

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

- Why do we have orchid shows?
 - To present our flowers (and plants) for judging
 - To attract and educate the public
 - To bring in orchid vendors
- What are we trying to do with an exhibit?
 - Present flowers at their best for judging
 - Please the public
 - Interest potential buyers

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

- What types of exhibits are there?
 - Educational (usually science or horticulture)
 - Orchid-related arts and crafts (original or collected)
 - Orchids in flower
- Exhibits of orchids in flower:
 - May be of cut flowers or blooming plants, but not both
 - May not contain non-orchid blooming plants

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- Options for the exhibit space:
 - Size (25 square feet or less, 50 square feet or less, more than 50 square feet)
 - Floor or tabletop
 - Free standing (walk all the way around)
- Be sure to ask for anything else you might need, like power or a backdrop or skirt
- Props using water may not be allowed

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- Things you will need:
 - Display props of various heights on which to place your orchids
 - Materials to create and attach labels to your plants with orchid names
- Things you may want:
 - Back drop
 - Floor covering
 - Pot covers

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

- Greenery
- Decorative props
- Lights
- Handy supplies:
 - Plants stakes, ties and clips
 - Scissors and clippers
 - Thumbtacks or pushpins
 - Tape and paper clips (for entry tags)
 - Spray bottle and water

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- Display props
 - Plant stands (graduated sizes)
 - Baker's racks, etageres, corner stands
 - Bookshelves (graduated width)
 - Tables (decorative or meant for covering)
 - Decorative trunks and boxes
 - Large driftwood branches
 - Artificial rocks

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- Crates and boxes used to transport plants, covered in black cloth
- Baskets and empty pots turned over to make short stands or adjust heights
- Label making materials
 - Construction paper, card stock, blank business cards in neutral color (black is popular)
 - Pen or pencil with sharpener (white, silver or gold for black labels)

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- Label maker (can take a while to make and peel off labels)
- Computer and printer (don't get inkjet labels wet)
- Floral picks with card holder, or wire holders to display label
- Scotch tape to attach labels directly to plant
- Note that shows using electronic registration may supply labels instead of entry tags

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- Backdrops
 - Tall folding screens for floor displays, short decorative screens for tabletops
 - Tall plant stands like baker's racks covered with cloth or greenery if necessary
 - Black cloth attached to a scaffolding (can be made with PVC pipe) or directly to a wall
 - Sturdy backdrops can be used for hanging plants in baskets or attaching lights

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- Floor covering
 - Seagrass, bamboo or other patio rugs
 - Indoor/outdoor carpet (not my favorite)
 - Mulch (kind make from recycled tires is good)
 - Green sheet moss for naturalistic exhibits
 - Draped black cloth (need large pieces)
 - Can add edging for finished look
 - Thick rope, wood edging
 - Brick or stone pavers, large stones

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- Pot covers
 - Give the exhibit a more uniform look
 - Cloth pot covers or pieces of cloth in neutral colors are the most flexible options
 - Baskets are attractive and are very handy for large and/or unsteady plants
 - Cache pots can be used on exposed pots for a decorative look
 - Greenery, green sheet moss, and Spanish moss can be used to mask pots as well

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- Greenery
 - Can be used to fill in holes in the exhibit, even out height, define edges, create a backdrop
 - Handy for separating problem colors
 - Must not be anything blooming
 - Need an assortment of heights
 - Commonly used plants include ferns of various sizes and types, ivy, and tropical houseplants like schefflera

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- Decorative props
 - Usually contribute to a theme
 - For a garden setting - bird bath, fountain, gazing globe, garden statuary
 - For a natural setting – stones, animal props
 - For an indoor setting – books, objects d’art
 - Should not be the first thing you notice
 - Decorative props are part of the setting, not the focus

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- Lights
 - Very helpful in a low light or fluorescent light setting
 - Need to provide warm or natural spectrum
 - Need to be adjustable to spotlight appropriate areas and avoid shadows
 - Can be clipped to backdrop or stand alone
 - Don't forget extension cords

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

- Setting up your exhibit
 - Set up your backdrop (and floor covering unless it's black cloth)
 - Record and register your plants and make labels
 - Identify one or more orchids that will be your focal point(s)
 - A focal point should draw the eye into an exhibit
 - Determine where to place your focal point(s)

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- Setting up your exhibit (continued)
 - Organize your colors around the focal point(s)
 - Group similar colors together (avoid the polka-dot effect)
 - Try for a “flow” from color to color
 - Avoid putting clashing colors together
 - Use multi-colored flowers to transition between colors
 - Use white or off-white flowers or greenery to separate problem groups or individuals

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- Setting up your exhibit (continued)
 - Place your plants, working from the back
 - Flowers should not block other flowers
 - It's like setting up a class picture, you have to get all the faces showing
 - Plants should be placed at a height that is appropriate for their flowers
 - Orchids with downward facing flowers, pendant spikes, flowers that hide under the leaves should be placed high
 - Orchids with flowers on top or facing up should be placed lower

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- Miniatures can be grouped together at the front of an exhibit, or hung on other plants
 - Try to keep them from getting lost
- Arrange display stands or other props as you go to get the best flower placement
- Put on pot covers, add labels and entry tags before placing plants
- Stake flower spikes before placing
 - Only use stakes when necessary for support
 - Make sure stakes and ties or clips are not obtrusive

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- Setting up your exhibit (continued)
 - Add greenery to backdrop or tall stands at the back as you go, fill in with more when finished
 - Greenery in front can cover stands and give a finished look
 - Set up lights last and adjust
 - Light from above the flowers to avoid shadows
 - Highlight bright colors
 - Don't forget to register the exhibit!

Creating an Orchid Exhibit

- A few last tips:
 - Height is good, and if you get cramped for space you can go as high as you like
 - Step back from the exhibit periodically while you work and get the overall effect
 - Make sure you look from every angle, an exhibit against the wall can still have an exposed side
 - Have things you can use to make small height adjustments
 - Empty pots, boards or pavers, newspaper padding