



AOS Awards of Distinction

American Orchid Society awards are intended to recognize and reward persons who have rendered meritorious service to the organization in various capacities. Thoughtful consideration should be given to all nominees and to the services rendered, regardless of personal likes and dislikes.

1. Nomination Procedure

Any AOS member may propose a candidate for any of the following awards except the President's Award; that nominee is selected solely by the sitting President. Nominations should be supported by written documentation of the candidate's record of achievement appropriate to the suggested award (Item 2 below). All proposals should be forwarded to the Awards Committee chair for review for completeness and subsequent consideration by the Executive Committee, and upon their recommendation, sent to the Board of Trustees for vote. All nominations should be handled with the utmost discretion by everyone involved to consider/spare feelings and ensure the award be a surprise to the candidate. If successful, the award would be presented at one of the semi-annual meetings of the Society.

Please note that nominations for sitting Trustees and staff will not be accepted. Recognition of employees' achievement is made through the annual employee performance review process which is conducted by the President at the end of each calendar year.

2. Documentation required to support a Nomination

In order to provide a measure of consistency and sufficient information to make an informed decision, each nomination should contain the following information:

- Name of person nominated
- Name of award under consideration
- Rationale for the award (what the nominee did, reason for the commendation, why performance merits recognition)
- Supporting background that gives perspective regarding the award (nominee's history in the AOS or elsewhere, length of membership, type of service, skills brought, etc.)
- History in orchids, (how long, local or regional service, etc.)
- Comparisons, if relevant, with previous awardees which provide perspective on the merit of the nomination
- Any other relevant supporting information.

3. The AOS Awards

Gold Medal

The Gold Medal is the highest honor of the Society which recognizes persons of extraordinary dedication to the ideals and aims of the Society in addition to distinguished work, over a period of many years, in orchid culture, scientific research in orchids or for outstanding service to the orchid community and AOS organization. No recipient may receive more than one gold medal in a lifetime.

Silver Medal

The Silver Medal recognizes a specific, singular exceptional contribution of outstanding service to a major project of the AOS and/or orchid community.

The AOS Medal for Excellence in Hybridizing

This award, granted by the Trustees on the recommendation of the Executive Committee honors the lifetime achievements of a living orchid hybridizer. This individual's career should demonstrate a substantial impact on the orchid industry or an understanding of orchid genetics based on the hybrids created.

Honorary Vice President

This honor is awarded to a former officer or board member of the AOS in recognition of long-standing, consistently superlative, ongoing service to the organization. Such individuals may be considered a "national treasure" who have the capacity to share extensive corporate knowledge, experience, decision making, and integrity which may be tapped to help guide the existing organization, as desired by the current Executive and Board.

The Thomas Sheehan Award for Outstanding Service by an AOS Volunteer

Named in honor of Dr. Tom Sheehan—dedicated professor and tireless AOS volunteer, judge and international ambassador—this award recognizes and applauds a member who has demonstrated sustained and exemplary volunteer service that leaves a lasting positive impact on the AOS. Having quietly cultivated a proven history of commitment to the AOS, award winners possess a record of advancing its mission through unique volunteer contributions and extraordinary long-term support of its programs and events. Current officers and trustees will not be considered for this award.

Ambassadors Award

This honor is awarded to an individual in recognition of outstanding, consistent and tireless contributions in promoting the AOS. This award recognizes outstanding volunteer service of an individual as an Ambassador for the Society, carrying out the goals and aims of the AOS in the orchid world at large. Recognition is intended for the recipients' lifetime of activities as an "Ambassador." It shall be awarded solely to AOS members and may be awarded to an individual no more than once.

AOS Fellow

Fellows of the American Orchid Society may be elected by trustees in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the scientific, horticultural advancement of the Orchidaceae.

Certificate of Meritorious Achievement in Orchid Education

This award is presented to an individual for long-standing, exceptional endeavors in the field of orchid education.

AOS President's Award

This award is granted by the President to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the AOS. It is initiated by the President and approved by the Executive Committee.

Certificate of Recognition

A certificate of recognition may be awarded by the Board to an individual who has completed a period of significant volunteer service to the organization, for example as a measure of thanks for service to outgoing Executive, Board or Committee members. It may also be granted as thanks for completion of a specific and significant task within a Committee.

In addition, the AOS grants additional specific awards which are managed elsewhere in the organization:

Special annual National Awards for the best in flower quality and botanical recognition are managed and awarded by the Judging Committee and published annually in Orchids magazine. A list of the awards and related information are given in the AOS Judging Handbook.

AOS Conservation Recognition Award and the **Philip Keenan Award for Native Orchids** – are given through and evaluated by the Conservation Committee.

Distinguished Affiliated Societies Service Award (DASSA)

The DASSA award recognizes long-term meritorious service by an affiliated society to the American Orchid Society and to members of the Affiliated Society. Nominations are evaluated by the Membership and Affiliated Societies Committee and recommended to the EC and Board of Trustees for final approval.

The Dillon/Peterson Essay Prize is well-described and is primarily handled by the Editorial Committee of the AOS with no approval from the board of trustees required.

4. Presentation of Awards

Presentation of awards will be made at semi- annual meetings of the members of the Society in so far as possible by the President or his designate.

Notes:

1. The BOT agreed that two awards be retired as they have not been granted in some time and have been replaced by other awards, so are redundant. These are the **Honorary Life Member** and the **AOS Achievement Award**, both now covered by **the Silver Medal**, or **the Ambassadors Award**.

2. The Governance Committee thanks Peter Furniss, and Donna Craig who prepared the initial draft version, July 8, 2005 upon which this document is based.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 31, 2016

**Amended and approved by the Board to add the Tom Sheehan Award
October 27, 2016.**

**Amended and Approved by the Board to clarify eligibility for awards, August
23, 2018**