

HODOS Newsletter

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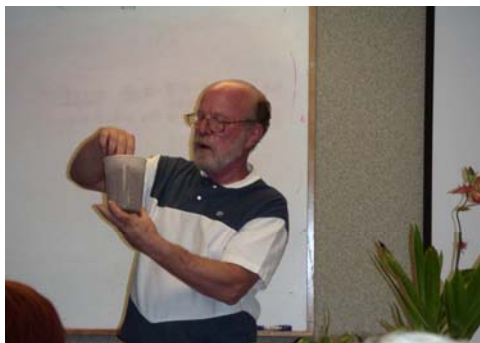
Hydroponics and Orchids

Inside this issue:

<i>September Announcements</i>	2
<i>September Show and Tell</i>	2
<i>Show Time in Birmingham</i>	3
<i>Birmingham Awards</i>	4
<i>About Town in Birmingham</i>	4
<i>Spotlight on Coelogynes</i>	5
<i>What's Blooming in ...</i>	5

Hydroponics is a method of growing plants without soil. It offers a number of advantages to hobby and commercial growers: it eliminates soil-borne pests and diseases, the plants require less space, and the system can be automated readily. In September, Rick Hertz and Reggie Wright talked to us about the hydroponic method they use to grow orchids. Rick spoke to us first about how he began searching on the Internet for the best medium for growing orchids. After digging through the hits, he became interested in a technique called semi-

hydroponic orchid culture, promoted by First Rays Orchids. The technique uses PrimeAgra, which is a spherical ceramic medium, and clear plastic pots



Rick Hertz shows us his semi-hydroponic potting media, in a clear deli container.

can buy custom pots, but Rick and Reggie make pots from readily available containers, including Tupperware! Potting with PrimeAgra is pretty straightforward - pour the medium around the roots (medium should be soaked before potting), and shake the pot to get the medium into the root ball. Culture is simple too. Water the pots from the top, filling them up and allowing the water to drain from the holes in the side. Rick has an in-home growing setup that allows him to water his plants without moving them, and volunteered to come back to another

(Continued on page 3)

Dates to Remember:

- Monday, October 16th 6:30 PM - HODOS October meeting at the Botanical Garden
- October 20th - 22nd, Northeast Alabama Orchid Society Show, Anniston Natural History Museum, Anniston AL
- November 9th - 12th, Atlanta/South Metro Orchid Societies Show, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, GA
- Monday, November 20th 6:30 PM - HODOS November meeting at the Botanical Garden.

All About Dendrobiums in October

The October meeting of the Heart of Dixie Orchid Society will be Monday, October 16th, at 6:30 PM in the Visitor Center classroom at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. We'll have a special guest speaker this month - Mickey Connell from Ringgold, Georgia. Mickey and his wife Leslie have been coming to our show for many years, and we're all looking forward to seeing them again. Mickey is

going to be talking about dendrobiums. They are one of the most widely grown orchids, but not everyone is aware of how much variety there is in the genus. We can all learn more about this fascinating group of orchids. Refreshments and raffle plants will be provided by Marion Fallon and Ann Ivey, so you know we'll

have a wonderful selection of both! Hope to see you there.



Marion Fallon's Dendrobium Twinkle was a big winner in Birmingham.



September Announcements

Area Shows: Carey and Brigitte Brooks put up the HODOS exhibit in Nashville, Ann Ivey, Tish Hall, and Deb Delmas put up the exhibit in Birmingham. Additional plants for both shows were contributed by Fred and Mary Kaufmann, Bob and Marion Fallon, and Reggie Wright. Thanks to everyone for their help!

Tish, Ann, and Deb will also put in our exhibit at the Northeast Alabama Orchid Society show in Anniston, and Tish and Ann have volunteered to do the exhibit in Atlanta. If anyone would like to help carry plants to or from either show, and/or help setup, please get in touch with them. They'll also be needing plants for both shows.

