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# OSGKC News

ORCHID SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

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## OSGKC January 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Scott Stewart, Ph.D., Presents -- "A Floridian Orchid Safari"

By Doug Martin

**D**r. Scott Stewart is currently a research scientist with PhytoTechnology Laboratories in Lenexa, KS. He earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Horticulture from the University of Florida in 2007, where he developed conservation practices for native orchids that are now being used throughout Florida by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Scott earned his B.S. in Biology and Chemistry from Illinois College in 1996. Today, he remains active in orchid conservation research throughout the Midwestern

and southeastern United States. Scott is a member of the North American Regional Orchid Specialist Group, a part of the ICUN Species Survival Commission, as well as the Native Orchid Conference, Inc. Conservation Committee. In addition, Dr. Stewart serves as a peer reviewer for a number of scientific and popular journals and magazines.

We will be socializing with Scott after the meeting at 75<sup>th</sup> street Brewery. Please plan to join us.

## Tree Fern as a Mounting Platform

By Susan Taylor, Orchid Editor,  
BellaOnline.com

**T**ree fern has been used as a mounting for orchids for a number of years, especially once Osmunda fiber became more and more expensive and difficult to find. We have now reached the point where the demand for the product is endangering many of the slower growing species of this large fern.

As the root mass – which is what we use as mounts – is stripped from wild growing ferns, eventually the plant dies. This is especially true in the case of the South American varieties where it is estimated by some that the majority of species are now endangered.

[While researching this article,] I was able to find some information on sustainable production of tree ferns in plantation form in Australia...Tasmania.[the Australian island,] has fairly strong governmental regulation of the

harvesting of wild ferns. It is only allowed in areas that are being cleared for road building and/or farmland where the ferns would be eliminated anyway.

Unfortunately, import of tree fern products from this part of the world is prohibited in the US and Canada, so we have no way to buy sustainable product. I was unable to find any source from South America which was marked as plantation raised and not from the wild. If anyone knows of any such source, please let me know, and I will pass the information on.

In light of the endangered status of most of the tree ferns, I have stopped using it for any mounting I'm doing. Coconuts, baskets, plaques, cork mounts and EpiWeb (<http://www.firstrays.com/epiweb.htm>) which is a new product made of recycled bottles, are all alternatives which should be considered instead of any kind of tree fern unless you know the source of that product.

Coconut husk pieces are a

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resource that is simply thrown away now in many tropical areas, and [the husks] provide an ideal planting and mounting product. Chips are used extensively in culture and the larger pieces are not hard to find at most supply vendors.

Cork slabs, which have also been used extensively for years and are a renewable resource, are now becoming scarcer due to a pest which is killing off the cork trees. It is a truly renewable resource and we hope that the pest can be managed so that this mounting medium is available for years to come.

As more and more people move away from tree fern products, we should start seeing more conservation friendly alternatives such as the EpiWeb product produced in many of the shapes that we now see in tree fern. In the meantime, please consider moving to one of the other products in order to reduce the demand for wild harvested ferns.



## Member Profile: Glenn Lessenden- Q and A

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

**A.** I have been growing since 2004. My father-in-law (a member of the Kansas Orchid Society) gave me a Cattleya hybrid that he could not get to bloom. When it bloomed in the spring of 2004, it was obvious that I had to learn more about how to grow and bloom these plants. I then started to seek out orchid nurseries and greenhouses, learned of the OSGKC, built a 14x17 greenhouse addition to my sunroom and currently care for about 500 plants. The collection is a mixed bag but is tending more toward species orchids all the time. My greenhouse addition gets a little cool for a lot of things in the winter (the last cold spell, the bench temp got to 46), but the sunroom gives me a place with warmer winter temps for phals, etc.

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

**A.** My favorites -- anything that blooms! The *Maxillaria setegera* that I grow has very nice fragrant flowers and blooms well (an endearing trait in a plant). Also I have several species Phals that do well: *Phal. chibae* and *Phal. mannii*. And of course the Cattleya hybrid that started it all.

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

**A.** I sure would like to grow a *Maxillaria lepidota* to see if the blooms look as cool as the pictures. I'm in the process [of] killing it for the third time. I read a comment

from some experienced grower that after you have killed a plant five times you should have a good idea of how to grow it. Maybe I'm closing in on it.

**Q. Share with readers your best orchid-culture tip:**

**A.** I don't think I have tips that everyone else doesn't already know. My schedule allows me to spend some time in the greenhouse most every day. That consistent observation I find helpful, then if some plant is not doing well, I will change something about its culture immediately, usually by moving the plant. More drastic measures follow: going from a pot to a mount or visa versa, etc.

**Q. What do (or did, if you're retired) you do in life (career/work) to support your orchid addiction:**

**A.** I'm still working to support my orchid addiction as a Veterinarian.



### Beginners' Group

**W**ith the way the cold season has started, let's discuss how to cope with the loss of electric service, a furnace, etc. Do you have a greenhouse? How can you conserve heat? Planning a greenhouse? What should you include in your planning? To provide something for everyone else, we will discuss grooming and judging plants. That should keep us busy.

*Fred Bergman*

**D**eb Pate, OSGKC Treasurer, will present this year's proposed budget at the January meeting.

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