



# May 2007

# Newsletter

<u>Affiliations</u> American Orchid Society The Orchid Digest	<u>Proud Supporter of</u> Alzheimer's Association of the Central Coast
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<b>Newsletter Editor:</b> Chris Ehrler	

## Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will take place on May 10 with ORCHIDS 101 starting at 7:00 PM. Christina Holenda with potentially Eric's help will be the evening's Plant Doctor, so bring along your questions or plants you are having trouble with and ask for suggestions on how to grow them better. If you think your orchid has bugs and want to know what to do, please bring it in a plastic bag to lessen the risk to the other orchids.

Our general meeting will begin at 7:30 PM and the presentation will be by our very own Bob Asbell speaking on his favorite orchids, Cymbidiums. Those who have heard Bob know what a clear, easily understood speaker he is. This is a great opportunity especially for new growers, as Bob is very "user friendly", always free with growing guidance. Cymbidiums also offer the best opportunity for success for the average grower. Bob will of course be supplying the plant table from his nursery stock.

Bob's love affair with Cymbidiums began in 1962 -- that's 45 years ago! He's gained a lot of orchid wisdom through those years, formed friendships with the orchid world's leaders, and along the way served as the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show Chairman, in the mid '70's.

Bob will be our dinner guest before the show. If you wish to join us, call Eric at 929-5749 by Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup> at the latest. We will eat at the Arroyo Grande Quarterdeck at 5:15 pm.

Treat fairies are Jeffrey Thompson and Eric Holenda.

## President Corner – Chris Ehrler

I would like to start off by saying we had a number of firsts at the April meeting. To begin with we could not get into the Women's Club (I was told that has happened before) so Frank Madrid gave the first ever ORCHIDS 101 outside. He did a great job while wearing shorts and a tee shirt with a very cold breeze blowing. THANKS FRANK. Then we went on our first even evening field trip to the Arroyo Grande Fire Department so we would have a place for our meeting. MANY THANKS DANNY for getting us into the building on very short notice. Thanks also to the AG firemen that allowed us to barge in on them. This was the first time they have ever had a group of orchid folks show up. Thanks also to everyone that hung in there and were adaptable at initially standing in the cold and then moving with the group to the firehouse. I hope that if anyone showed up at the

Women's Club after I left that they saw the sign I left for them so they would know where we were hiding.

## Summary of the April meeting presentation

Our speaker Bryce Augustine presented an interesting discussion on Orchid Physiology. He was easy to understand but some folks probably got lost when he discussed his fertilizer system, so I decided to try to give a summary of some of the highlights of this talk including his fertilizer program. So here goes.

The quality of your water is important to the general health of your orchids. Roots gather both water and minerals. Plant chloroplasts trap the light energy and when combined with water produces chemical energy. Light intensity controls the plant's photosynthesis. During the night, the plant digests sugars that were made during the day and makes new plants cells. Leaf stomata, which are made up of 2 cells, open during the day and water vapor moves out of the open stomata. Availability of minerals affects your orchids growth rate. Magnesium is very important for photosynthesis. Orchids can take up more carbon dioxide for growth if the air is moving. Respiration that takes place at night is affected by air temperature. Need high enough temperatures at night to keep the chemical process going. He stated that the reason to water your orchids in the morning is so that the pot has time to warm up during the day so that respiration can take place at night. Air movement controls heat stress, transpiration and photosynthesis. Bugs love areas with little if any air movement. He suggested the following shade levels in your growing area: 80% shade cloth for Paphs, 60% for Catts and 50% for Cymbidiums. Bryce keeps the same shade cloth on his growing area all year round and does not remove it in the winter.

He suggests treating coco husk prior to use. Bryce said that the husk comes from Sri Lanka and although it says it is washed, it is washed in seawater and thus need to be washed to leach out the salts. He suggests soaking your husk in a mixture of 1 teaspoon (t) (not tablespoon) of Epsom salts and 1 t calcium nitrate per gallon of water. Soak over night and then dump off the liquid. This liquid will have a reddish to brown color. Repeat this at least two additional times or until the liquid you pour off is more or less clear. He suggested treating bark with the same process. He sifts his material prior to use and anything that goes through 1/8-inch mesh is discarded.

Bryce fertilizers as follows: He uses the following system from March 1 – August 31. Use Peters 20-10-20 at

1/4 t per gallon (50 ppm) for two (2) watering. On the third watering he switches to Epsom salt (magnesium chloride) at 1/4 t per gallon (35 ppm), and then on the fourth watering uses calcium nitrate at 1/5 t per gallon (27 ppm). On the next watering he start over again with the Peters 20-10-20. His only change for the rest of the year (Sept 1– end of Feb) is he switches to Peters 30-10-20 instead of the Peters 20-10-20. The ppm values above were given by Bryce and refer to the nitrogen concentration in your final solution.

When you switch to the Peters 30-10-20 you need to only use about 1/8 of a teaspoon (50 ppm). As these small quantities are difficult to measure I suggest you purchase

more orchids and then make up a larger quantity of fertilizer (say 5 gallons) so the measuring will be easier. If you are interested in calculating out the amount of fertilizer to use for fertilizers other than Peters with different concentrations to end up with Bryce's recommended concentrations for the fertilizers go to the following website ([http://www.firstrays.com/free\\_info.htm](http://www.firstrays.com/free_info.htm)) and check out the "Fertilizer PPM Calculator". There is lots of other interesting free info at <http://www.firstrays.com> so check it out.

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### Orchid Calendar

Dates	Event	Location	Comments
Thursday May 10, 2007	FCOS Monthly Meeting	AG Woman's Club 211 Vernon Street, AG	Christina and possible Eric Holanda will be Plant Doctor at 7PM for Orchids 101 to answer your orchid growing questions. Bob Asbell will discuss Cymbidium and how to grow them on the central coast. .
Friday-Sunday May 11-13, 2007	Mother's Day Orchid Sale and Raffle	Lakeside Garden Center, Lake Merritt, Oakland	Orchid Society of California's annual event. FREE admission. Culture and Potting Demos plus educational Displays. RAFFLE. More info at <a href="http://www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com">www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com</a> .
Saturday-Sunday May 12-13, 2007	OrchidMania's 18 <sup>th</sup> Annual Mother's Day Sale	Fort Mason on the San Francisco Waterfront	All the proceeds go to HIV prevention education and AIDS awareness and relief efforts. Lat year over \$20,000 was donated to grassroots organizations in California, Columbia and Vietnam. Open 10am-5pm on Saturday and 10am-4pm on Sunday. OrhcidMania is a California nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.
April 3 – June 3 2007	"Orchids of America" exhibit	Conservatory of Flowers Golden Gate Park, SF	See info on the Conservatory of Flowers website
July 13-15, 2007	Santa Barbara Orchid Estate Orchid Fair	Earl Warren Show Grounds Santa Barbara	Over 50 orchid vendors from around the world. Admission is FREE but parking costs \$5/vehicle. Fri-Sat from 9AM-5PM and Sun from 10AM-4PM. More info at <a href="http://www.orchidfair.com">www.orchidfair.com</a> or call 1-800-553-3387.