

The following is an edited reprint of an article written by Gordon Heaps, Orchid Society of Alberta, published in the Ottawa Orchid Society Newsletter, Dec. 1996.

MINI CATTLEYSAS: EXCITING, COLORFUL & SMALL

A miniature Cattleya is a plant under 15 cm (6 inches) in height, usually with multiple flowers... "Mini Cats" can be traced back to several species... The genus *Sophranitis*, which includes *S. coccinea*, *S. acuensis*, and *S. cernua* provides the basic parents for the really small varieties and has influenced the offsprings' bright colors. Several *Laelia* species can also be included: *Laelia briegeri*, *L. flava*, *L. cinnabarina*, *L. sincorana*, *L. pumila*, *L. milleri*, and *L. lundii*. *Cattleya* species that are small include: *Cattleya luteola*, *C. walkeriana*, *C. aclandiae* and *C. violacea*. A couple of *Brassavola* that need to be included in the list are *B. glauca* and *B. nodosa*. There are probably a dozen other species that could/should be included, but this gives you some idea of the complexity of the breeding...As with all orchids, basic necessities are: light, air, water, temperature, humidity, and nutrition.

Light

For the windowsill growers, the best windows would be southwest or southeast...A south window will also work during the spring, fall, and winter period, but during the summer the sun is usually too high in the sky to provide enough direct light, especially if there is a large overhang on the house...

The addition of two fluorescent tubes above the plants in the window will not only increase the light levels, but also serve to increase the day length in our short day winters.

For those growing under total artificial light conditions, 2000 fc. to 4000 fc. are acceptable levels for mini cats. This level is less than required for *Vandas* and *Oncidiums*, but more than for full-sized *Cattleyas*. Remember, some of the species' parents grow in full sun in Mexico, Brazil, etc.

Air

Very simple! Lots of air movement around the foliage is necessary to grow mini cattleyas. A fan can be directed right at the plant. ... Don't forget that air is also very important around the roots.

Water

When they need watering!!! It is the same for all plants; watering schedules are affected by light, temperature, plant variety, medium, air movement, stage of growth, type of container, and day length.... [M]ost mini cats should be thoroughly watered (entire medium saturated), then allowed to dry so that the medium at the bottom of the container is still slightly moist before rewatering.

During the winter's low light periods, it is better to keep the plant slightly drier. City water can be used as long as leaching takes place with each watering.

Temperature

The old adage "if you are comfortable, the orchid plant will be" does not hold up for mini cats. When the new pseudobulbs are growing, the plant can and should be maintained at about 65° to 70°F (18° to 20°C), but once the pseudobulbs are mature, mini cats prefer 60° to 65°F (15° to 18°C). ... Flower bud formation is enhanced during the cool night temperatures and usually results in flowering within a month or two.

Humidity

Humidity is not as important as most people think. Increased humidity will improve the quality of the flowers, but generally will not make a plant flower, or stop a plant from flowering. To increase humidity, it is better to grow plants over a source of water so the water can evaporate around the foliage.

Nutrition

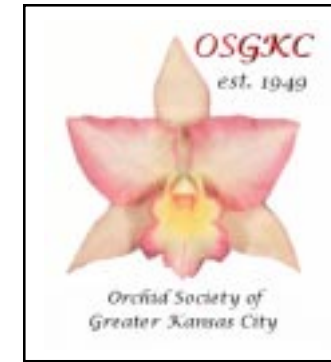
All *Cattleyas* are heavy feeders and mini cats are no exception. I would recommend the following feeding schedule: feed every watering except the fourth....This process will remove [leach] any build-up of toxic salts that might accumulate in the medium. There are literally hundreds of brands and hundreds of different analyses of fertilizers on the market. Use soluble fertilizers that have a relatively high percentage of fertilizer in the container. For example, 20-20-20 has over 60% fertilizer, whereas 2-1-1 has only 5% fertilizer. The first number represents nitrogen, which is used by the plant for foliage growth. The second number is phosphorous, which aids in root and flower production. The last number is potash (potassium), which helps in flower and seed growth.

