



February 2020 Newsletter

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to friends who might be interested in knowing about Five Cities Orchid Society and encourage them to subscribe at www.fcoss.org.

Our Speaker for February 13th is Bob Asbell, owner of Asbell Orchids in Arroyo Grande, CA.

Bob is a champion breeder of *Cymbidium* orchids and will share his wealth of knowledge breeding and growing these outdoor growing orchids for our Central California climate. Our meeting will start at 7:30. Details can be found on the Events page at www.fcoss.org. Join us for dinner with Bob at the Quarter Deck restaurant, 1500 W. Branch St., Arroyo Grande at 5:30 on Feb. 13th. [Confirm with Ed Lysek.](#)



Bob often shares his growing suggestions with our members by hosting Orchids 101 at 7:00 PM at our monthly meetings. A man of many talents, Bob grows a range of orchid types, including this robust *Cattleya*. Bob runs Asbell Orchids with the help of his two sons, Dan and Doug.



Board Meeting - Sat. Feb 8

Reminder: FCOS Board Meeting, Saturday, Feb. 8th 1:00 PM. All members are welcome. Alan Durham's house, 235 Cuyama, Shell Beach.

All Members are encouraged to attend the FCOS Board Meeting. See the website Events page for details. Your suggestions for future programs and priorities for FCOS are always welcome. Email [Jeff Parham](mailto:Jeff.Parham@fcos.org) with your thoughts if you can not attend.

FCOS was pleased to have Joe Ambriz speak to the society members about *Laelia anceps*. Joe owns and operated Ambriz Kingdom of Plants where he grows a variety of orchids but specializes in *Laelia anceps*, Tillandsia and succulents. *L. anceps* are temperature tolerant and can survive air temperatures from the low 30s F to low 100s. Flower color in this species can vary from white to pink and purple with the lip color often contrasting with the rest of the flower. He mentioned that for healthy pseudobulbs and flowers the plants need high light levels. If they have low light levels they will have floppy leaves (weak plants) and low flower count. Joe said that if you hold your hand 12-18 inches above the orchid you should see a distinct shadow. If the new leaves have reddish pigmentation they are getting a good light level and could have a high flower count. Where they grow in Mexico they are in full



sun and experience wet summers. They seem to grow well in California which has dry summers. Joe suggested that during our summer (growing season) we should water *L. anceps* in pots potentially 2-3 times per week. In Mexico they experience dry winters so in California you potentially will only need to water once per week for potted *L. anceps* and should let them dry between waterings. Joe likes to pot his *L. anceps* in clay pots with medium and/or large bark. He uses medium bark and some granite gravel in 4" pots and a mixture of medium and large bark with granite or black crush lava in 5" pots. He uses Nutricote and likes it better than Osmocote fertilizer due to the way it releases its nutrients when it is wet and does not depend on water temperature as the Osmocote does. He also applies a seaweed extract fertilizer and also a dilute solution of 20-20-20 fertilizer once per month during the growing season. He likes fertilizing using a Dramm siphon mixer to speed up the process. When transplanting his orchids, Joe places a few white Styrofoam peanuts in the bottom of the pot before adding the bark mixture. He does not use colored peanuts as he believes they have a chemical in them. He also suggests using granite pieces for ones with large pseudobulbs. He also has been using a recycled glass product that has holes in it instead of perlite. He purchased the glass product at a

hydroponic store but warns that the product is not well screen so there are generally large pieces in each bag. He likes Orchata but due to its higher cost he generally just uses regular bark. For plants with no roots he suggests planting in only granite as you cannot over water it as the granite dries more quickly than a bark mixture. He generally transplants his *L. anceps* in spring.

When mounting *L. anceps* onto wood he likes to use citrus or avocado as it is dense and holds up for many years. He uses cork oak slabs and when they grow off the top of the mount he just turns the mount upside down and it generally then grows up the other side of the mount. Prior to transplanting he puts the orchid into a bucket of water for about 10 minutes to soften the roots to decrease the chance of breakage. He first holds the orchid on the mount and figures out where it looks the best. He then drills a pair of holes thru the bark and uses zip ties to anchor it to the mount. He might need multiple pairs of holes and ties to securely hold the orchid in place based on its overall size. He then sometimes drapes a small amount of moss on the orchid to make it look more natural.

