



Dear TOS Members,

May 2025 – Orchids love being outdoors for the summer and for much of the fall. I started putting out my plants in small batches during first week of May, in partial shade of course, and have continued since. Then, about a week ago now, a cold, wet front moved in and nighttime temperatures dropped to the low 50s. I even recorded a dawntime temperature of 49°F on May 25, which actually was the forecasted low for my area. However, despite this getting rather cold for some of the orchids, I was reluctant to haul them all back indoors again. I left them out, figuring a brisk, morning cold shower is most invigorating – right? Perhaps the *C. dowiana* amongst the plants I put outside will be jolted into some growth by the cold shock treatment (it needs some sort of shock that's for sure!) But, please make your own decisions about your orchids for I tend to be a bit of a risk-taker with mine.

Business News from May 19 TOS Board Meeting

1. Balance of the checking account as of May 19, 2025 was \$ \$9,402.
2. The Board welcomes Kaleigh Hessel as a new Trustee, indeed an important happening that forgetful Phil should have mentioned last month! Do take the opportunity to introduce yourself to Kaleigh at meetings. The Board is most appreciative of Kaleigh's willingness to get involved with everything, especially in the recent Away Shows, helping with putting in and/or taking down the TOS displays.
3. The live auction of plants at our May 12 meeting netted a total profit of \$987, which included \$35 from the silent auction items. A great result!

4. May Membership Report (Carole Saravitz, TOS Membership Chairperson)

Total Paid-up Members at end of 2024: 195+35 Partners

Total Paid-up Members thus far for 2025: 127+23 Partners

New Members joining in Apr: 1

Lifetime Members: 4+1 Partner

Paid-up membership has stabilized around 150 members (including partners) over the past couple of months. Come Sept though, we anticipate an uptick of individuals joining at our Fall for Orchids show due to the irresistible lure of orchids; some undoubtedly will become orchid addicts and long-term members (maybe even a giant in the orchid world), while others will likely join in a moment of orchid giddiness and never be heard of again.

Away Shows in Reflection:



Above is our fabulous TOS display at the Triad Orchid Society's show, the theme of which was "The Splendor of Orchids: A Universe of Color", held May 9-11 at High Point

University. Thank you to Carol Saravitz and Stacy Hoffman for putting in the display and Kaleigh Hessel for breaking down the display and bringing home the orchids. Great photos of the TOS displays from all the Away Shows are posted on our website at,

<https://triangleorchidsociety.org/2025-local-aos-shows/>



Here, I highlight just one orchid from the Triad Show as it captured the full essence of the show's theme, and certainly caught my attention. It belongs to TOS member, Sara Gallis, owner of Riverwood Orchids Farm in Durham. This beautiful hybrid is

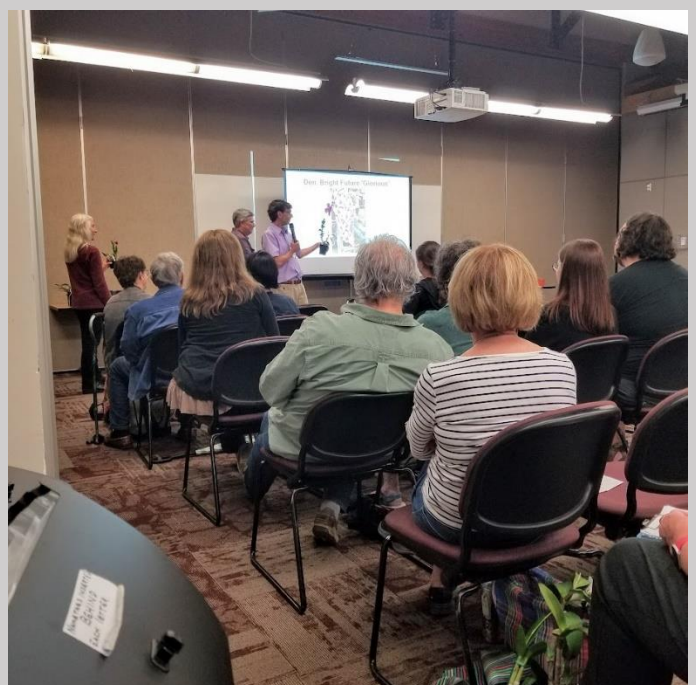
Rhyncholaeliocattleya Akiko Sato 'Volcano Queen' and it garnered two first place ribbons, one for color and the other for fragrance. It is understandable why it got these awards. In fact, its knockout fragrance permeated the air all around its bench at RW as well as the surrounding benches. This led me to wonder what were the ancestral species in this hybrid responsible for its fragrance. Well, it turns out to be a medley of fragrances from 24 species - a tall order even for the best of perfumeries to match!

