded flowers and plants, fill out award documentation, and shuttle plants to and from the judging table located at the front of the room. Clerks are often judging students. The process of clerking provides them with an opportunity to learn the entire process from start to finish.

**The Judging Chair:** The chairperson is responsible for guiding the process of judging. If the plant being judged belongs to the judging chair, they will recuse themselves and another judge will chair the judging of that particular plant. The chairperson will provide information to the judges such as names, measurements, and any other considerations needed by the judges. The chairperson also determines if the scores are within range after scoring and for assigning a second team in cases when the scores are out of range.

**Research:** One judge, student, or clerk will be responsible for research. They use a variety of resources to retrieve and review information about past awards, awards to parents and/or similar grexes for each plant. This information is projected at the front of the room for the entire group to see.

**The Judges:** Judges sit at tables perpendicular to the judging table facing each other. This makes for better interaction and discussion. The Mid-Atlantic team judges as a committee of the whole, that is to say, each judge has the opportunity to speak about each plant. The exception to this is if the plant belongs to a particular judge or if a particular judge has a vested interest in the plant. In these cases, the judge(s) in question will recuse. A judge may not participate in any aspect of having his or her own plant judged, including discussion, measuring, and describing a plant. If the number of plants presented is excessive, the judging chair may split the group into sub-teams. A team will consist of no fewer than three judges, at least two of whom must be fully accredited.

Years of training and continuing education means they are well-versed in the desirable attributes of each plant. If any judge feels that the plant under review meets the standards a nomination will be offered. A second is required to proceed. After a second is offered, each judge will score the plant using a scale developed over many years by the AOS. At the end of this process the scores are collected and reviewed by the judging chair. If the spread between high and low is 6 points or fewer, the scores are averaged, and the result is the award for that plant. See below for the various types of awards and what they mean.

If the team can't come to a consensus the score sheets are returned and the judges have an opportunity to reconsider their scores. If this does not result in a spread of fewer than 6 points, the plant goes to a second team. This team is made up of the judges who had the highest and the lowest scores, plus one who was in the middle. They will leave the room, discuss the plant, and come to a conclusion. If they decide the plant deserves an award, the scores of the second team of judges determines what that award will be.

Often one or more judges will approach the plant for a closer examination. They may rotate the plant to view it from different perspectives. They may even (carefully) touch the flower to determine its substance. Judges are trained in the proper handling of flowers so that they can accomplish this without damage to the flower or plant. Any judge may recuse themselves at any time from scoring a plant. This can occur if the judge feels he or she cannot come to a fair assessment of the plant or if for any reason they missed all or part of the discussion about the plant.

**The Photographer/Descriptions:** After the plant is awarded, it goes to the photographer where a high-resolution portrait is taken. Multiple images may be taken. These images are stored by the AOS and used in the judging process for future plants of the same species. The plant is then taken by the clerk and measured. The flower segments and in some cases the entire plant are measured and the measurements recorded. These are also stored by the AOS and become part of future judging sessions. The final part of the process is the description. Judges often work in teams of two or three, many times with a student or clerk, to describe in intricate detail all attributes of the flower. As with the photo and measurements, the descriptions are stored by the AOS and are often pivotal in future judging sessions when a plant of the same species is presented. The individual who presented the plant for judging is then, in most cases, allowed to provide a 'clonal name' for the plant, which remains with that particular plant permanently. In most cases, the clonal name also goes with any divisions, clones, or progeny of that plant.

## The Awards

There are several different awards a plant can receive. A plant can also receive multiple awards under certain circumstances. The awards are based on a scale of 100 points that has been developed and refined by the AOS over many years. Each scale is designed to allow the judges to evaluate a flower based on attributes specific to that type of orchid.

## Flower Awards

Flower awards are given to the flowers only. The plant itself is not supposed to be considered in the evaluations for a flower award. The plant does not even have to be present to receive a flower award... it is acceptable to present a cut flower for judging. Flower awards stay with the plant if it is divided, cloned, or bred. The flower awards are:

**Highly Commended Certificate (HCC)** - given to a flower which receives a score between 74.5 and 79.4

**Award of Merit (AM)** - given to a flower which receives a score between 79.5 and 89.4

**First Class Certificate (FCC)** - given to a flower which receives a score greater than 89.4

## Cultural Awards

Cultural awards are given to the grower of the plant and not the plant itself. Cultural awards acknowledge the efforts of the grower in creating an environment in which the plant can thrive. The entire plant, including roots, are considered when a cultural award is proposed. The award designation for a cultural award DOES NOT follow any divisions, clones, or progeny of the plant, however, the clonal name assigned by the grower does. There are two kinds of cultural awards:

