



Let's Grow Together!

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**THE OCTOBER 2019 AOS CORNER** – From the desk of Denise Lucero, Vice Chair, American Orchid Society Affiliated Societies Committee ([Affiliated Societies@AOS.org](mailto:Affiliated_Societies@AOS.org)).

**For newsletter editors:** *Orchid societies are welcome to reproduce the AOS Corner in whole or in part, in their society newsletters. We encourage promotion of AOS website use by your members.*

#### **AFFILIATED SOCIETIES**

We are happy to welcome our newest affiliated society, Worcester County Orchid Society. They are located at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, MA. You are not going to want to miss the exciting event planned for February and March in the Arboretum. We wish them great success. Also, if you're in the area on the 1st Saturday of any month at 1:00 pm, you can stop by for a visit to the AOS Northeast Judging Center to attend and participate in monthly AOS judging.

**Last chance...** Make sure that all members of your society know that they are welcome to join us at the AOS Fall Members Meeting. The Trustees of the AOS and its Standing Committees meet twice each year in the spring and fall. This fall's meeting, which is hosted by the East Everglades Orchid Society, is being held October 16th – 20th, 2019 in Homestead, Florida. The Affiliated Societies Committee will meet Thursday morning, October 17th and we welcome you to join us. We always want to hear how we can better support your society. Registration is still open so get signed up for the meeting and make your hotel reservation while space is available. It's not too late to join us but rooms are going fast!

Selected events in addition to the East Everglades Orchid Society Show - 'Fall in Love with Orchids' include:

- Meet & Greet
- AOS & Ribbon Judging
- Bus Tour to Everglades National Park, Alligator Farm and Airboat Ride (Ticketed)

event)

- Annual fundraising auction
- Meeting of the Members, “State of the AOS,” Judges elevations
- Lecture Series & Speakers discussion
- Tropical buffet dinner, cocktails & entertainment (Ticketed event)
- For additional details (including menu), visit: <http://www.orchidseeos.com/aos-bookings/>

You can click the link below to register online, or if you would prefer to register by mail, you can send a check payable to the East Everglades Orchid Society to the following address:

**Donna Taylor**  
9975 SW 196 Street  
Miami, FL 33157

Here’s the link: <http://www.aos.org/news-and-events/members-meetings.aspx>

Make sure not to miss the President’s message in the October issue of ORCHIDS magazine. Susan Wedegaertner discusses planning care for our orchid collections when we are unable to. Whether it’s a greenhouse emergency at a time you can’t get there, the simple inability to no longer properly care for your precious orchids, or the death of another society member who could have a collection that includes rare plants, do you have a plan? Susan asks that you email your ideas or plans to save our precious collections to her email at [Susan@aos.org](mailto:Susan@aos.org). Hopefully, we can collect enough suggestions for an article in ORCHIDS to aid us all to conserve those orchids in greenhouse collections when situations arise.

We’re always looking for ideas to bring kids into the world of orchids. While planning your next orchid show don’t forget to check out the AOS Kids Corner for ideas. Here’s the link to the main page: <http://www.aos.org/orchids/kids-corner.aspx>. See other articles for instructions on how to create activities we’ve tested out or make up your own great activities. Please share your ideas and experiences with the Education Committee at [education\\_committee@aos.org](mailto:education_committee@aos.org).

Thanks again for all the pics that you are sending in for the Instagram feed. Our Instagram Administrator, Candace Hollinger, sends her appreciation to you all. It’s wonderful to see such a variety of everything orchid that’s enjoyed around the globe. Please remind your members that we would love pics of how they grow, what’s blooming now or anything they love about orchids. Please continue to send your photos and short videos to: [americanorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:americanorchidsociety@gmail.com). Be sure to send a short caption explaining your photo. Also, if you are bilingual and can include your caption in English plus your other language(s)—it will help with our universal outreach.

Remember to check-in on our Facebook Group Page for Affiliated Societies of the American Orchid Society. The response has been great, many thanks to all of you who

added pics of show banners. We can all learn from what has been successful for other societies. Let us know how your show went, and what was successful for you, or what didn't quite make the mark. Our administrator, Chad Brinkerhuff, monitors the feed and is a great resource for all that the AOS has to offer. Keep us up to date on what's going on at your local society and let us know how we can help you.

