



AOS Volunteer Awards for Outstanding Service

American Orchid Society awards are intended to recognize and reward individuals who have rendered meritorious service to the organization in various capacities. Thoughtful consideration should be given to all nominees and to the services rendered.

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) and supported by at least three nominators.

Forward all proposals to the Awards Committee chair for review by the Committee for completeness and subsequent consideration and approval by the Board. All nominations should be handled with the utmost discretion by everyone involved to consider/spare feelings and ensure, to the degree possible, the award be a surprise to the candidate. If approved by the Board, the award will be presented at one of the semi-annual members' 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

To provide a measure of consistency and sufficient information to make an informed decision, each nomination should be presented on the attached application form and contain the following information:

- Name of the individual 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, if relevant, (how long, local or regional service, etc.),
- Comparisons, if relevant, with previous awardees which provide perspective on the merit of the nomination,

- The names and contact information of at least three nominators,
- Any other relevant supporting information. If photographs are included, please identify them with a title and include photographer credit.

3. **The AOS Awards**

Gold Medal

The Gold Medal is the highest honor of the Society which recognizes individuals 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, education, conservation and/or 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 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.

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. The nominee demonstrates 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, or horticultural advancement of the Orchidaceae.

Certificate of Meritorious Achievement in Orchid Education

This award is presented to an individual or individuals 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 and announced by the President.

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 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 Awards for the best in flower quality, culture and botanical recognition are voted on at the fall members meeting by the Judging Committee and confirmed by the Board of Trustees. They are then awarded once annually by the AOS at the Spring meeting of the AOS members and published 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 and evaluated by the Conservation Committee and presented to the Board for final approval.

The Certificate of Recognition for Advancement of Research in an aspect of orchidology which significantly extends knowledge of the Orchidaceae. It will be considered by the Research Committee and nominations will be presented to the Board for approval.

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 Affiliated Societies Committee and recommended to the Board for final approval.

The Dillon/Peterson Essay Prize is given to the winner of the annual orchid essay contest, organized, advertised, and managed by the Chief Education and Scientific Officer, (the CESO), and the Editorial Committee chair of the AOS. No approval from the Board is required. The winning essay is published in ORCHIDS magazine.

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/her designate.

5. **Chair and Committee procedures**

The Chair will:

- be nominated by the President and approved by the Board. The nomination will be based on experience and knowledge of the work undertaken by member volunteers,
- serve one term of two years followed by a second term as advisor to the committee to provide continuity after which he/she will no longer be eligible to serve,
- ensure, as much as possible, representation by region of the members of the committee,
- schedule and hold regular meetings of the Committee, several times per year,
- appoint a secretary from the Committee members to keep and distribute minutes of meetings to Committee members and the Board,
- set out the awards schedule and adhere to it,
- provide progress reports to the President and Board, as requested, and in advance of semi-annual meetings of members,
- act as the Committee liaison with the Board and other committees, in particular the Education, Conservation, Research and Affiliated Societies Committees to coordinate nominations and announcement of awards.
- be responsible for announcements of the awards and publication and posting of Awards.

The Committee will,

- consist of six members, not counting the chair, representing different regional areas of the membership, to serve one two-year term, drawn by the President and Chair from the Board and membership. Three will be elected in one year (for a two year term) and three in the next, staggered to provide continuity in the Committee. They must have several years of service within the AOS such that they can knowledgeably evaluate award nominations.
- agree to meet on a scheduled basis several times a year to review, obtain Board approval and have awards ready for presentation at annual meetings of members.
- actively search for, solicit, and recommend possible award candidates
- exhibit a national rather than regional focus when proposing awards.
- respect the confidentiality of award nominations before and after awarded.

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 Ambassador 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.
3. The Honorary Vice president award has been retired as it duplicates the Gold and Silver Medals and the Thomas Sheehan award. February 24, 2022

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 31, 2016

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

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

Amended and Approved by the Board to clarify award criteria/procedures February 24, 2202

Amended and Approved by the Board to retire the Honorary VP Award February 24, 2022