



February 2016 Newsletter



Greetings!

Thanks for taking the time to check out our newsletter!

Enjoy!

Message From the President

What makes you buy the plants that you buy, other than Karma or everyday addiction issues? This crossed my mind as I entered the Tamiami Orchid Festival. Usually I am drawn to plants with an abundance of roots and foliage. I was new to orchids then and had no idea what the flower would look like and didn't care. I was captivated by the promise that the buds would turn to flowers. Now with many years of experience, I know to look farther. Experience

has taught me what orchid genres I can successfully grow in our hot humid summers and chilly seasonal winters. Those I look for are the Brassavola crosses (BLC, BC), Dendrobiums, and the Cattalayas. There are many branching crosses and renames. It helps to ask questions of the nursery owner.

Now that I am mounting more plants, I tend to search for those with a root mass that has overgrown its container or hangs off a mount. Any root outside the pot is healthier than those in the pot and will generally do very well mounted on something. If you look carefully, you can find what they call overgrown plants in 4 inch pots with roots pushing the plant out of the pot. I usually don't look at the flowers, just the sides of the pots. If a sample is present the bloom can convince me to buy. Sales at the vendors' greenhouses offer the best shots at finding the root monsters.

Color is another factor I hear about and even hear about that certain person who only buys red flowering plants. That can't be true, can it? The most important factor in buying plants should be your ability to match the plant to your growing conditions. A pool cage cries for plants that crave light. Porches and covered areas tend to favor the shadier orchids. If you have a greenhouse, you don't need me to tell you any of this because you can create all the zones you need. But we all know that the real reason we are going to buy the plant is that it delivers the WOW factor. Never underestimate the WOW factor.

This month's speaker is **Prem Subrahmanyam**. I will include a bio for him below:



Prem is a true Florida native, having been born and raised in the Tallahassee, Florida area, before moving to Orlando with his family in 2005. He's been studying Florida's native orchids for more than 30 years and is renowned for his presentations at native plant and orchid societies across the state. He makes his living as a software engineer and is also a graphic designer and 3d computer animator. His free time is spent photographing native orchids, growing his own collection of (legally purchased) orchids, developing his orchid-related websites, and collecting fossils or geocaching. Prem is an award-winning photographer and his works have appeared in various magazine publications, textbooks, educational displays, orchid society newsletters, and brochures. In October 2009, his article on *Epidendrum magnoliae* was published in *Orchids - the Bulletin of the American Orchid Society*. His photos were also used in the *Illustrated Dictionary of Orchid Genera*, Jay Pfahl's *Orchidspecies.com* website as well as in PBS website content for their *Nova* series. Prem will dazzle and inspire us with his beautiful photographs and hopefully share a few of his discoveries, although the exact locations usually remain a deep secret. Some of his earliest finds were located less than 15 minutes from his home. If

we're fortunate, Prem will bring some of his photographs and other orchid-related items for sale.

Bus Trip

The January bus trip was a huge success. Thanks to our Naples Orchid Societies , we filled the bus. Talks have begun for the May bus trip to the **Redlands Orchid Festival**. **We have reserved a bus and will be taking reservations at the next meeting.**

Hope to see you all at the February meeting.
Happy Growing

Barb Murza

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 6-7 is the **Venice Area Orchid Society Annual Show** and sale. This show is held at the Venice Community Center, 326 S. Nokomis Ave. Venice FL . This is a great show to attend. It is less than an hour away.

Feb 13-24 is the **Edison Garden Festival** and sale. This is held at [Edison Ford Winter Estate](#) 2350 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33901.

Feb 12-14 is the **Greater Orlando Orchid Society Annual show** and sale. This show is held at the Orlando Garden club, 710 East Rollins St. Orlando, FL.

Feb 26-28 is the **Naples Orchid Society 2016 Orchid show**. The show will be at the [Naples Botanical Garden](#), 4820 Bayshore Drive , Naples, FL

May 15-17 is the **Redland International Orchid Festival**. The festival will be at the [Fruit & Spice Park](#), 24801 SW 187th Ave., Homestead, FL. **RESERVE YOUR SPOT ON THE BUS THIS NEXT MEETING!**

Dying Orchids

Experienced hobbyists have learned a lesson over the years that

many newer hobbyists do not like to hear. If an orchid wants to die, don't spend a lot of time trying to save it. This is often a hard lesson for new growers who just spent what seemed like a large amount of money for a gorgeous orchid plant in flower or for some unusual



species that a speaker was selling. The fact is that once an orchid plant starts "toward the light" it's hard to stop it. Also, growers with many plants want to remove that potential carrier of disease from the growing area as well as spend their limited time on other orchids that are growing well.

There are times, however, when you just are not willing to let an orchid die. It might be a very rare and hard-to-find orchid, or it might be the first orchid you purchased. Just about everyone has "nostalgic" orchids in their collection. While difficult, orchids headed toward that great mulch pile in the sky can often be brought back. Here are some of the tricks of the trade.

Before reading this, remember that orchids do not have immune systems like animals. Treating orchids requires that you understand and take advantage of the mechanisms that orchids use to fight disease and pests.