Don't forget to check out the [List of Speakers](#) to help you plan society meeting programs. You will now find the Affiliated Societies link on the home page under the "About Us" heading.

And... **Here's a link to check it all out** - <http://www.aos.org/>

## **CULTURE**

### **Orchids on the Half-Shell by James Massay originally published in ORCHIDS – November 2014**

#### Oyster Shells as Orchid Mounts

"If only it were as easy to grow orchids as it is to raise oysters . . . !" How many times have I repeated this complaint over the years? Raising oysters has been a hobby of mine almost as long as I have been struggling with orchids. A possible intersection of the two endeavors struck me three years ago when a woman in my local orchid society, not knowing that I raise oysters, happened to tell me she was looking for some large oyster shells on which to mount orchids. I laughed and said, "I'm your man." After that, of course, I became interested in raising orchids on oyster shells myself. I always like to make good use of everything available, so this seemed like a very good purpose for my numerous shells.

There are several advantages to using oyster shells for orchid mounts. The shells are very inexpensive (usually free) and readily available in areas where oysters flourish. In contrast to other mounting materials, they are durable and not subject to decay. Two elements needed by orchids, calcium and nitrogen, are present in the shells and provide slow-release nourishment for the plants. The orchid's roots find a place on which to anchor themselves on the rough surface of the shell. When in bloom, an orchid presents a striking appearance on an oyster shell.

Like many other orchid growers, I mix crushed oyster shells with potting medium to provide nutrition for plants that are not mounted. Also, to ensure good drainage, I place whole oyster shells instead of packaging material in the bottoms of pots. This seems to me to be a more natural and beneficial method than using synthetic packing peanuts, as many growers do.

If you don't live on one of the coasts, you can obtain oyster shells inexpensively by simply buying some oysters still in the shells and having a feast before putting the

shells to work. Another option would be to stop in a restaurant that serves oysters-on-the-half-shell and ask for some of the shells. I always clean my shells with a pressure washer to remove the salt. You could accomplish the same result by soaking the shells in fresh water to get rid of the salt and then scrubbing them with a stiff brush. Orchids are mounted on an oyster shell the same way as on any other mounting material. You can use either the smooth side or the rounded side of the shell, depending on your preference and the size of the plant.

In nature, oysters frequently make the defensive move of bonding to each other. In the past, I would divide oysters that were bound together. Now, I leave them alone and hope they will get bigger—together. Two conjoined oyster shells make a wonderful mount. People have accused me of gluing two shells together; however, conjoined twins are, in fact, just a lucky find in my oyster float. I have given several people in my local orchid society oyster shells to use, and some have had success with them. My own best results have been with hard-cane dendrobiums. I should add, though, that I always get my best results in any growing medium with these dendrobiums. Some cattleyas I have put on oyster shells look healthy and promising, but they are not yet big enough to bloom. I am continually experimenting with different orchids to see if they will thrive on oyster shells.

Old farmers used to say that when they butchered hogs, they used everything except the squeal. Oysters don't squeal, but they do squirt water. If you eat an oyster and mount an orchid on its shell, you can use everything except the squirt!



Mounting complete. A dendrobium plant with sphagnum moss around the roots. I tie the plants to the mount using strips of recycled pantyhose. It is easier to tie than monofilament fishing line and will not decompose for long periods in the sun.

— Jim Massay is an AOS member living in Yorktown, Virginia, and is a member of the Peninsula Orchid Society of Virginia. 111 Faulkner Road, Yorktown, VA 23692 ([jimmassay@cox.net](mailto:jimmassay@cox.net)).

#### **UPCOMING WEBINARS**

It's easy to find the scheduled webinars and to register on the AOS website. You'll find the link under the [All About Orchids](#) tab. If you check there, you will find any webinars that have been scheduled after the production of this monthly Corner.

