

June 2023 Triangle Orchid Society Newsletter: From the President's Desk



Dear TOS Members,

June, a hot month! With our summer solstice past we begin to enter the dog days of summer, certainly not my favorite time of year. But be cool, come to our regular July meeting at JCRA for an ice cream social and members' plant sale. Yes, bring along duplicate plants, divisions, keikis, to sell, barter, or just give away. For the aspiring entrepreneurs, TOS would greatly appreciate a 10% donation of what you make, (but don't feel bad about donating all your takings if you so wish!) It is a great time to build camaraderie amongst members, especially the new members.

Growing orchids, and more so getting them to flower, is a most gratifying experience. We read learned articles about them, we study the conditions of their native habitats, we listen to the expert growers, we purchase countless bags of different growing media and fertilizer types, but alas, the magic doesn't happen and yet another orchid bites the dust! I think I can say with surety that all TOS members, all orchidists in fact, have experienced this so don't despair. Doing all the above is of considerable value, but there comes a point when we must let go and begin recognizing the constraints of our own growing conditions. It's much like the student letting go of the teacher's instruction to find their own way - that Jedi moment! The point is, what works for one grower, may not necessarily work for another. So, start working with the environment you have and purchase only reliable, strong performers that will be well suited to it - remember, there's a mind-boggling 30,000 species and about 150,000 registered hybrids to choose from! The basics for plant life must be always met, but here are few things you may wish to try: use rainwater instead of tap water; position other transpiring plants near your orchids to increase humidity; hang Spanish moss amongst the dangling roots of orchids (esp. vandas); ensure gentle air movement around your orchids; put plants outside in partial shade for the summer; mist your plants more often (use rainwater); relocate a struggling orchid to a different window aspect of your house or greenhouse; increase night-day temperature differential; alter the dark- light period if growing under lights; during active growth, don't allow roots to become totally bone dry between waterings; don't allow water to collect in the leaf axils of new shoots; watch

for very early signs of disease or pests (once an orchid begins to look sick, it is!) The permutations are endless, but try to be systematic in your approach so you know what

factor makes a difference. If your plants don't respond, try something different because once they do begin responding then orchidelirium really begins. For me, this is the stuff that makes orchid growing so rewarding.

Do please pass along any ideas for topics and speakers for 2024 directly to Sunny Allen, our VP/Program Coordinator, (speakers@triangleorchidsociety.org). I wish you much enjoyment and success with all your summer activities and may the Force of the Orchidaceae be with you!

Phil Brindle, TOS President

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