

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society



**Cover photo:** Your editor's photo of a highly patterned phalaenopsis at the 2008 Santa Barbara International Orchid Show.

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday, February 18, 2009**

Location: Louise Lowry Davis  
Recreation Center  
1232 De La Vina (at Victoria)

Meeting: 7:30 PM

**Greg Cooper**  
will speak about  
***How to Make Good Orchid Pictures***

Most of us like to take pictures of our plants. Most of us are not very good at it. It is time to learn some tricks and tips on photographing our favorite plants from an expert photographer who specializes in orchids. Greg Cooper teaches Visual Journalism full time at Brooks Institute of Photography in Ventura. In addition, he sells fine-art prints and notecards of his orchid photographs. This is your opportunity to hear about orchid photography from an expert—and put your newfound knowledge to use at the upcoming spring show!

Don't forget to arrive early and help set up for the meeting.

AOS Judging:

The American Orchid Society's Central Coast Judging Center meets concurrently with OSSB in the small room at Louise Lowry Davis. To enter a plant in AOS judging, bring it by 6:30PM for registration. Note that AOS judging is separate from our society's monthly show table.

## Calendar—It's Show Season!

**February 20-22, 2009**

**Santa Clara Valley Orchid Society Show**

Westgate Mall, San Jose. [www.santaclaravalleyorchidsociety.org](http://www.santaclaravalleyorchidsociety.org)

**February 21-22, 2009**

**Gardena Cymbidium Club Show**

Nakaoka Memorial Center, Gardena.

**March 6-8, 2009**

**San Francisco Orchid Society Pacific Orchid  
Exposition: "Green with Envy"**

Fort Mason Center's Festival Pavilion, San Francisco.  
[www.orchidsanfrancisco.org](http://www.orchidsanfrancisco.org).

**March 7-8, 2009**

**South Bay Orchid Society Show**

Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Dr.,  
Torrance. [www.SouthBayOrchidSociety.com](http://www.SouthBayOrchidSociety.com)

**March 13-15, 2009**

**San Diego County Orchid Society Show  
"Around the World with Orchids"**

Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego  
[www.sdorchids.com](http://www.sdorchids.com)

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OSSB Officers for 2009:  
President - Randall Umland  
Treasurer - PJ Sanderson

Vice President - Carol Rogers  
Secretary - Heidi Kirkpatrick

Visit the OSSB Web Site!

[www.orchidsb.net](http://www.orchidsb.net)

## Report of the January Meeting

### Announcements

- President Randall Umland announced the show table winners for 2008 and presented high point scorer Don Brown with a gift certificate to SBOE. Second place and third place winners Ed and Shirlye Carter and James Merriman, respectively, won tickets for the raffle table.
- Long time editor of the *Orchid Digest*, Harold Koopowitz, has retired. The new editor is none other than our own Sandy Svoboda.
- It is not too late to register for the Cymbidium Congress at the CSA member, early registration price. Not a member? Ship off your membership fee at the same time to get the membership registration price.
- Treasurer PJ Sanderson reminded everyone to pay their annual dues for 2009. If you do not pay by March, you will be dropped from the mailing list and will not appear in the OSSB roster that comes out in April.
- OSSB will once again have a sales booth at the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show. We will need plants to sell and members to staff it. Sign ups for sales and for exhibit installation will start this month at the meeting. Groom your plants now for show or for sale. Remember, plants should be bug and disease free!

### Program

Vice President Carol Rogers introduced our January speaker, our own Phil Watt. Phil, who is a librarian at UCSB, is a second-generation orchid grower, son of members Betty and Conrad Watt. Phil has been involved with the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show since age 10, when three of the corsages he made won awards and he appeared in the newspaper as a young orchid grower. The corsage regulars were so shocked that they refused to believe he had made his own corsages, so every year after that he set up at a card table and made the corsages at the show to demonstrate to everyone that he made his own corsages.

