

NEWSLETTER



Editor's Note: The newsletter will be distributed electronically to all members for whom we have an email address. If you wish to switch from paper to electronic delivery (blind copy so your email address remains private), please notify me at thues@sasktel.net.

Future Meeting Dates:

Sept 22, 2017 Oct 21, 2017 Nov 26, 2017
(dates in italics to be confirmed)

SOS Executive

President:	Bob Lucas
Vice-President:	Sherida Gregoire
Past President:	Cal Carter
Secretary:	Donna Carlson-O'Keefe
Treasurer:	Cheryl Grummett
Social:	Shirley Keith Lori Pozniak
Plant Orders:	Heather Anderson Cheryl Adamson
Resources:	Yvette Lyster Pat Randall
Librarians:	Debbie Huculiak Don Keith
Newsletter:	Tracey Thue
COC/AOS Rep:	Tom Kondra
Speakers:	Heather Anderson
Webmaster:	Calvin Lo
Mail Address:	SOS, Box 411 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3
Web Address:	www.saskorchids.com
facebook:	https:// www.facebook.com/saskorchidsociety?

May Meeting

The general meeting of the Society will be held on Sunday, May 28, 2017 at John Dolan School, beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Potting demonstrations will be given in the Presentation portion of the meeting. Bob will demonstrate the repotting of a *Phragmipedium*, Pat will divide and repot a *Cattleya*, and Tracey will mount an orchid. See the article included on pages 8-10 on different potting mixes, kindly shared by Gordon Heaps from the Orchid Society of Alberta.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Foothills Orchid Society Show

June 3, 4, 2017

We need your orchids for the SOS display at the Foothills Show. Your blooming plants can be dropped off between 7:00 – 8:00 p. m. at 3254 Calder Terrace (Heather's house) on Thursday, June 1st.

If you could email a list of the plants you'll be sending to the Show, to one of us by Tuesday, May 30th it would be much appreciated.

If you feel comfortable registering your own plants for AOS judging, please do so - watch the FOS website (www.foothillsorchidsociety.com/show) for the registration form. However, if you'd like us to register your plants for you, please include information about your orchids, such as do you grow under lights or on the window sill, this your orchid's 1st bloom etc. This way we'll be able to register them in the correct judging category.

Display plants & Ecuagenera pre-orders can be picked up at the same address Monday, June 5th between 10:00 a.m. – noon.

Heather Anderson (heather.jane.anderson@gmail.com)

Cheryl Adamson (orchidcrazycheryl@gmail.com)

Meeting Agenda:

Announcements

Problem Corner

Show and Tell

BREAK:

Treats/Supplies/Library

Potting Demonstrations

Plant Raffle

Plant Sale

Adjournment

Plant Sale Table

Members are welcome to bring plants for the sale table this month.

10% of the sale price of plants goes to the SOS. Please mark the pots with your name and you'll receive a cheque from the SOS Treasurer.

JUNE FIELD TRIP

Are you interested in visiting a local field where our native **Ladyslipper, *Cypripedium calceolus*** grows?

Don is planning to visit the location next month. There will be a sign up sheet at the general meeting for those of you interested in joining him.



Membership Renewals for September 2017 - May 2018

Take advantage of the incentives offered for early renewals!

Members renewing their membership at the April and May general meetings will be rewarded with a choice of a \$5 coupon for the SOS supply table, or a Phalaenopsis seedling donated by Bob Lucas.

There are still some seedlings available!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

SOS General Meeting Saturday, October 21, 2017

Guest Speaker - Fred Clarke, Sunset Valley Orchids

Plant pre-orders will be available, details to follow

APRIL 23 MEETING MINUTES

Recorded by Donna Carlson-O'Keefe

Announcements

Bob Lucas, SOS President welcomed members and guests to the meeting. There were several new members present.

The Society will hold its annual silent auction today. The auction will proceed throughout the meeting. Bidding starts at \$1. The auction will be stopped two or three tables at a time; this will be announced a couple minutes in advance. The bid sheets indicate that either 50% or 100% of the proceeds go to the SOS.

Memberships can be renewed today for the 2017-18 season. There is an incentive for renewing in April or May, either a Phalaenopsis seedling (grown and donated by Bob Lucas) or a card for \$5 credit at the resources table, good until the end of January. A single membership is \$25; a family membership is \$30.