**Certificate of Cultural Merit (CCM)** - given to the grower of a plant which receives a score between 79.5 and 89.4

**Certificate of Cultural Excellence (CCE)** - given to the grower of a plant which receives a score greater than 89.4

## Botanical Awards

The AOS maintains a database of all the plants ever presented for judging. Occasionally a new plant is presented. If the judges determine that the plant has merit, is rare enough, or is simply interesting, a nomination for a botanical award may be offered. Botanical awards do NOT take into account the same considerations as flower or cultural awards and are based on an entirely different point scale. A plant that is given a botanical award must be verified by the Species Identification Task Force (SITF), a committee of the AOS staffed by experts in many different genera. The flower and plant must be described in extreme detail and a flower must be dissected and photographed carefully to assist the SITF in making a determination. Once approved, the botanical award is entered into the AOS' system for future reference. The botanical awards are:

**Certificate of Botanical Recognition (CBR)** - Awarded to a cultivar of a species, subspecies, variety, or natural hybrid deemed especially worthy of recognition for rarity, novelty, or educational value previously unrecorded by AOS. The entire plant must be exhibited and not just the inflorescence. The plant need have no special horticultural value.

**Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM)** - Awarded to a cultivar of a species, subspecies or natural hybrid with outstanding esthetic appeal that contributes to the horticultural aspects of orchidology. The entire plant must be exhibited and not just the inflorescence and the plant and flowers displayed should be in good condition and have sufficient flowers to judge the horticultural merit of the plant.

## Miscellaneous Awards

In addition to the awards listed above, awards may be given as follows:

**Award of Distinction** - Awarded once to a cross, exhibited individually or collectively, representing a worthy new direction in breeding. The award is granted unanimously without scoring by the judging team assigned. The specific values for which this award is granted must be recorded by the judging team. If the hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Distinction is not given a cultivar name.

**Award of Quality** - Awarded once to a strain (the result of a mating of specific cultivars), exhibited by a single individual as a group of not less than l2 different clones or the inflorescences thereof, of a raised species or hybrid, which may or may not have been made before, when the result is of sufficient improvement over the former type. The parental cultivar epithets and the hybridizer of this strain, (not necessarily the registrant of the hybrid), must be provided by the exhibitor upon entry. At least one cultivar of the exhibited strain must receive, or have received, a flower quality award. It is granted unanimously without scoring by the judging team assigned. The specific values for which this award is granted must be recorded by the judging team. If the hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Quality is not given a cultivar name.

**Judges Commendation** - Awarded to flowers or plants, individually or in groups, for a distinctive characteristic or aspect of historical or other importance which, in the opinion of the judges, is worthy of recognition. Judges' Commendations must record the specific values for which the award is given. Granted without scoring by an affirmative vote of at least 75 percent of the judging team assigned.

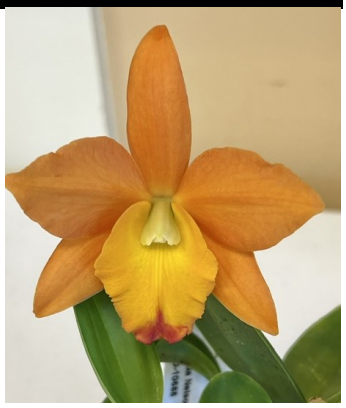
## The American Orchid Society - Mid-Atlantic Judging Center

# Photos from our September Show Table

Photos by June Pierson

Lc. Mi Morena
Grown by Stan Baker

C. Pollyanna
Grown by Stan Baker



Synda Nelson 'SVO' x
Slc. Angel Eyes 'SVO'
Grown by Rachel Wolburg

Tolumnia Delight
Grown by Doug Tuggle

# AOS Corner

## AOS Affiliated Societies Newsletter

## AOS Culture Day: Sunday November 15th, 2026

**Time:** 11 AM – 4 PM Eastern Time

**Cost:** $40 for A.O.S. Member / $50 for A.O.S. Non-Member

**Presentations by**: **Serena Roman** – Learn how to get your tiny Bulbophyllums to grow and bloom to their potential. Serena teaches practical, evidence-based care to demystify orchids for new and experienced hobbyists, emphasizing accessible techniques that build confidence and success. With years of hands-on cultivation experience, she curates and propagates a broad range of orchids.

**Tomas Bajza with Vicki Hallock** – "Orchid Universe: Selecting and Growing Orchids in BiOrbs" – This talk will focus on various miniature and small orchids, culture and at-home growing tips and techniques. Additionally, you will learn how to put together simple setups for your miniatures.

**Julien Cedric Anne** – "Cloud Forest in a Box: Engineering a Highland Habitat at Home" – What's a cloud forest? What are the necessary conditions which need to be replicated to successfully meet the growing conditions of the tiny treasures of the orchid world at home.

**Luis Ortiz Jordan** – "Chilling Out: How to Keep Cloud Forest Orchids Happy in a Heated World" – Luis will discuss what he has learned to beat the heat and successfully cultivate cool-growing miniatures in less-than-ideal geographic areas.

**Registration Link and Speaker Times:**

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6153537128861022549

# A few pictures from our picnic at Chadwick's

Photos by June Pierson