Our Show: Show chair Deb Delmas got a great deal at the

Mid-America in Lexington on large Purple Clay orchid pots to use as trophies in our spring show. These are the beautiful Oriental-style pots that everyone loves! You can donate one



An assortment of Purple Clay pots, showing some of the colors available, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the product.

of the trophies at our show with a \$25 contribution. Get your name to Deb early, and you can have your trophy go to your favorite type of orchid.

It's time to start working on publicity for our show. If any-

one is interested in working on the publicity committee, please let Deb (deb@delmasfamily.net) know.

Membership: Don't forget to let Tish (tish@tishathome.com) or Amanda (hodosmember@aol.com) know if your address, phone or email changes, so we can keep the directory and mailing list up-to-date.

Refreshments and Raffle plants: Many thanks to everyone who brought raffle plants in September. We went from no plants to an overflowing table! We still have some meetings with only one volunteer for refreshments, so if you haven't signed up yet, please see Deb about helping out with one of our meetings. Raffle plants can be donated at any meeting.



Excess supplies can also be donated to the raffle. The two bags of Styrofoam peanuts were quickly snapped up in September.

Many thanks to Mary Kaufmann, our new VP, for the terrific programs we've been having!

Let her know if there's a topic you're interested in seeing, or talking about yourself.

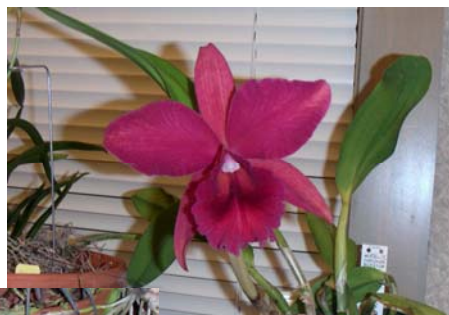
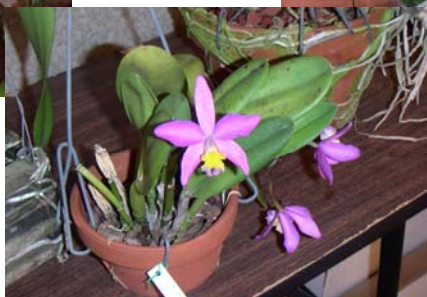
September Show and Tell

It was Cattleya night in September, not surprising since fall is

ers below belong to the appropriately named Lc. Tiny Treasure 'Star Amethyst'. And the large and colorful bloom on the right belongs



one of their peak seasons, and many other types of orchids aren't blooming. The beauty above with the colorful lip is Blc. Mem. Vida Lee 'Limelight'. The dainty flow-



to Pot. Rebecca Merkle 'Sangre de Paloma'. Plants from our exhibit in Nashville also graced the show and tell table, and Reggie brought in a fascinating catasetum species.



New member Rosa Blair brought in a lot of the show and tell plants. Here she is talking to the society about her C. Belle Meade.

Hydroponics and Orchids continued

meeting and explain it to us. Orchids growing in PrimeAgra don't need to be watered as often as you might think, usually on the order of ten days to two weeks. They do need to be fertilized regularly. First Rays uses a very dilute solution of Dyna-Gro fertilizer with Superthrive (a vitamin/hormone supplement) added.

Reggie brought pots and media for any of our members who wanted to give semi-hydroponics a try, and shared some tips with us. He has a large greenhouse with an automated system that is admired by everyone who has seen it. One tip is when you

switch a plant to this method, let the roots grow into the water at roots are put into the water they'll die. Another thing



Paphiopedilum hybrids happily growing semi-hydroponically. Note the holes near the bottom of the plastic deli containers.

Reggie noted is that the PrimeAgra medium can be reused, if it is soaked in a sterilizing solution. A good thing to know since orchid media is not cheap!

Reggie also noted that this method works for many other types of plants. He brought in an African violet happily growing in the same medium as the orchids, and says that it's great for growing tomatoes!