The annual election for the SOS Executive will be held after the break. All existing executive members have let their names stand again, but if anyone else is interested in serving on the executive, he/she should tell Bob during the break. They could pair with existing members at the start.

There is detailed information in the April newsletter about the Orchid Society of Alberta show, April 7-9, 2017. It was very successful for contributing SOS members. The SOS display received two trophies: Best Visiting Society Display and Best Display of 16-25 Plants. The plaques are on display at the library. Three Society plants were nominated for American Orchid Society (AOS) awards, two grown by Lori Pozniak and one grown by Bob Lucas. Bob's plant, *Phragmidedium* Red Flare 'Elizabeth' was awarded an Award of Merit (AM/AOS) with a score of 83. Other plants grown by SOS members received four show trophies. Thanks to those who loaned plants and who helped with display set-up and take-down.

Gardenscape was held March 24-26 and seemed successful. We usually attract a few new members as a result

of our display there. Thank you to those who contributed their time and their plants.

After the break there will be three awards handed out: (1) a draw from the names of those who brought treats during the year; (2) the Wilma Nykiforuk Award for the best plant on today's Show and Tell Table, chosen by Wilma's sister, Sarah; (3) a draw from the names of those who brought plants for Show and Tell during the year.

We will be participating in the Visiting Speakers Program, in cooperation with the Orchid Society of Alberta and the

Foothills Orchid Society. In the months that we have a visiting speaker, meetings will be held on Saturday. Otherwise the meetings will remain on Sunday. This will be on a trial basis for a year, after which, the membership will be asked if they want to continue with the program. Heather Anderson will coordinate our participation with the other two societies.

Thank you to Heather Anderson and Cheryl Adamson for arranging the garage sale of plants from the OSA show.

Treats today were provided by Ruth Zuk, Deb Huculiak, Beth Langer, Cheryl Grummet, and Sarah Nykiforuk. A couple of volunteers are still needed for May. Their names will be entered in the draw for the treats prize, drawn later today.

Plant Orders (Cheryl Adamson & Heather Anderson)

Heather reported that Ecuagenera will be attending the Foothills Orchid Society Show in June, so she and Cheryl are taking pre-orders. The deadline for ordering is May 10. There is a link to the Ecuagenera plant list on the SOS website. Prices are in US dollars, and there is a handling fee of \$2 per plant.

Speakers (Heather Anderson)

It might be too late to be included in the visiting speakers program this year. However, Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids in California is coming in October and it is possible that he might be able to come here. Fred is an AOS Judge and a very good grower. If it isn't possible to host Fred we'll be included in the speakers program in the new year.



Cattleya (syn Laelia) purpurata var. schusteriana

Grown by Tracey Thue

Resources (Pat Randall, Yvette Lyster, Karen St. Marie)

Pat reported that she was able to purchase Orchid bark at a good price from Calvin Wong (Canadian Orchid Congress President). Orchid bark is very hard and doesn't break down as fast as regular bark. It is treated with dolomitic lime, so shouldn't be boiled or soaked before use. Pat purchased 25 bags, on sale at the Resource table for \$12 each.

Problem Corner

How long should lights be left on during the day? Should the timing be changed with the seasons? Bob responded, saying he leaves his lights on for 12 hours, off for 12 hours. This simplifies things.

Show and Tell

Eighteen plants were shown by Tracey Thue, Pat Randall, Merle Ward, Mary Orchard, Heather Anderson, Cheryl Adamson, Donna Carlson-O'Keefe, and Bob Lucas.

Break

Presentation There was no presentation this month. In its place was the annual fundraising silent auction.

Plant Raffle There was no plant raffle this month. Several plants, mostly Phalaenopsis donated by Saskatoon Coop were included in the silent auction.

Election

A slate of nominees for the 2017-18 Executive was presented. Mary Orchard moved that nominations cease, Dave Robinson seconded. Carried. The slate was elected by acclamation. **The SOS Executive for the coming year includes:** President - Bob Lucas; Vice-President/Past President - Sherida Gregoire; Secretary - Donna Carlson-O'Keefe; Treasurer - Cheryl Grummet; Social Directors - Shirley Keith & Lori Pozniak;

Plant Orders - Heather Anderson & Cheryl Adamson; Resources - Yvette Lyster & Pat Randall; Librarians - Deb Huculiak & Don Keith; Newsletter Editor - Tracey Thue; COC/AOS Rep - Tom Kondra; Speaker Coordinator - Heather Anderson; Webmaster - Calvin Lo.