In those early days, Phil knew cattleyas, phalaenopsis and cymbidiums because those were the flowers used by florists. He attended meetings as a child with his mother and noted that he was never really out of orchids, but high school and college intervened. Phil joined the society as an adult some 10 years ago. Currently, he is studying to be an AOS judge and is president of the Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society.

Phil discussed "Orchid Growing Basics," aimed at the beginning grower but with plenty of useful reminders for the expert. Phil noted that he has learned much of his orchid growing not only from his mother, but from Paul Gripp and the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. Phil and his wife Angela grow outdoors

in Goleta, so his comments were particularly useful for local growers.

The first step in knowing how to grow your plants is to learn how to mimic conditions from your plants' natural habitats. Orchid growing basics begin with light, temperature and water. Orchid advice books usually list low light as 1000 to 2000 foot-candles, medium light as 2000 to 3000 foot to candles, and high light as 3000 to 4000 foot-candles.

Phil and Angela grow mostly outdoors, where the light meter on a camera would inform them they have high light levels. To provide similar dappled conditions as an orchid might find in its natural environment, they grow under 50% shade cloth or light dappled through tree leaves. Over time, they have pruned their citrus tree to comfortably host orchid plants, with Spanish moss to fill in the hot spots. As a note, Phil observed that their shade cloth is intentionally low because then it is not visible from the street, and therefore less likely to incur the ire of neighbors.

Typical orchid books divide orchid temperature requirements into cool, intermediate and warm. Since they grow mostly outdoors, Phil says they look for cool growing plants. But he has learned to expect temperatures between 27°F and 100°F. Beyond those extremes, they either bring sensitive plants inside or cool down the outdoor plants.

Phil notes that outdoor intermediate or warm growing plants are best in a greenhouse in our area, though he and Angela grow some phals that live outside when the weather is good. Temperatures below 50°F, though, are very bad for phals, and can result in leaf damage or death.

Plant leaves will show the results of adverse temperatures, and Phil showed several examples. They left a phal out in cooler nights in an attempt to force it to bloom, and the nights got a little too cool, resulting in very red phal leaves. A plant of *Lc. Stonehouse* had burn marks on its leaves. These result either from an unusually hot day or from direct sunlight on the leaves for a substantial time.

Temperature is tied in with air movement, which is important for orchids. Phil and Angela keep their plants on benches with gravel below. Not only does this allow air movement beneath the plants, but one doesn't have to bend down so far. Phil noted that some nurseries do grow on the ground, but not directly on the dirt; plants are sitting atop something like gravel, as in Gallup & Stribling, which also has huge fans for air movement. Additionally, Phil feels the benches keep the plants at least a little further away from snails and slugs.

When watering, Phil notes that he and Angela like to do so thoroughly by making two passes. He recommended for five plants to water once, wait a few minutes, then come back and water again. For a few hundred plants, water once, then start over for the second pass. Ideally, morning watering is best, because it allows plants to dry before nightfall. However, Phil did mention

that Harry Phillips of Andy's Orchids likes to water hanging plants in the afternoon.

Phil observed that a frequent answer for water frequency is every seven days, but that is too easy. A rigorous schedule doesn't take into account wind, cold, Santa Anas, foggy mornings, marine layers. Instead, it is better to water more often when it is hot, dry or windy, maybe every four days. During cool weather, water only every ten days or less, particularly if there is rain. Phil also noted that since growers try to duplicate what plants receive in their natural habitat, it is useful to know which specialized plants want a period of no water at all.

Phil and Angela do not have reverse osmosis water. Instead, they use city water in Goleta, which has a relatively high mineral content. He noted that if they had better water, they would have better looking leaves, and demonstrated with a photo of leaf tip burn on the salt sensitive *Cym. devonianum*.

When watering mounted or hanging plants, one waters the whole thing, roots, cork/basket and plant. Phil observed that mounted plants will grow any which way they want and look more natural than those growing in a pot. But mounted plants will dry out more quickly than potted ones and need more frequent watering.

