
ORCHID SOCIETY OF MAURITIUS

Newsletter — June 2023

web site: www.orchidmauriti.us.org

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Message du Président

Au début du mois de mai de cette année, a eu lieu le lancement des deux derniers volumes d'une longue série de publications scientifiques sur la flore des Iles Mascareignes (Maurice, Réunion et Rodrigues). L'initiation de ce projet remonte à 1970. La dernière famille de plantes étudiée concernait les orchidées. Ces deux ouvrages constituent une source de documentation sur la taxonomie, la répartition géographique ainsi que l'état des populations de ces 170 espèces recensées dans ces trois îles.

Les membres se sont réunis le vendredi 12 mai au Cercle de Rose-Hill autour d'une présentation sur la fertilisation des orchidées et avec le traditionnel Mini-Show.

Nous projetons une activité un peu spéciale pour la fin du mois d'août qui combinera une exposition d'orchidées et un cocktail anniversaire. Le lieu ainsi que d'autres détails vous seront communiqués sous peu.

D'autre part, nous souhaitons organiser une sortie dans la nature pour changer. Nous travaillons sur le projet et nous communiquerons à ce sujet dès que possible.

Au début du mois de décembre nous maintiendrons le traditionnel repas de fin d'année.

Nous espérons vous voir nombreux lors de ces activités. A bientôt.

Members Jewels posted in May 2023



Grower: Jacqueline Wing



Grower: Gerard Leung



Grower: Gerard Leung



Grower: Krishna



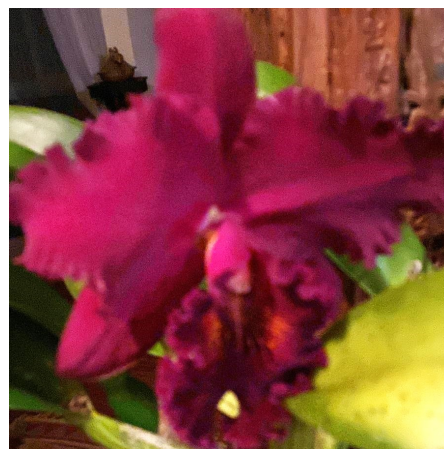
Grower: Jérôme Nieva



Grower: Joseph Sam Soon



Grower: John Hunma



Grower: Shahrukh Bundhun-Puddoo



Grower: Gerard Leung

Cultural Tips

Staking orchid flowers

The advent of long nights will promote flower initiation in many orchids that we currently grow. A well know example is the *Phalaenopsis*. This is why we used to hold our annual orchid show at the end of September or early October.

Its time to get ready to train and support the new inflorescences, so that when they are fully open, their overall presentation will be at their very best.

First of all, bear in mind that the flower or inflorescence will tend to grow towards a bright source of light. You need to pay attention to this when the flower stem elongate, especially if the plant has a front side. Its not advisable to do so once the buds start to form.

Staking is an other option and for optimum effectiveness, it should start long before the flowers open. The best time would be after the flower stem has fully elongated, but before the buds become well formed.

The type of staking will vary according to the type of orchid, as well as its growth habit. Some will have a front side; others may have pseudobulbs or canes which could be vertical, angled or horizontal. Knowledge of the characteristic of the flower and also the expected habit and arrangement of the inflorescence can guide you in your choice of staking.

You may use plastic-wrap wire or bamboo skewers as the case may be. It may help to make a u-shaped hook at the top end to support an inflorescence. Use twist ties to fix the stem onto the support.

Sometimes, for a short stemmed inflorescence, in the *Cattleya* alliance, you can modify the angle of the pseudobulb to which it is attached in order to improve flower presentation.

Growing vandas successfully

Vandas are monopodial orchids which grow vertically. A well grown plant should have leaves all the way down to the base of the stem.

Vandas grow best under high light and plenty of moisture. They need to be fertilized regularly to support their active growth.

If they are grown in low light and too dry conditions they will lose their lower leaves and flower poorly.

Fungal spots on flowers

During the cool and damp season, orchid flowers are liable to be affected by a fungal disease caused by *Botrytis cinerea*. Brown spots will appear on all flower parts and proliferate very rapidly. The flowers will be ruined and short-lived and generate a lot of disappointment.