Treat Award

Ruth Zuk's name was drawn from all the names of those who brought treats during the year. Ruth received a plant grown and donated by Lori Pozniak.

Show and Tell Award

The winner of the plant was Mary Orchard.

Wilma Nykiforuk Award

Awarded to the best plant on this month's Show & Tell Table, chosen by Sarah Nykiforuk in memory of her sister Wilma.

Sarah's favourite plant on the table was *Cattleya mossiae*, grown by Pat Randall. Pat was presented with a plant.

Bob announced that the May meeting will feature potting demonstrations, which would

probably be of interest to those wanting advice on the plants they have just purchased in the silent auction.

Adjournment Approximately 3:00pm.



SOS APRIL SHOW & TELL TABLE

Photos by Sara Thue



Cattleya mossiae
Grower: Pat Randall



Thrixsperum merguense
Grower: Heather Anderson



Phalaenopsis Tying Shin Baby Smile
Grower: Bob Lucas



Paphiopedilum Dellaina
(*chamberlainianum* x *delenatii*)
Grower: Mary Orchard



Brassolaeliocattleya (Blc.) Village Chief North
'Green Genius'
Grower: Donna Carlson-O'Keefe



Lockhartia parthenocomis
Grower: Heather Anderson



Pleurothallis tribuloides
Grower: Tracey Thue



Laeliocattleya (Lc) Orglade's Grand 'Yu-Chang
Beauty'
Grower: Pat Randall



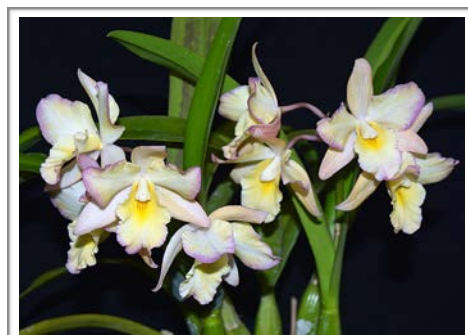
Lockhartia oerstadii
Grower: Heather Anderson



Cattleya lueddemanniana
Grower: Pat Randall



Paphiopedilum Fairburn x Vale Grande
Grower: Mary Orchard



Jackfowleara (syn *Iwanagaara*) Apple Blossom
Grower: Pat Randall



Cattleya nobilior
Grower: Cheryl Adamson



Phalaenopsis Tying Shin Blue Jay
Grower: Bob Lucas



Rhyncholaeliocattleya (Rlc) Sung Ya Green
'Mailman'
Grower: Heather Anderson



Phragmipedium Eugene Conroy
(*longifolium* x *wallisii*)
Grower: Mary Orchard



Laeliocattleya (Lc) Orglade's Grand 'Yu-Chang Beauty'
Grower: Pat Randall



Phragmipedium Dominicanum 'Bob
Mac' AM/AOS
Grower: Bob Lucas

AOS Pacific Northwest Judging Centre (Richmond)
Orchid Society of Alberta Show Judging Results April 7, 2017
Photography by Judith Higham and Ed Higham



***Paphiopedilum* Krull's Pride 'Tall Tales' AM/AOS 83pts**
(*Paph. Shin-Yi's Pride* x *Paph. rothschildianum*)
Exhibitor: Paul Paludet