Schedule fertilizing as follows: — 30-10-10 after flowering to produce new leaves and pseudobulbs (3-5 months) — 10-52-10 next to increase root growth and start the flowering response (1-2 months) — 7-11-27 to finish flower production (3 to 5 months)

Neem Oil recipe...con't from pg. 1

making the plants look healthier. We mix it into the fertilizer water, equal parts Dynagro 9-7-5 growth formula and Protekt. Protekt is high in silica and is supposed to make the plant tissue tougher, and more disease resistant. Within a month of using it, my plants looked healthier...the leaves developed a sheen to them.

I've also applied Neem oil straight, using a QTip or cotton ball, rubbing down the leaves and inflorescence for mealy bugs.



OSGKC News

ORCHID SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

www.osgkc.org

July 2006

A Look Forward:

OSGKC July 9th Program: Annual Picnic

by Mark Prout

It's a potluck barbeque! Meat and baked beans provided, as well as soft drinks and lemonade. OSGKC members are asked to bring sidedishes: salads and desserts.

We will also have a potting/repotting clinic. I will lead the session and talk about everything I know about potting. Since I don't know everything about the subject, I want members to feel free to put their two cents in.....and maybe we'll have a quarter before we're done.

There will be a free seedling to pot for all members. Non-members will pay \$5.00. Tom Larkin of Whippoorwill Orchids will provide the plants: *Cattleya* seedlings.

Set-up will begin at 12:30. Picnic starts at 1:00 or ASAP thereafter. The potting clinic will begin between 2:00 and 2:30.

Check out Whippoorwill's website to see some of the orchids that might be in the free seedling selection sent to the OSGKC on the 9th. <http://www.wiplark.com/cattleya.htm>. The orchids will be from the ones priced \$5 to \$9 in 2 1/4 inch pots. I requested a range of colors and a size range of compact to mini.

See page 4 for information about growing mini-cattleyas

OSGKC's Monthly Meeting: July 9, 2006

Roeland Park Community Center
4850 Rosewood
Roeland Park, KS

Beginners' Group: 1:00 p.m.
Regular Program: 2:00 p.m.

[See above for special details about the July Annual Picnic meeting.]

1 qt water
1 qt alcohol (rubbing alcohol at 50% solution)
1 1/2 tsp Neem Oil
1 1/2 tsp Dish Soap or Dynagro Protekt (I use Protekt)

For more sensitive plants, such as *Masdevallias* or *Paphs* with soft leaves or young plants of any type, omit the alcohol. You can use this as a spray, and I also highly recommend watering the plants with this solution (no alcohol), once a week or so, for four times, if you're battling bugs, as some of the critters and their eggs hide in the media. You can also change the media, and apply directly to the roots before you repot.

The Neem oil is a bit messy. If cool in temperature, it will not mix with the water, or come out of the sprayer, so I put my spray bottle down into a bowl of warm water, then shake vigorously before using. If you water with this solution, take plants to the sink and then wash out the sink. I don't think Neem oil is a toxin to humans, but it does stick to things. To me, it has a pleasant odor.

Deb [Pate], Al [Clinton] and I have been using Dynagro Protekt on our plants since February, and it is really

Inside...

Officers' Reports & Messages: pg. 1 & 2

Special Feature: Member Profile pg. 5

Orchid Resources: pg. 5

Growing Mini-Cattleyas pg. 4

OSGKC Sponsors pg. 2

Taking Care of the 'Chids

by Susie Hanna

I've tried a couple of formulas for creating my own insecticide recipe with Neem Oil. And I'm having good success getting rid of mealy bugs with this one. I think it has other antifungal properties too.

The first formula is with alcohol, and works well with thick-leaved plants, but take care with softer leaves. The alcohol has a drying effect. Don't use on flowers.

Letter from OSGKC President:
Dan Schlozman

Well, summer is in full gear and my tomatoes are beginning to look better than my orchids-unless you like looking at green leaves. Still a few things are in bloom and/or bud. The Phals, however, are exhausted and look so. Time for repotting! Speaking of which, this is the subject of this month's meeting. Please invite your nonmember friends for some expert advice from the great Mr. Prout and company.

Last month's auction was a great success, as those of you who were there know. There is some "buzz" that this would be the only auction. Also, as you know there were many blooming plants, in spite of a similar buzz that there would be none. Another auction is planned for the fall, and I certainly look forward to it.