Instead of moving disease fighting cells to the infection like we do, orchids instead separate healthy cells from unhealthy cells by building walls between healthy and unhealthy tissues. Infection of a plant has an entry point every time. This fact can be as important in treating an orchid as the diagnosis.

The first step is coming up with a diagnosis. If you can see where the problem started, there is an excellent chance that the plant can be

saved. Often, the tip of a leaf or a new growth turns black indicating where the rot has started. If there is healthy tissue on the rhizome or at the base of the leaf the orchid can generally be saved.

Most fast acting diseases are caused by bacteria. If bacteria have penetrated to new growths or reached the center of a phal or vanda, it is often too late, but it can be worth a try if it is a very special plant. My first tactic is to remove all of the black or dead tissue, which requires removal of the plant from the pot. Totally wash all media from roots. I use a small jet from a hose to wash the orchid. Next, I spray the entire plant with household hydrogen peroxide. Then, place the plant on a newspaper in a spare room where there is plenty of air movement and little humidity. The main point is to kill the bacteria and stop the infection.

Check the plant each morning and night before bed for any soft or watery spots and remove any you find followed by spraying the new wound with hydrogen peroxide. Your plant should remain dry and will look desiccated. Avoid the temptation to mist. If after a week no new rot spots have appeared and the orchid is green, you have a chance to save it. Put the plant at the bottom of a new clay pot and set it in a shady part of the greenhouse. At this point, I will move it out when I water because I do not want the plant to get wet until I see signs of growth. When new roots or leaves appear, water it. Once roots begin to attach to the pot, gently place a small quantity of media in the pot and leave it alone until it is clear that the orchid has resumed growing. Next move it back to the proper light level. If caught early, an orchid with rot can be saved.

Renew your membership to the Southwest Florida Orchid Society !

___New

___Renewal

Date:

___Single (\$25.00)

___Household (\$35.00)

Name:

Street Address:

City: _____ State _____ Zip

Phone: _____ Alternate Phone

E-mail _____

Cool Weather

Cool weather is here for most of us. South Florida is experiencing lower daytime temperatures and cool nights. The shortening day length and cooler nights initiate all sorts of changes in your orchids.

Many fall blooming cattleyas are getting ready to bloom and buds are swelling in their sheaths. *C labiata*, *C bowringiana* and the fall blooming form of *C skinneri*, and their hybrids typically have double sheaths. It seems that the big change in day to night temperatures can cause moisture to accumulate between the inner and outer sheaths causing buds to rot. Watch these orchids carefully and be sure there is lots of air movement around these orchids. If you observe any moisture accumulating, carefully open the outer sheath and allow air movement into the space between sheaths. That usually solves the problem.



Vandas are known as heat-loving orchids, but have always bloomed better for me in the fall and winter as long as temperatures do not get below 60 F and there is enough light. Colors are always brighter when nights are a little cooler. This is especially true for any Vanda or Ascocenda with Vanda coerulea in the parentage.

Phalaenopsis require a significant day to night temperature change to initiate spikes. It usually takes a couple of weeks of these conditions to get all of the phals in a greenhouse to put their energy into growing spikes instead of leaves. Phals will be fine on a porch or in a greenhouse even after nights are in the upper 50s F as long as the day temperature rises above 80 F. Once daytime high temperatures are below 78-80 F, phals need to be kept no lower than 60 F at night.

Paphs and phrags really seem to love the cool nights too. Mature growths, especially in the multifloral paphs will prepare to flower. Usually development of new growths is the first sign that a flower spike will soon emerge.

Essentially, I stop fertilizing cattleyas (except seedlings) starting in October and reduce watering frequency, but not watering intensity. Less light and heat each day means that orchids dry out less rapidly. Pay careful attention to periods of clouds and rain, which can also lead to less need for water.

Some books recommend switching to high phosphate fertilizers for phals, paphs, vandas, and other orchids that do not have a rest period before flowering. For years I did this, but finally decided that maintaining a high nitrogen fertilizer gave me better flowers and more of them. Because watering is reduced and fertilizer is provided with each watering, there is a reduction in fertilizer, but that is the only change.

Cymbidiums are not widely grown in the Deep South, but can do well here. If you have some of these genera, now is the time to move

them into increased sunlight. Best results occur when Cymbidiums are kept under heavy shade during the intense summer heat. Now, give them a good shot of fertilizer and slowly move them into the sunlight. Unless you have one of the tropical forms, they can take temperatures near freezing and seem to bloom best when they have a light frost on their leaves at sunrise. Once you see bloom spikes emerging, protect them from extreme cold until they flower.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!



OFFICERS 2016

PRESIDENT Barb Murza

VICE-PRESIDENT Gary Murza

TREASURER Michelle Schooley

RECORDING SECRETARY open

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Lia Andrews

WEBMASTER Pam Hyyti

TRUSTEES

Jan Colbet, John Hampton, Steve Bessellieu,
Carol Worrell

COOKIE BAKERS: Rich Gamauf, Vicki
Cosgrove, and Gloria Haston

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 9th

Board meeting @ 6pm
Culture Class @ 7pm Meeting
@ 7:30pm

Bring a friend to come
enjoy our club.

Visit our website at:
www.SWFOS.org

CLEAN UP: Edward McCoy