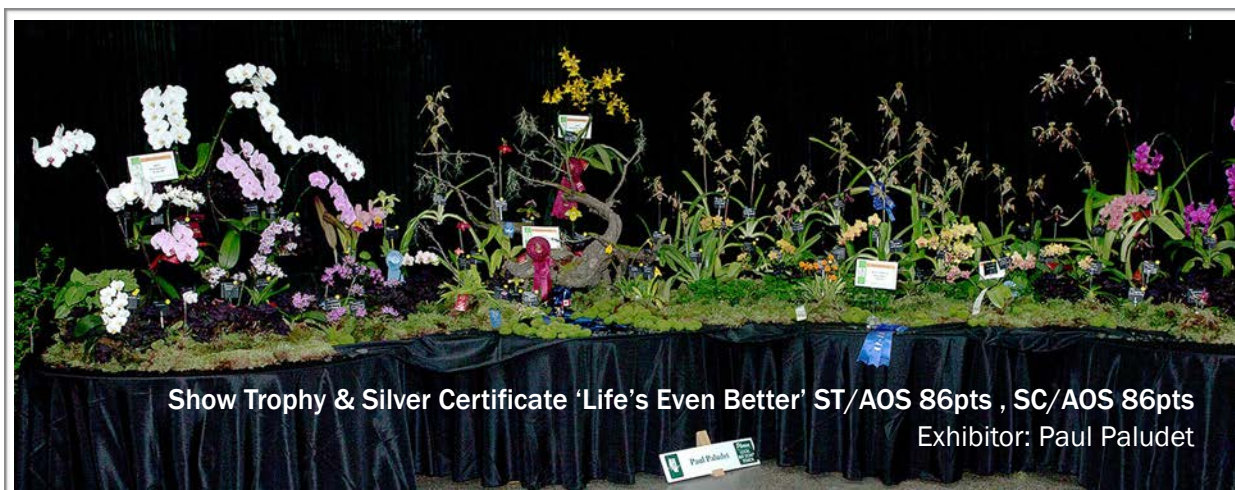
***Phragmipedium* Red Flare 'Elizabeth' AM/AOS 83pts**
(*Phrag. Green Hornet* x *Phrag. Memoria* Dick Clements)
Exhibitor: Bob Lucas



Artistic Certificate 'The Orchid Tree'
AC/AOS 86pts
Exhibitor: Dale Cote



***Dendrobium* Little Green Apples 'Wild Glory' AM/AOS 82pts**
(*Den. Green Elf* x *Den. convolutum*)
Exhibitor: Jean Tarr



Show Trophy & Silver Certificate 'Life's Even Better' ST/AOS 86pts , SC/AOS 86pts
Exhibitor: Paul Paludet

What Orchid Mix Do I Need?

Article written by Gordon Heaps, Orchid Society of Alberta and reproduced here with his permission.

Choices of orchid mix are plentiful, as orchids will grow in almost anything (except soil). Questions you need to ask yourself before deciding on a specific type of mix include the following. Keep in mind that most orchid failures relate to overwatering.

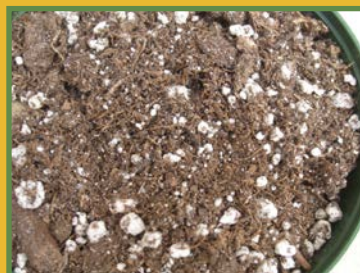
1. How frequently do I want to water?
2. What type of orchids am I growing? Do they have fine or course roots?
3. What are the general conditions that my orchids require? Do they naturally prefer wet or dry conditions?

My experiment with orchid mixes and the different combinations of ingredients was a simple format. Each mix or ingredient was given the same amount of water, temperature and light.

1. *Dry each sample ingredient and measure its weight.*
2. *Saturate the sample for 48 hours.*
3. *Drain off and measure the excess water. Measure the pH of each sample.*
4. *Dry each sample in greenhouse temperature of 20C.*
5. *Record number of days before sample dried and watering would be necessary. (Keep in mind that nothing was growing in the samples so the drying periods were by evaporation only). Measure the weight.*

The following results are for the most commonly used orchid media. These results are listed in order from the longest drying out period to the shortest drying out period.

1. **Sphagnum moss** (packed) held moisture until 26 days before it needed watering. The samples I used had a pH of 6.0, which is slightly acidic but acceptable. The packed sphagnum also absorbed the most water of all the media. A very good choice for orchids but be careful of overwatering. Note: Loose sphagnum took 15 days to dry out. Recommended with caution.
2. **ProMix** (a commercial peat-perlite mix) under my conditions, was ready to be watered after 21 days (yes, that's 3 weeks). The pH was 6.6, which is great for orchids. As overwatering or too frequent watering will cause problems, this mix is not recommended for beginner growers. Not recommended.
3. **Coconut coir** is available in compressed packages that are a reasonable size to work with. It too 18 days to dry out. A pH of 6.5 was very good but the pH changed to 7.8 after drying. That's not good - too alkaline! I have tried coconut coir for several different genus, but found a problem with overwatering and mushy mix even though I was trying to be careful. Not recommended.