For more information, see the First Rays site at

www.firstrays.com.

the bottom of the pots. If the



Reggie brought in this Catasetum sacca-tum species and let us take it to the Birmingham show. It's growing in a basket with cypress mulch and perlite. These are the male flowers of this fascinating orchid.

The next orchid show in our area is the Northeast Alabama Show in Anniston, followed by the Atlanta/South Metro Show in Atlanta. These are the last two fall shows near us, so you might want to try to make it to one or both.

Show Time in Birmingham

Ann Ivey, Deb Delmas and I headed off to Birmingham on September 22nd to put in an exhibit for the Alabama Orchid Society Show at the Birmingham Botanical Garden.

It was a terrific show, and our exhibit did very well. The exhibit took a blue ribbon and trophy in its class, while individual plants collected 8 blue ribbons, 4 red, and 3 yellow. Marion Fallon received a Best of Class for her

Dendrobium Twinkle, and Ann received a Best of Class and Best Slipper award for her Paph. Schaetzchen. Fred and Mary

5. The AOS Show Trophy and Orchid Digest trophy went to



Kaufmann won the IPA trophy for their Phalaenopsis pantherina species. Both plants are pictured in the "What's Blooming..." column on page



this lovely display by Mickey and Leslie Connell. Placed atop a pedestal, it looked like a giant flower arrangement from a distance.

It was another beautiful fall show, and I hope many of our members had the opportunity to go down and see it.



The Atlanta Orchid Society put in this cute display honoring the recent landing of the Space Shuttle. They also included a plastic bag, like the one suspected of delaying the shuttle landing!

Tom Nasser Takes the Awards in Birmingham

Tom Nasser says he doesn't go to a lot of orchid shows these days, but I'll bet he was glad he went to Birmingham! There were a number of plants pulled for AOS judging at the Birmingham show, including some from our exhibit, but only four AOS awards were given out, and three of those went to Tom and Shan. One of those was an AM of 83 points to this Cattleya hybrid - C. Mark Jones 'Carmel'. It was indeed a gorgeous plant, and quite different for Tom, who is known more for his unusual species. The smaller Eria bicolor on the right is more what

we expect from Tom. It received a CHM (Certificate of

award for a huge Coelogyne fimbriata. Look on page five for a picture of that. The last award was an AM of 82 points to the Wilsonara



Horticultural Merit) award. Tom also received a culture



Downtown Honolulu 'Huina Road' shown above. As you can see, it made a beautiful display against the black backdrop.



Here are some of the wonderful plants being brought into the judging area at the Birmingham show.

About Town in Birmingham

Well, we're still missing Mark when we go to the orchid shows! Not just in setting up the display, but also in visiting the local area. As a former Birmingham resident, he always knew good places to go for food, some off the beaten path. Since we didn't have him this time, Deb and I did our best to find a cool spot for Friday night. After web searches and conversations with friends, we finally decided on Ocean, in Birmingham's trendy Southside area. We knew it was a good pick when we couldn't get a table until 10:00. After a hard day setting up our display, it was terrific to unwind in Ocean's undersea atmosphere.

Cool blue lights and a waterfall behind the bar contributed to the watery effect. The food was fabulous. We sipped cool blue martinis and enjoyed a range of



appetizers. Ann and Deb sampled the seafood, while I nibbled wild mushrooms and Alabama goat cheese. Yum!

But the highlight of our visit

had to be the trip to the Penzey's Spice store in Inverness (even Atlanta doesn't have a Penzey's store). After judging on Saturday, Ann, Lydia Merkle, Phyllis Bailey, and I followed Deb and her cousin from Birmingham to the shopping center. What a great store! Every spice you could think of, and a few we never heard of, all fresh and fragrant. I wound up with a pepper mill and three different kinds of black peppercorns. All of us came out with shopping bags, recipe cards, and current catalogues. Check out the website at www.penzey.com, and don't miss the store if you're in Birmingham.

The Spring Mid-America is not until April 27th of next year, but organizers are warning that those planning to attend should make hotel reservations soon. The event is in busy and popular Chicago. Go to the Mid-America web site for more information.



