

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



Dear TOS Members,

November 2023 – It's Holiday season, a time that's awash with great, albeit high-calorie, foods and soda. So, my Holiday message: DO NOT throw out those plastic soda bottles! All will become clear, but you must read on.....

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that the three previously nominated TOS members, Brenda Pauwels, Carole Saravitz and Tyler Nace were elected to the TOS Board at our Nov 13 meeting.

You must not miss our December 11 Holiday meeting! Come enjoy some orchid camaraderie to close out the year. It will be a potluck with a live auction of fine plants, both purchased and donated. TOS will be providing baked ham and mulled apple cider at the meeting, so you might want to consider bringing potluck dishes to complement the ham. Alternatively, just bring some of your favorite seasonal food. Regarding the auction, remember orchids make fabulous gifts for the holidays - especially great centerpieces for the dining table - and by giving such a gift you are not only supporting TOS with your purchase but you may well open up new horizons for someone who doesn't know about the fascinating world of orchids. Some of the donated plants are named specimen-size plants much in need of dividing and repotting. So, one strategy would be for two or three members to club together to bid on these large plants. The plant gets new leases on life, each member involved gets a plant at the shared winning bid price, and your Society benefits from a few dollars towards holding a future event – Phil's divide and conquer strategy so to speak! Those involved can enjoy even more orchid camaraderie by practicing their orchid division and repotting techniques together at a future coffee morning.

A very productive Annual Retreat for the Board took place on Oct 28. At a meeting in Kelly and Steve's home (Thank you, both!) on a gloriously sunny

autumn day with an abundance of delicious potluck food at hand, the Board continued advancing foundational TOS objectives set at the beginning of 2023. Several new actions were debated and unanimously agreed to maintain momentum in moving the Society forward for the future. Accordingly, there were two notable actions. First, the establishment of a new Officer position on the Board, that of Membership Chairperson to take care of our growing membership. And second, an update of the 2015 TOS Bylaws (Note: Bylaws are available on the TOS website under the 'About TOS' tab). You will hear more about these actions at our end-of-year Holiday meeting on December 11 when I will present all the 2024 Board members, together with their roles, and summarize the updated and amended sections of the TOS Bylaws prior to a Members' majority vote.

On November 13 (lucky 13 for those who bought one or two of the fabulous plants on sale!), Fred Clarke of Sunset Valley Orchids delivered an excellent presentation of his breeding work with members of the subtribe *Catasetinae*, namely the genera *Cycnoches*, *Clowesia*, *Mormodes* and *Catasetum*. Fred breeds orchids with very clear objectives in mind - designer orchid breeding! He carefully studies and selects the traits he would like to see in the progeny of his crosses, traits such as flower color and patterning, flower shape and form, etc. And, as exemplified by the deck of photos of the award-winning plants shown, Fred is highly successful at achieving his objectives. One of Fred's most well-known intergeneric hybrids is *Fredclarkeara* After Dark. If there was a category of orchids known as Goth orchids, some cultivars of the After Dark grex would be in it, for their almost black, melancholic, arching inflorescences!

Have you ever wondered how Fred Clarke's name essentially became a genus? I did, and so armed with a little knowledge about plant nomenclature that I learned many moons ago in botany classes, I decided to investigate. There are strict taxonomic rules behind the naming of plants which are governed under the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, the rules today being known as the Shenzhen Code - sounds more like an ancient Chinese lost cypher rather than an internationally-accepted scientific work on plant taxonomy! First, *Fredclarkeara* is an artificial genus, so rather than a genus, it is referred to as a nothogenus. It is in fact a nothogenus of a trigeneric hybrid, meaning plants with the name *Fredclarkeara* have a genome comprised of three genera, namely *Catasetum*, *Clowesia* and *Mormodes*. Now for the naming rule. Where three or more genera are involved in producing a new hybrid, taxonomic convention under the Shenzhen Code specifies that the termination *ara* be added to a person's name, ideally the breeder's name, to form its nothogenus, hence *Fredclarkeara* in this case. (There is an alternative method for naming a

trigeneric hybrid, but I will leave those with piqued curiosity to check out Art H.6.4 of Shenzhen Code, 2018 - <https://www.iapt-taxon.org/nomen/main.php>)

So, now that you know the three genera making up a *Fredclarkeara* orchid, you can have some Holiday orchid fun by getting a pencil and paper to work out how many different breeding combinations of *Catasetum*, *Clowesia* and *Mormodes* can result in a

Fredclarkeara hybrid (clue: remember crosses of two bigeneric parents). You get 10 points for the correct answer and an additional 9 bonus points if can write down all the direct parental crosses at the genus/nothogenus level (another helpful clue!). And, the prize? Well, you need to figure that out with those around the dinner table! The correct number of breeding combinations may be found at <https://catasetinaecanada.weebly.com>, which is a great orchid website on which to while away the Holiday hours. And, here ends my sermon on plant taxonomy, which can be an interesting subject to study - honest. In fact, I highly recommend keeping a copy of the Shenzhen Code beside your bed, especially if you have difficulty falling to sleep at night!

Below are a few images from Fred's presentation summarizing cultural conditions for members of the Catasetinae.

Now, before leaving the Catasetinae, feast your eyes on some of the stuff here, [https:// www.youtube.com/valdisondubomcatasetinae](https://www.youtube.com/valdisondubomcatasetinae). You don't have to know Portuguese (or Spanish) to garner great orchid-growing information from this website – I only speak English, plus a little American! Fred tried showing us these YouTube videos but unfortunately the link would not open on the night. You will see in one of the videos how to turn those empty soda bottles into ideal growing containers for your catasetums and other Catasetinae orchids. The clear plastic bottles allow one to see what's happening with the roots too.

Wishing you all a joyous Holiday season.
Phil Brindle, TOS President

<http://TriangleOrchidSociety.org>

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Board of Trustees,
Triangle Orchid Society, Inc.

Below are the images from Fred Clarke's presentation summarizing cultural conditions for members of the Catasetinae.

Best Cultural Practices

- When in active growth water like a 'monsoon'
- Fertilize every watering @ ½ tsp per gallon
- Use an open well drained media
 - Sphagnum moss
 - Fine bark and perlite
- Re-pot and divide just as new growth is started
- Don't begin watering until the new growth has new roots that are 3-6" long

Environmental Conditions

- Summer highs: 80 – 95 F (26 - 35 C)
- Summer lows: 60 – 75 F (16 – 24 C)
- Winter highs: 65 – 75 F (18 – 24 C)
- Winter lows: 50 – 60 F (10 – 16 C)
- Light levels: 2000-4000 fc
- Humidity: 40-80%

Summary of Catasetinae Plant Culture

- ✓ Wait to irrigate until new roots are 3-6" long
- ✓ Well drained potting media
- ✓ When in active growth, water and fertilize frequently (½ tsp per gal)
- ✓ Reduce irrigation when leaves begin to yellow
- ✓ Stop watering when bulbs are leafless
- ✓ Re-pot and divide when new growth starts
- ✓ **They make excellent hobby plants!**