The best form of control is prevention, which involves good sanitation in the growing area, adequate air circulation and careful watering.

The pathogen thrives on dead and dying plant debris and fallen flowers. Removing them regularly will reduce the source of infection.

A stagnant and humid environment with inadequate air circulation will promote the development of the fungal spores. Increasing air movement and decreasing ambient humidity will minimize infection.

When watering avoid wetting the flowers, as far as possible. Water early morning so that plant and flower will dry out by nightfall.

Should the situation get out of control, you may consider the use of a fungicide like Thiophanate-methyl (Topsin) to prevent the spread of the disease. However bear in mind that in some circumstances (midday sun) some chemicals may damage the flower.

OSM members' meeting on Friday 12th May 2023

- ◆ **Talk by Serge L'Ecluse on Orchid nutrition, and**
- ◆ **Table display of members' blooms.**



What amount of N do we need?

- Research shows that orchids grow best within a range of 100 – 200 ppm (parts per million) of Nitrogen.
- Professional experience indicates 130 ppm as being optimal.
- In practical terms: how do we measure this amount:
 - 1 tsp/gal of 10 % N = 132 ppm
 - 1tsp (US Tea spoonful) = 5.69 grams
 - 1gal. (US gallon) = 3.785 Litres
- Hence 1 tsp/gal represents 1.5g per litre (metric)
- 1 rounded teaspoon = 5g

Concluding remarks on Orchid Nutrition

- ◆ **Feeding is necessary when growing orchids in our home or shade house environment.**
- ◆ **Nitrogen supply and sources require much attention**
- ◆ **Nitrate and ammonium forms are more easily assimilable than urea.**
- ◆ **Optimum level of N is 130 ppm**
- ◆ **Roots are the best route for nutrient absorption.**
- ◆ **Feed mainly with nutrient solutions at root level.**
- ◆ **Foliar application less effective for macro elements.**
- ◆ **Application of fertilizers immediately after watering is not the best approach.**



Le Président du Orchid Society of Mauritius recevant une copie des deux volumes de 'Flore des Mascareignes' du Dr. Jean Claude Autrey, le Directeur du projet Flore des Mascareignes.



Orchidées des Mascareignes

Les deux derniers volumes de Flore des Mascareignes, dédiés à la famille des orchidées, constituent un travail gigantesque et l'expertise des auteurs commande le respect.

C'est un ouvrage qui vient mettre en perspective les espèces menacées et fait une évaluation provisoire de leurs conservations au niveau mondial. Ces deux volumes constituent aussi une référence pour ceux et celles qui s'intéressent aux orchidées.

A savoir que dans les trois îles des Mascareignes (Maurice, Rodrigues et Réunion) la famille des orchidées comprends 165 espèces, réparties dans 40 genres différents.

A Maurice on recense 88 espèces, dont seulement 7 % sont endémiques.

Suggestion Box

You will recall the suggestion published on page 3 of OSM Newsletter 1st Q 2022 which referred to the setting up of an OSM Self-help project whereby members would pool together keikis, cuttings and seedlings resulting from the propagation of plants from their personal collection. The idea was to share them freely among fellow members.

A suggestion as regard its implementation would be to establish a 'Donation Register' to keep a record of what is available and once a year organize a 'Plant sharing event'. Of course it will involve mainly those orchid types that grow fast and multiplies easily. We all lose plants sometimes to pest and diseases and should welcome the possibility of getting back a specimen out of a collaborative action.

Renew your membership

The renewal of your membership signifies your continued interest and support to the Orchid Society of Mauritius. You may wish to simplify your life by having a Standing Order with your bank or make a bank transfer into OSM's account. Please contact the treasurer for bank details.

Your membership gives you the opportunity to meet with other orchid growers and to benefit from their experience. Talks and workshops led by experienced members provide additional knowledge and useful growing tips.

'Sharing the same passion can be fun when people meet'

Editorial team: Serge L'Ecluse, Shashi Puddoo, Gerard Leung For Sang and John Davy.

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