We highly recommend the blue Ocean Martini. Potent, refreshing, and definitely colorful!

Spotlight On ...Coelogyne

Coelogyne (pronounced see-LOJ-in-ee) is a large genus of perhaps 150 species from Asia. It grows from India to the Pacific Islands, and up into southern China. Coelogyne species grow at many elevations, so warm, cool, and even cold-growing types can be found. There are even Coelogyne species native to the Himalayas. Most of them grow as epiphytes, and like moist and somewhat shady conditions.

The plants have short pseudobulbs, topped by one or two soft leaves. Some are quite large, and all are robust growers, spreading out quickly to fill a pot. The flowers are large

and showy, usually borne on long inflorescences, and usually appear in the spring. Most of



them are not brightly colored, but two popular species, this pandurata and the similar mayeriana, are bright green with striking black markings. Al-

most all of the Coelogyne species have fragrant flowers, but the fragrance is not always pleasant!

Coelogyne species are readily available. The warm and intermediate growers do best in our climate. Those include pandurata, mayeriana, speciosa, and fimbriata. They like bright filtered light, and plenty of moisture during the summer when they're actively growing.

They're not deciduous and don't need a winter rest, but you should cut down on watering in winter to encourage flowering.



This huge specimen of Coelogyne fimbriata took a blue ribbon in the specimen class, a Best of Class award, and an AOS cultural award. It was grown by Tom and Shan Nasser of Carolina Orchids.

What's Blooming in ...

... Birmingham? A nice variety of orchids at the Botanical



Garden. You've already seen some of the award winners, here are a few more nice ones. The Paph. Schaezchen (you'll have to get Brigitte to pronounce it properly for you!) above belongs to Ann Ivey. It garnered a special award for best slipper orchid in the show, in addition to a blue ribbon and a best of class award.

The neat blooms below belong to Holcoglossum kimballiana, which belongs to David Mellard of the Atlanta Orchid Society. It's a Vanda relative, but it comes from higher elevations and likes cooler



temperatures than we normally think of for vandaceous spe-

cies. The cute Phalaenopsis pan-

therina species above belongs to Fred and Mary Kaufmann. It received a special award from the International Phalaenopsis Alliance (IPA) in addition to its blue ribbon. This species is similar to the more often seen cornu-cervi.

These plants were all considered for AOS judging, though none of them received an award. Maybe next bloom!

What's YOUR favorite orchid?

Send some pictures and I'll put it in the spotlight! Or let me know what you would like to see featured, and I'll look for pictures, or even come to your place and take them.



This is another species, Cynoches cooperi. Hard to get to a show with the dangling inflorescence, but this one made it in good shape.

Heart of Dixie Orchid Society

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«AddressBlock»

We're on the web at:

<http://www.h-o-d-o-s.org>

The Heart of Dixie Orchid Society works to promote and educate the general public on different orchid topics ranging from care to conservation.

The group meets at 6:30 PM on the third Monday of the month at the Huntsville/Madison County Botanical Gardens.



HODOS

Upcoming Orchid Shows and Events



Northeast Alabama Orchid Society Show **2007**

October 21 - 22
Anniston, AL

Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society Show

October 21 - 22
Cincinnati, OH

AOS Fall Members Meeting

November 3 - 5
St. Louis, MO

Atlanta and South Metro Orchid Societies Show

November 10 - 12
Atlanta, GA

Southeastern Flower Show
February 7 - 11
Atlanta, GA

South Carolina Orchid Society Show

February 9 - 12
West Columbia, SC

North Carolina Piedmont Orchid Society Show

February 28 - March 4
Charlotte, NC

Miami International Orchid Show

March 2 - March 4
Miami, FL

Heart of Dixie Orchid Society Show

March 24 - 25
Madison, AL

Northeast Louisiana Orchid Society Show

March 30 - April 1
Monroe, LA

Deep South Orchid Society Show

April 10 - 13
Savannah, GA