

EWA ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

ALOHA AND WELCOME SPRING!!!

Once again it's that time of year when the Board of Directors is starting to plan for our Annual Orchid Show. It may seem early but there is a lot of planning to get accomplished. Not the least of which is signing up to work at one or more of the various tasks that are essential to a successful show.

We are scheduled for July so put on your thinking caps and check your calendars to see when and how you can best help!! We will be handing out sign up sheets within the next few months. Help is needed in the kitchen, for set up and break down, Host and Hostesses, sleep over personnel, etc. We have some old faithful that will take over the key positions, members of the Board who are the ones in charge. Many hands make light work so don't be bashful.

I didn't receive any requests for specific information and many of the questions from last November were similar in nature. Most of the things requested have been provided either by our expert speakers or in past Newsletters. If you are a new member it is important that you learn the "how to's" and the best way to do that is by experimenting. There is no one single answer to your questions. All the success with growing orchids depends on how you work within your specific environment. Ewa Beach and surrounding Leeward towns are drier than the Windward side so adjustments have to be made. Another factor is related to the amount of shade you have available and the type of orchids you grow. Specific plants have different requirements of light, water and fertilizer and even different hybrids vary in their specific needs. Any information shared is to count as a guide only, what works for you may not work for others.

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Information from experts who report to the AOS Newsletter.

The first is from Jim Connell who lives in Florida and has been raising orchids since 2007. He offers the following advice:

- a. Create a 3 X 5 card file on each orchid. Start with one or two and add gradually. Any new plant should have a card from the beginning. On the card put the name, cross, cost, and source (grower, gift etc.) On the reverse side I write when it flowered last, the date, repot date, and any notes related to the plant
- b. DO NOT over water. The amount of water needed depends on the media used. Rocks require more frequent watering than sphagnum moss. This means monitoring the plants.
- c. When you repot, clean up the root system. You need to cut off the dead roots to prevent root rot and disease.
- d. Repotting into a larger pot and keeping everything clean is of utmost importance. Use newspaper so that each plant can have a clean sheet.
- e. Plant the orchid at the same depth as it was growing and do not leave large air pockets in the medium. There is some controversy on the subject of air pockets. However, you will be safe if you use caution and limit the air pockets around the roots.
- f. Keep Rubbing Alcohol (70%) handy and if you are dealing with a diseased plant or one you suspect might be diseased, wipe all surfaces with alcohol.
- g. You may spray the cleaned roots with RD20, an algicide to limit black rot.

Tom Mirenda from the Smithsonian Institute offers the following information.

- a. In Hawaii, it is almost impossible to alter the temperature to make the nights cooler for our plants. However, the longer daylight hours has an effect on the plants so it is essential to be aware of the light needs of your collection. Each species has different requirements and the only way to be sure is to experiment in your own yard.
 - b. Watering needs vary with species and season. Many need water withheld in order for the plant to bloom. Some do better when completely dry and still others require more frequent water. Arrange your plants so that the dry are separated from those that need more water and plan to be more diligent when spraying.
 - c. Cattleya, cymbidium, paphilopedilum and nobile-type dendrobium should be ready to bloom in early spring.
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Questions and Answers from the AOS Journal. Questions are submitted by members and answered by experts in that particular area.

Q: My cymbidium bloomed last March. What are the chances that it will bloom again in March in time for the flower show?

A: Chances are good for March bloom. Cymbidiums need fertilizer to bloom but you can't control the bloom with fertilizer. Most standard cymbidiums require a temperature differential in order to bloom. That means that there should be a 20-25 temperature differential between day and night. Flower spikes set in late summer or early fall when the temperature differential is more critical. Light is another factor that effects the blooming of cymbidium. Enough light to provide a soft yellow green foliage rather than a dark green of most other species. For information on fertilizer check

www.oruideas.com/growing/cymbidium.html

Q: I have phalaenopsis that are oozing sticky, sweet droplets on the underside of the leaves. What is going on?

A: If the droplets are at the tip or base of the leaves, not to worry. This is excess plant fluids being secreted by a healthy orchid plant. Caution is needed to be sure this doesn't attract ants, aphids or mites. Spray the plant with 70% alcohol should solve the problem and keep other insects away.

Q: I understand that a fungus is the cause of black or brown spots on my phalaenopsis flowers. How can I control this problem?

A: This fungus is everywhere and is the cause of the "grey mold" that grows on strawberries and causes the berries to rot. The spores need a lot of free water to germinate. The best way to avoid this problem is to prevent even a slight film of water on the plant especially at night. Recommend to water early in the day and to avoid the damp leaves over night.

Q: My plants get covered with insects, especially ants. How can I control this?

A: Drench your plants with a solution of neem oil and safe soap. Plants can be soaked for up to an hour to control the insects. You may use a harsher solution but most are dangerous to humans and pets. If you decide to use a stronger solution, be sure to read the label and follow direction strictly!!!

Some new items:

A. IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2011, NOW IS THE TIME. BE SURE TO SEE BARBARA YOUNG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MARCH IS THE DEADLINE FOR 2011.

B. Mary Bicoy, our Chair of the Aloha Committee, is still on the Mainland. In the interim Adele Mitchell will assume the duties.

BE SURE TO LET ADELE KNOW, EITHER BY EMAIL OR PHONE, OF ANY MEMBER OF THE EWA ORCHID SOCIETY SHOULD RECEIVE A CARD. Cards will be sent promptly as soon as Adele is notified of any problem for the member or their family. I need to know what the problem is: illness, hospice, hospital, death, anniversary etc. It would also help if their address is included. Mahalo!

C. We are collecting money for school supplies for the Ewa Elementary School. Any time you care to contribute the monies can be given to Pete Domingo, our Treasurer.

Be sure to label what the money is for so you can be credited with the donation.

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Our March meeting included some beautiful plants for Show and Tell. Please bring your plants for show or if you are having a problem with a specific plant. Our experts may be able to help you.

President Roy gave a slide show on judging and the rigorous program required to be a judge. Congratulations Roy for taking on the task!

Next meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2011 at Ewa Elementary School on Renton Road in EWA. Meeting time: 7 p.m.

Come and be prepared to sign up for one of the duties needed for the July Show.