



Orchid Society of
Greater Kansas City

OSGKC News

ORCHID SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY www.osgkc.org May 2009

OSGKC May 3rd Meeting: "Growing Orchids Under Lights"

By Glenn Lessenden

Reminder:
May 2009 Program Change

Hello everyone. The May meet-
ing will be Sunday May 3 (note
the date change from the usual date)
with beginners at 1:00 and the
regular meeting at 2:00. The speaker
will be Ernie Gemeinhart from
Enlightened Orchids in Chicago,
and the topic will be "Growing
Orchids Under Lights."

For his day job Ernie is Labora-
tory Manager and Technician in the
Biomedical Polymer Sciences
Laboratory at the University of
Illinois at Chicago. He is a proba-
tionary accredited AOS judge in the
sixth year of training, and has been
growing orchids under lights since
1997. We can expect a detailed
discussion of different lighting
systems with pros and cons of each,
emphasizing florescent systems.

Ernie will be bringing plants for
sale and our society obligation for
the speakers fee will disappear if we
generate \$200 in plant sales. He has
mainly paphiopedilum and paph
hybrids. Be sure to visit
www.enlightenedorchids.com and if
in doubt, buy a plant.

Due to Ernie's flight schedule, it
will not be possible to arrange a
dinner with society members either
Saturday or Sunday evening. So a
Sunday brunch seemed the only
possibility. The venue will be Grand
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Guide to exhibiting orchids

from AOS

Third in a three-part series

[Last month summary: The American Orchid Society Handbook on Judging and Exhibition provides a point scale for judging four areas of focus: labeling (10 points), variety (20), quality of flowers (35) and general arrangement (35). The design of the arrangement should take into account the following elements: balance, contrast, dominance, proportion, scale and rhythm.]

When putting in an orchid exhibit you are always better off having too
much than too little. Of course this does not mean that you must
USE it all. When you are at the exhibit hall, it is a real luxury to have
MORE foliage than you
really need, plenty of
mulch to cover all of your
staging and enough of an
orchid selection that you
have **just the right
orchid** for a particular
spot. After spending
hours planning your
exhibit, gathering
materials, creating your
props, collecting plants
and transporting all of
your stuff to the exhibit
hall...it is only frustrat-
ing to have to compro-
mise at this point. Don't allow it. The guidelines offered below are **conserva-
tive**. If you can exceed them then by all means do so. You will appreciate it
on set-up day.



Stoney Brook Orchids - Central Jersey, Exhibit 2009

Orchids

Plan on having **at least 100 blooming orchids** per 100 sq. ft. of exhibit
space. Plants should be groomed for exhibition and flowers should be fully
opened but not on their way out. A few days in an air-conditioned exhibi-
tion hall can be hard on flowers, only those in their prime will last. Be sure
that plants have been **fully watered** before putting them in an exhibit. If the
show will last more than a few days make provisions to water the plants at
some point during the show.

Foliage Plants

For naturalized exhibits, that is landscaped exhibits, figure that about
20% - 30% of the total area will be foliage plants. You will need a variety of
sizes and heights. Actual needs will depend on the show staging, exhibit
design and location of your space. Corners will require less foliage. Often
show committees will provide a minimum amount of foliage with the
exhibit space. [Ask] the show chairman about this. Provide at least a row of
tall foliage (up to 8') for creating a barrier between your space and the

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From the President

A special thank you to members Lance Jesse, Jami Parkison, Tony King and Jason Thoren for opening up their homes and orchid collections for the annual Growers' Tour. This is one of my favorite programs for the opportunity to see the clever and innovative ways that people grow orchids and to give ideas for improving my own collection. Kudos to Tony and Jason for the yummy refreshments. And finally thanks to Glenn Lessenden for arranging the fantastic tour.