<https://orchidroots.com/display/summary/orchidaceae/100901597/>

So why hasn't this orchid received any AOS merit awards? An excellent question and one that I put to my AOS source on all judging matters. Apparently, the flowers are a little too crowded on the inflorescence. Nonetheless, good old uncle Phil thinks it's a crackerjack orchid and it can occupy space on my bench any day!

In Reflection: May TOS Monthly Meeting at JCRA

A fun, lively auction was enjoyed by all, and our masterful auctioneer, Ralph, should take a bow as TOS raised nearly \$1,000 to help fund future speakers and different events. The plants from 808 Orchids - a lot of dendrobiums - were of high quality which certainly helped the bids ascend to lofty heights for a few plants, but there were some notable bargains too. The tall and beautiful *Oncidium* Gower Ramsey being auctioned in the left photo below went for just \$22 – perhaps its tallness was a bit off-putting for some bidders. Then there was *Dendrobium* Bright Future 'Glorious,' an orchid Ralph took a particular shine to, making him expound all the "bad" attributes of this dendrobium hybrid as he handed over auctioneering duties to Sidney, our impartial Treasurer (right photo below). I'm pleased to report that Ralph did win the bidding contest in the end. Many thanks y'all for the orchid fun and a great job!



Upcoming: Jun 9 at 7.30 p.m., TOS Monthly Meeting at JCRA

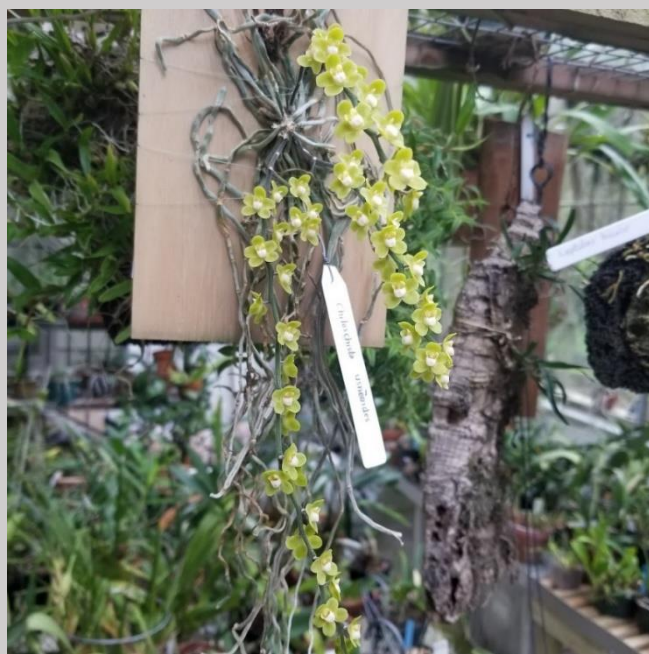


Thomas Bajza of Tarzane Group will be presenting, “Giant World of Miniature Orchids & Growing in Simple Setups.” If you are tight on growing space but love the diversity of orchids, miniatures are for you. There are some truly spectacular miniature orchids which can be grown indoors in a simple growth chamber. Come meet the experts and add a new dimension to your hobby. If you pre-order by June 4, Tarzane will give you an 18% discount and bring your plants to the meeting! Use discount code “TOS2025” when pre-ordering.

<https://tarzanegroup.com/>

All are welcome to join the Speaker for dinner before the meeting at Neomonde Mediterranean Restaurant, 3817 Beryl Rd, Raleigh. A few of us usually arrive about 5.45pm. There are diversions in place because of road works so plan accordingly.