I will not be present at the meeting in July, due to pressing business in the Colorado mountains. See ya all in August.

Happy growing

Dan



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Windy Hill Gardens
Whippoorwill Orchids



Doug Martin and the native orchid, *Cypripedium parviflorum*, somewhere in the backwoods of Kansas.

The following is a handout provided by Fred Bergman for his Beginner's Class, which meets one hour prior to the regular monthly OSGKC meeting.

Fertilizer: How Much Am I Using

by Fred Bergman

The magic formula is: % x 75 = ppm/oz/100 gal. One half strength may be anywhere between 1/4 and 1/2 tsp/gal. Formula may be: 30-10-10; 20-20-20; 15-30-15; 10-30-20, or Gro-More offers 6-30-30, 28-8-18 and 20-10-20 (urea free).

So how do you answer the question: How much do you feed? Or you read that you should be feeding 200 ppm nitrogen, how much do you use?

Example: you want 200 ppm of nitrogen using 20-10-20, then...
 $0.2 \times 75 = 15$ ppm of N/oz/100 gal, you will need 200 divided by 15=13.3 oz/100 gal or 0.133 oz/gal. One tsp of fertilizer weighs 0.132 oz. You will need 1 tsp/gal.

You use 1/2 tsp of 30-10-10 in 1 gal of water. How much do you feed?
 $0.3 \times 75 = 22.5$ ppm N/oz/100 gal, you use $0.132 \times 1/2$ or 0.066 oz/gal or 6.6 oz/100 gal.

You are feeding 22.5 x 6.6 or 148.5 ppm of nitrogen.

A Look Behind: OSGKC Meeting - June 11th, 2006, Minutes

Because the June meeting was the annual fundraising auction, there are no minutes.

Submitted by Susie Hanna, Secretary

Member Profile: Vivian Walters -- Q and A

Q. How many years have you been growing orchids?:

A. I have been growing orchids 47 years, since 1959, and it became a business in 1978.

Q. How many orchids are in your collection?:

A. I have over 10,000 orchids.

Q. What is the predominant type(s) of orchid you raise?:

A. I have all types of orchids with the majority being phalaenopsis and cattleyas.

Q. Give a brief description of their growing environment:

A. I have 3,000 square feet of growing space under glass, consisting of three greenhouses.

Q. Name one to three in your collection which is a/are particular favorite(s) and why:

A. My two favorite orchids are the Paph.." Memorial Cliff Walters" and the Phal. "Memorial Cliff Walters"

I am partial to paphiopedilums and phalaenopsis, and Cliff and I both liked the Vandas and Ascocendas as well.

Q. Name one to three in your collection that, despite your best efforts, has/have proven particularly difficult to grow:

A. We had been growing orchids for so many years that we usually mastered what we tried to grow. I have found getting Vanda's to bloom challenging, but now that they are on a misting system they are blooming like crazy.

Q. Share with readers your best orchid culture tip(s):

A. In most orchid mixes you will find foreign seeds which usually produce all kinds of undesirable little plants. So now when I am repotting, I put Preem on top of the mix, and it has helped a lot.

I also mix my own type of insecticide, especially in the winter time. It is a combination of mineral oil, soap and water and will destroy most of the pests.

Having lived with a Certified Orchid Judge since the 1960's, I know that Cliff was most interested in the quality and shape of any orchid, while my interest was to have nice plants for sale.

Q. What do/did (if retired) you do in life to support your orchid addiction?:

A. Orchids are my business and obsession. Unfortunately customers make the decision as to what will sell. Since I am also a florist, I need to have nice flowers that work well for weddings, funerals and special occasions. I have several customers who love orchids but don't want to grow them, so I established a rental business a long time ago and that, also helps with the "orchid addiction".

The photo shows Vivian and Cliff Walters when they received the Orchidists of the Year award in the fall of 1990 at the Mid-America Orchid Congress.

Special thanks to Marquita O'Riley for help with this article.



Looking for information about orchids?

The Central New York Orchid Society maintains an excellent website. The back issues of its extraordinarily informative, 12-page newsletter are kept online.
<http://www.cnyos.org//>