Monica McNamara

Exhibiting - AOS, con't from pg. 1

exhibit you back up to. For a 100 sq. ft. space that would be about 8-10, 5-gallon ficus benjamina, areca or queen palms depending on how full they are. Stocky two-gallon arbuticola, philodendron or boston fern can be used between and in front of the background material as well as for the sides of the exhibit area. 15-20 of these two-gallon plants would be a good number to have on hand. Finally, two dozen or more small maidenhair or fluffy ruffles ferns work well as contrast and relief between orchid plants. Philodendrons and other foliage plants as well as some bromeliads also work well for this. However, **avoid strongly variegated foliage (important !)** It competes with the orchids. Finally, an interesting specimen foliage plant such as a citrus trained to a standard can provide a focal point for an exhibit as well as a great place to display that *special orchid*.

DO NOT use any other flowering plant material in your exhibit (important !).

And finally, **do not use any artificial plant material in your exhibit (important !).**

Groundcover

The word "groundcover" refers to any material used to cover the floor or tabletop that the exhibit space encompasses. This material is also used to cover any staging that is used to create levels within the exhibit area as well as the orchid

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May program, con't from pg. 1

Street Cafe at 10:30 a.m. Sunday May 3, check out the menu online. Price starts at \$14.95. If you are interested in attending, please e-mail or call me by Friday May 1 (Lessenden@aol.com, 816-858-5309).

Thanks. I'll see you all May 3.

pots in most cases. Groundcover can be almost any material that serves this purpose without distracting from the orchids themselves. For naturalized exhibits, groundcover is typically a bagged material such as cypress mulch, peat or pine bark "deco nuggets". Sheet moss was and still is extremely popular giving a nice woodland look to any orchid exhibit. It must be moistened before use however and today many exhibitors are looking for easier to use materials. Tabletop exhibitors generally use yard goods to cover tables, with black or dark green fabric being favorites. Yard goods have also begun showing up in floor exhibits; large dropcloths dyed or painted a dark color provide a quick effective way to cover large areas of staging and foliage pots. Camouflage cloth such as used by hunters has been recently seen at orchid shows and makes a fast, easy groundcover especially when combined with a bag or two of dried leaves. Any groundcover material you decide on should be of a neutral color that does not detract from the orchids and should be readily available and inexpensive enough that a large enough quantity can be obtained for your exhibit space. A 2-cu. ft. bag of cypress mulch or pine bark should cover about 10-15 sq. ft. of space depending on how thick it is applied and whether or not the space is flat or contoured. Five bags would be minimum for 100 sq. ft

Beginners' Group

The beginners group will meet at 1:00 before the regular meeting. We will discuss ways to improve your growing area.

Fred Bergman

exhibit taking into account the space taken up by foliage and orchids. Allow 3-4 boxes of sheet moss per 100 sq. ft. exhibit space and be sure to bring buckets and tubs to soak it in. Two or three bags of dark peat or top soil will make a nice path in a 100 sq. ft. exhibit.

Staging

A successful exhibit has different levels on which to display orchids. Foliage plants are also more attractive when they are not all on the same horizontal plane. Whatever you use to achieve these levels will in part depend on the groundcover you have decided on. If you are using sheet moss, your staging will need to be waterproof. Plastic milk crates, fern stands, plastic pots, wooden vegetable crates and crumpled newspaper in plastic garbage bags all work well and are equally suitable for dry groundcover. The newspaper does not need to be in garbage bags if you are using dry groundcover. Whatever materials you use should be light in weight and easy to transport to the exhibit hall. They also must be sturdy enough to **support orchids without compromise** throughout the duration of the show. I remember one exhibit I worked on where the committee chairman had devised staging using chicken wire and lumber. It collapsed and destroyed our two best Cattleyas. If using crumpled newspaper, be sure that any orchids are seated firmly before finishing the exhibit. Six or so milk crates can be used to carry materials to the exhibit hall and then pressed into duty to gain height for background foliage. An assortment of plastic pots are light in weight and can be used upturned to provide elevation to an orchid or foliage plant.