**American Orchid Society: Greenhouse Chat with Dr. Ron McHatton**  
**Thursday, October 3rd, 2019 @ 8:30-9:30 EDT**      **Public**

Please join Dr. Ron McHatton, AOS Chief Science Officer, as he answers your questions about all things orchid. He will discuss a variety of topics on orchid culture based on questions submitted by attendees. Please send your questions and pictures

to Sandra Svoboda at [greenhouse@aos.org](mailto:greenhouse@aos.org) by Tuesday, October 1st. Please remember to include pictures as well.

**Register now using this**

**link:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1567490565018905091>

**Conservation & Ecology of Western North American Cypripediums with Tara Luna**

**Monday, October 7th, 2019 @ 8:30-9:30 EDT**

***Members only***

Please join us for a webinar with Tara Luna, field botanist, ecologist and an AOS grant recipient, as she discusses the Yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) found in a range of mesic upland and groundwater fed wetlands in Western North America from Alaska to New Mexico and Arizona, including three botanical varieties: var. pubescens, var. makasin and var. exiliens. Throughout its western North American range, this species is rare and is often found in range restricted or groundwater dependent habitats.

**Register now using this**

**link:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2321741246359376130>



*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens* 'MoJo' AM/AOS; Photographer: Katie Payeur

**Note:** After registering you will receive a confirmation email information about joining the seminar.

**WHAT ARE WEBINARS?** Webinars are an Internet conference where you can hear the speaker and view the presentation, ask questions, and hear interactions from other members of the audience. You can join either on your computer or by phone. You can join from anywhere, via your Mac, PC or even your mobile device. Audio is included, so attendees can phone in or use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). You will need a microphone for your computer to use VoIP.

**WANT TO LEARN BUT CAN'T MAKE THE DATE?** The live webinars will be recorded and posted on the AOS website, where you will find a link allowing you to view the webinars at your convenience.

**THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF ORCHIDS MAGAZINE** This is the month in which our annual Supplement is included. This year's subject is the vast and beautiful Oncidium Alliance. The supplement and the issue itself are chock full.

- Genus of the Month - The true miltonias by Tom Mirenda
- For the Novice - Those fall and winter preparations by Sue Bottom
- New Refugium Botanicum - TBD
- Orchids Illustrated - *Catasetum* by Peggy Alrich and Wesley Higgins
- The *Catasetinae*, Part 3 - Breeding with Goblins (*Mormodes*) by Fred Clarke
- Vanilla in Puerto Rico by Paul Bayman
- *Miltoniopsis* by David Rosenfeld



Miltoniopsis Maui Tropical Sunset 'WOW' AM/AOS; Photographer: Maurice Marietti

**YOUR SOCIETY CAN EARN FREE AOS MEMBERSHIP EXTENSIONS:**

Upcoming shows are a good time to encourage new membership to AOS. Affiliated societies can now earn a one-month extension of their AOS society membership for each new AOS member that they refer (note: membership renewals don't count). Make sure to note your Society Affiliation in the comments section of the application.

*With twelve new AOS members, your affiliated society can have a FULL YEAR OF FREE AOS membership!* Be sure to have membership applications with your society's name already filled in and available at your club meetings!

Remember to let your members know, we want to sweeten the deal and give them every possible reason to join AOS today! If they become an American Orchid Society member, they have considerably more resources at their disposal making growing orchids even more enjoyable and successful.

Digital Access to Over 350+  
past issues of Orchids magazine extending back to 1932!

### **ALSO FEATURED IN ORCHIDS MAGAZINE!**

16-page award gallery of breath-taking pictures of recently awarded orchids.



Phalaenopsis LD's Bear Queen 'Alma' AM/AOS; Photographer: Judith Higham

### **RECENT ORCHID AWARDS PICTURES ON THE AOS WEBSITE:**

See fabulous pictures of the most breathtakingly beautiful orchids receiving awards from the AOS! Visit the new "[Latest Orchid Awards](#)" page on the AOS website to enjoy these stunning photographs! Click on the thumbnails to see them in larger format. Free to members and non-members.



Cattleya pumila 'Mirtha Isabel' AM/AOS; Photographer: Glen Barfield

Let's grow together,  
Denise Lucero

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