Monthly Feature



So far, my record of growing leafless orchids is hardly a beacon of success, but I’m gradually beginning to understand their needs more and more. Such is the case for so many of the orchids we grow; some genera are very finicky while others are much more forgiving when it comes to their cultural requirements. Ticking all the boxes of an orchid’s

needs, and in the right order and at the right time, can be tricky. And, since there is such a vast, diverse range of orchid species in the world, providing different microclimates with the correct light, temperature, and humidity within a single growing space to house a diverse collection calls for creativity. Even very large greenhouses face this challenge; national gardens often have separate greenhouses designed to simulate different habitats around the world for growing their diverse collections (Kew Gardens is a great example). North-facing vs south-facing aspects make a difference with respect to light and temperature, the position of fans and vents make a huge difference for air movement, clear plastic strip curtain or Spanish moss drapes can help create different humidity zones. Even the movement of air across plants on a windowsill, or the way the sun tracks across a growing space throughout the day, create subtle differences which can influence the growth of a particular orchid. For me, these challenges are part of the excitement of growing orchids - the drug that keeps me coming back for more. Just seeing an orchid developing new root initials, or a flower spike emerging for the first time, gives me a real rush.

But I digress, back to the photos above. The orchid is *Chiloschista usneoides* (D. Don) Lindl., as described and published by John Lindley in Edwards's Bot. Reg. 18: t. 1522 in 1832; it was first described as *Epidendrum usneoides* by David Don in 1825 before the genus reclassification by Lindley. It's considered a ghost orchid by some, but I prefer to reserve that descriptor for *Dendrophylax lindenii*, the supreme ghost of all orchids (an extremely finicky orchid to grow by the way). The native range of *Chsch. usneoides* is the Himalayas to Myanmar. It is epiphytic, growing primarily in the subtropical biome.

I bought the orchid at a TOS auction last year. It was on the cedar wood mount as seen in the left photo above, but it had not been growing on the mount that long. However, being a plant of blooming-size, I jumped in when the bidding started. Its performance has not disappointed me thus far!

As an aside note, cedar wood was a substrate I did not try when I de-flasked seedlings of another *Chiloschista* species, namely *exuperei*, a couple of years ago. But, does the type of substrate material actually make a difference for an epiphyte? All I can say in answer to this question is I had tried hessian sacking, ash bark, coconut fiber, cork bark, tree fern fiber....., all of which based on the different articles I had read were touted as "the substrate" on which to grow leafless orchids. But alas, none of my spider-sized seedlings really took to any of these substrates. Most just sat on the substrates refusing to grow, seemingly with the will of recalcitrant toddlers, and they eventually succumbed to the beckoning finger of the orchid grim reaper. And, all of this after I had nursed them 24/7 using only the purest of rainwater for regular misting, avoiding temperature extremes, ensuring adequate lighting,etc. One seedling did give it a half-hearted go on a tightly compressed pad of well-rinsed coconut fiber (to remove possible salt residues), but during the winter past even this plant began showing signs of going off to meet its maker. With this being my last but one of the de-flasked *Chsch. exuperei* seedlings, there was nothing to lose so I transferred it to a freshly split cedar mount, and as you can see from the left

photo below it has taken to it like a duck to water. So, perhaps substrate material does make a difference when mounting epiphytic orchids – only time will tell. One last thing,



draping Spanish moss loosely over leafless orchids to create greater humidity immediately around those all-important roots - something I tried early on - is not a good approach because the roots require fairly bright light, albeit indirect light, in order to photosynthesize.

A good approach to increasing humidity around leafless orchids, especially when growing indoors, is to hang the mount inside a large glass, open vessel containing a little water with glass balls or stones in the bottom. The latter increase the evaporative surface area for the water, a useful tip if small mounted orchids must go without misting for 2-3 days.



A Special Request

TOS has been contacted by the curator of the Smithsonian Gardens Orchid Collection who wants to know if any TOS members happen to have orchids in their collections that once belonged to the late John Hope Franklin as it is working on a future orchid exhibition. JHF, who passed away in 2009, was an eminent university professor and historian of the American South. He was also a keen orchid hobbyist who was a member of TOS. Some notable orchid hybrids were named after JHF and his wife Aurelia. If you do have divisions of any of the following, please let us know by emailing president@triangleorchidsociety.org.

Cattleya John Hope Franklin

Paphiopedilum John Hope Franklin

Phalaenopsis John Hope Franklin

Phalaenopsis Aurelia Franklin

Wherever you may be and whatever you may doing, I wish you a great month of June. Especially enjoy the summer solstice evening of June 20 because from that time forward the days will be shortening.....again. It sure is surprising how quickly time passes, unless you are waiting for an orchid to flower for the first time that's been grown from seed!

Phil B.

<https://triangleorchidsociety.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TriangleOrchidSociety/>