Strategic Plan Goals Exceeded

The Five Cities Orchid Society is still in year one of our Five Year Strategic Plan. One of our priorities is the need and opportunity to increase membership in the Five Cities Orchid Society.

The criteria established at the July FCOS Board Retreat was to increase membership by 15% over the next year, approximately 8 new members.

Advertisements were placed electronically in Nextdoor App and Facebook to gauge the interest of the local population in attending a daytime orchid meeting in Los Osos. The result was encouraging and over 40 people on the Nextdoor app expressed interest in attending. The Facebook advertisement resulted in a favorable 85 responses to hold a daytime meeting in Los Osos.

Subsequently, The Five Cities Orchid Society held our first membership drive and orchid meeting in Los Osos on Sunday, January 19, 2020 at CalCoast Orchids from 2-4 pm. There was a good turnout of about 49 people, with 39 of these being new guests.

We held a discussion on Phaleanopsis: the moth orchid and learned how to grow, bloom and rebloom these amazing plants. We were then given a tour of CalCoast Orchids Greenhouse Facility by the owner of CalCoast orchids, Bas van Eijk. Bas has optimized the conditions to grow and bloom over 300,000 orchids. Members and visitors brought refreshments and we held a raffle from plants donated by CalCoast Orchids. (Thank you, CalCoast Orchids!)

Many of those attending filled out New Membership forms. New members were given an orchid as their new member benefit for joining during this meeting. Memberships in the Five Cities Orchid Society are \$20 a year. We received 19 new memberships in conjunction with this outreach and membership drive. Facebook reported that 15 out of 63 interested people attended. Clearly there is momentum for continued growth.

The FCOS Board will discuss future orchid meetings and adventures and will decide whether to hold regular daytime meetings in Los Osos since there is such a large interest. We will send out notifications out in advance of a meeting time and place.

Do you Live in Los Osos and Need to Carpool to the next meeting? Call Jeff at 360-271-3971

Cymbidium Orchids: Secrets Revealed



A great book to compliment Bob Asbell's talk this month is *Cymbidium Orchids: Secrets Revealed* by Easton, Graham and Guest. Shown above is Andy Easton at CalOrchids two years ago. The book describes the seven secrets to becoming a first class *Cymbidium* grower. It provides growing suggestions, species descriptions and a fascinating look at the history of *Cymbidium* hybridizing and current trends in creating new hybrids. Andy Easton presents his thoughts on a number of *Cymbidium* topics in his always colorful and entertaining manner. [Available from Amazon by clicking this link.](#) The ebook version is \$9.50, 172 pages. Highly recommended for every serious *Cymbidium* grower.

Orchid Facebook Groups (FG)

Many of us attended the Facebook marketing training that was given at the December meeting. FB provides a lot of really good opportunities to network with people from all over the world. One of the ways to do this is to go to our Facebook site for the Five Cities Orchid Society (<https://www.facebook.com/fivecitiesorchid/>). You can post a picture, like a post, add a comment and invite people to visit the Five Cities Orchid Society.

Additionally, it's fun to visit other orchid societies such as the American Orchid Society (AOS) Facebook page and scroll through it. Many times people post pictures of their sick orchids and ask for help. Many people will offer advice as to the problem and solution. It's a great resource for learning about growing orchids and getting advice from growers. (The AOS does not allow people to sell orchids or do commercial promotion on their Facebook page).

There are many different Orchid Groups on Facebook, many of them are Public Groups but many are Private, (here you have to apply to and be accepted before you can see what people are posting). Many of these Facebook Groups both Public and Private have strict rules that you need to observe such as no selling or commercial selling, use of inappropriate language and behavior.

Many commercial orchid growers use Facebook or Facebook Groups to advertise their current offerings. Sometimes a grower will post a picture of a first bloom seedling and offer a look at the newest hybrids that are becoming available. It becomes a valuable resource to find current hybrids and for growers to show off new crosses that you may not have known existed. As an example, once on the Facebook site, search and visit FANGtastic *Phalaenopsis*, a Facebook Group where Norman's Orchids regularly posts. See what's happening in his nursery and get a first look at the new *Phalaenopsis* hybrids that are available this year.