4. **Gordon's Fine Mix** (40% medium bark, 40% sponge rock, 20% fine gravel) took 9 days to dry out. The pH was 5.8, which is slightly acidic but if you are using city water with pH 7.2, there will not be a problem. I have used this mix successfully for all my fine-root orchids, most Oncidiums, all Masdevallias and other miniature orchids. Recommended.
5. **Gordon's Coarse Mix** (40% medium bark, 40% sponge rock, 20% medium lava rock) took 9 days to dry out and had a pH of 6.2, which is good for most orchids. As with other bark mixes, this mix will have to be saturated before potting or watered daily for the first week after planting to get the bark to hold water. This is a very easy mix to use, almost impossible to overwater as the water runs through it. I have used this mix successfully for many years. Recommended.
6. **Wilgro Medium Mix** is currently available at our orchid show and most horticultural supply stores. This mix did not hold as much water as I expected, drying out in 5 days. The pH of 6.5 is great for orchids. The Wilgro mix is similar to mine, without the lava rock. Note: The **Wilgro Fine Mix** is also very good for miniature orchids. Recommended and readily available.
7. **Premium Tech ProMix**: Until I started this experiment I had not seen this mix, which is available at many supply stores. The bark in the mix is poorly graded and of poor quality so it breaks down quickly. The mix did not absorb much water when saturated and it dried out in 3 days. The pH of 6.5 is good. If you use this mix, repot your plants every 6 months because of the bark breakdown. Not recommended.



MAKE YOUR OWN ORCHID MEDIUM

There are many choices for developing your own orchid mix. Following my experiment investigating pH, water absorption and drying time in various media, I recommend the following components. As you read this, always remember that overwatering is the number one cause of orchid death.

SPHAGNUM MOSS with its pH of 6.0 is good form most orchids. The drying time after absorbing 750ml of water was 26 days. To decrease this time, modify the moss with sponge rock, pumice rock or lava rock. Recommended.



MEDIUM BARK is bark chunks of Douglas Fir with a pH of 6.0. It absorbed a surprising 650ml of water in my experiment and dried in 5 days. To increase drainage, decrease drying time and add air to the roots, try my mix of 40% medium bark, 40% sponge rock and 20% lava rock. Recommended when modified.



FINE BARK - I use fine bark for orchids with fine roots. This fine fir bark has a pH of 5.0, which is definitely on the acidic side for orchids. Fine bark dried out in 9 days. Adding modifiers like sponge rock and fine gravel will raise the pH to an acceptable level and decrease the drying time. My mix is 40% fine bark, 40% sponge rock and 20% fine gravel.



SPONGE ROCK (coarse perlite) is probably the most used modifier as it holds some water and improves the amount of air around the plant roots. The pH is 7.4, so is quite alkaline. It absorbed 490ml of water in my research, then dried out in just 5 days. When combined with bark or sphagnum moss, the drying time increases as noted above. Note: sponge rock is used extensively in horticulture as a rooting agent. Recommended as a modifier.



PUMICE ROCK (available from Wilgro Products) is a good modifier (use medium size only) with an alkaline pH of 7.4 and a drying time of 7 days. Note: fine pumice rock did not work well in the mixes I tested. It sank to the bottom and formed a sludge. Recommended as a modifier (medium size only).



LAVA ROCK is a good modifier when added to coarse bark and sponge rock. I use 40% medium bark, 40% sponge rock and 20% lava rock. The pH of lava rock was 7.2 in my experiment and the drying time was 8 days. The tiny holes in lava rock hold water and increase air around the roots. Note: Vandas and Angraecums like to have just lava rock around the roots, allowing air circulation and some water. The Vandaceous orchids like to grow through the lava rock so the roots hang below the container for access to lots of air. Recommended as a modifier.



ORCHIATA is an orchid medium from New Zealand. It is pine bark, available as coarse or fine chunks. It has received rave reviews in various orchid magazines. So far I have not tested Orchiata in a mixture or by itself, but I plan to do so soon.

Have fun with your media, try different mixes and combinations, but remember - do not replant all your orchids in a new mix until you have tested a sampling for several months!

- Gordon Heaps