Facebook Orchid Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates. The list of Facebook Groups is quite extensive and you can find a Facebook Group for nearly every genus. You can even create your own Facebook Group. Before entering the site or entering their webpage you can see the membership in the group and how often there are new posts, so you can determine how active the site is currently.

Here is a partial listing of some other Orchid Facebook Groups that you may find interesting. (This listing is not inclusive of all orchid Facebook Groups nor is it a recommendation for any particular group. There are at least 65 orchid Facebook Groups to which you can belong, as well as related growers and garden groups).

Orchids Trade and Sale -This group is for the trade and/or sale between individuals and also for businesses advertising their plants and products.

- Coalition for Orchid Species -Orchid Society in Miami Florida for people interested in growing orchid species.
- Orchid Lovers Around The World (Tips, Share, and Ask All about Orchid). This Group For Orchid Lovers, so if you want to ask, share, or just upload a photo your orchid.
- Planet Pleurothallid - A place for people who grow, collect and appreciate Orchids in the Pleurothallid Alliance of genera. No selling of orchids.
- Scented Orchids- Where scented orchids are appreciated. A place where you can share pictures, care information, and where you got this beautiful plant.
- Miniature Orchids Worldwide - We enjoy everything about miniature orchids. Please no hybrids and selling of products. All reports are first approved before they are posted.
- Cultivated orchids of Madagascar-currently 1200 members worldwide share pictures and culture information.

The 25th Annual Central Coast Orchid Show & Sale Committee Seeks Volunteers

Our 2020 Annual Show & Sale is coming up and we are looking for volunteers to help with our 25th Show Anniversary. If you would be interested in volunteering during the show, please email Eric Holenda at cbh@charter.net

Take a moment to go to www.fcoss.org and purchase your ticket for the Friday night Orchid Show Preview Benefit.

A very worthy cause benefiting [Welcome Home Military Heroes](#) and [Honor Flight Central Coast California](#) and a fun evening. Remember, there are a limited number of tickets available for this event.



Two Shows worth considering for a visit. Sonoma at the end of March and Garden Grove in early April.

The Sonoma County Orchid Society proudly presents our **Exploring Orchids**, our annual show & sale on Sat 3/28 10am-5pm, Sun 3/29 10am-4pm, Santa Rosa Veteranâ€™s Bldg, 1351 Maple Ave, Santa Rosa. Free parking. \$10 admission, children 12 and under free.

A weekend full of fun, education and beautiful blooming orchids to admire, photograph and purchase! A great event for the whole family!

Skill Sessions:

- **How to Grow & Re-bloom your Orchids: 11:00 am Saturday & Sunday**
 - **Growing & Repotting Cymbidiums: 1 pm Saturday & Sunday**
 - **Growing Orchids Outdoors in the Bay Area: 2 pm Saturday**
- Docent Tours: 12:00 pm both days.** Learn interesting details about the rare & beautiful orchids in the displays. Shoot great photos to share on Instagram and Facebook.

FEATURING:

- **On-Site Orchid Doctor**
- **Premium Vendors from all over California â€” Featuring orchids suitable for all skill levels. Find the perfect plants for growing in your home, greenhouse or outdoors**
- **Member Plant Sales**
- **Hourly Drawings for FREE Orchids**
- **Silent Auction**
- **Boutique**

<http://www.sonomaorchids.com/>

Garden Grove

Cool Growing Orchid Society Annual Auction

April 8, 2020; Preview and registration 6:30 pm, Auction begins

7:00 PM

Garden Grove Masonic Lodge, 11270 Acacia Pkwy, Garden Grove

92840

Info: www.coolorchids.org

www.coolorchid.com

Our website www.fcoss.org had 843 unique visitors in 2019. This year we've had 353 U.S. visitors and 45 foreign visitors from 10 countries during the first month of the year.

- Our website will have a membership form and payment option soon. An easy way for new members to join FCOS and existing members to renew annual memberships.**
- Our Newsletter has 54 subscribers with more being added every month.**
- Both Facebook and Instagram pages are showing increased followers. We have 418 Instagram followers.**

Orchids are really fascinating!