Phil noted that potting media are very individual, depending on the grower. Most of their plants are in bark. For organic media that will break down, Phil recommended that if you can't remember when you last repotted it, it probably needs it.

Moving beyond light, temperature and water, Phil noted that the fertilizer isle can be confusing. He uses a water soluble fertilizer, considered the safest. However, he does not follow the instructions on the box; instead he and Angela fertilize more often but with a lower strength, even through winter. It is important to remember that plants in the wild don't receive regular fertilizer, so growers should not over-fertilize or the roots will be burned. Another option for outdoor orchids is the time release fertilizer; two common brands for orchids are Osmocote and Nutricote. Phil noted that it is important not to use too much of these. He recommends liquid fertilizers for phals.

Among the pests he and Angela encounter are slugs and snails. Phil observed that there are a number of products available to fight these pests, but that Sluggo is considered safe around pets. A home remedy is a dish of beer, to which the slugs will be attracted. If you check for them, check just after dusk.

Phil commented that one must be vigilant for aphids. He and Angela use regular dish soap in a sponge, wet the sponge, then pour the bubbles over the infected spike. Alternatively, they pick them off with their fingers. There are also insecticidal soaps available commercially. For mealy bug, scale and mites, it is important to spray more than once, following the directions on the bottle; the second spray kills new hatchlings. To discourage mites in hot weather, Phil waters the underside of the leaves.

It is also important to keep one's potting area clean to avoid transferring disease and virus. Phil and Angela use an old steak knife for dividing, sterilizing it with flame or trisodium phosphate between plants. The work surface should be clean, too. Some nurseries work on old newspapers. Others wipe down the potting area with bleach. Phil and Angela also don't reuse bamboo stakes.

In discussion afterward, Phil noted that catching water that drips through one plant and using it on another probably isn't a good idea. PJ Sanderson recycles her orchid fertilizer water by using it on azaleas rather than orchids. Though some say slipper orchids don't like to be repotted/divided, Phil noted that they dislike salts and will be unhappy if their mix goes sour. Also, new divisions are best with two to three growths.

## Calendar continued ...

**March 14-15, 2009**

**Central California Orchid Society Show**

Sierra Vista Mall, 1050 Shaw Ave., Clovis, CA

**March 20-22, 2009**

**Santa Barbara International Orchid Show  
"Orchid Escape"**

Earl Warren Showgrounds. [www.sborchidshow.org](http://www.sborchidshow.org).

Installation will be the same day as our March meeting; more info at upcoming meetings and newsletters.

**March 21, 2009**

**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Cymbidium Congress**

Held in conjunction with the Santa Barbara show. Lectures, banquet, auction, etc. Get a brochure at the meeting or go to [www.cymbidium.org](http://www.cymbidium.org)

**April 4-5, 2009**

**Five Cities Orchid Show and Sale  
"Orchid Stampede"**

800 W. Branch Street, Arroyo Grande, CA

## Refreshments

	Food	Drink
February	Randall Umland	Mary Sadeghian
March	Robin Hamlin	
June	Joyce Tolle	
August	Betty Watt	

There are plenty of spaces open on the refreshment sign-up sheet!

## Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Membership Renewal

Annual Membership is \$30. Make checks payable to OSSB. Memberships can be renewed at the monthly meeting or by sending your check to: PJ Sanderson, 2211 Alameda Padre Serra, Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Please include the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## January 2009 Show Table Results

First place in the January Show Table voting went to Bill Robson's *Pleurothallis palliolata*. Don Brown's *Slc. Purple Jewel* and Larry Vierheilig's *Den. farmeri* tied for second place. Third place went to Bill Robson for his usual *Arpophyllum spicta*. Somehow the list got away from your editor before I could write down who else brought plants to show; please let me know if you brought a plant in January.

AOS results are not available as I write this, but from

my notes, Jim Sloniker's *Paph. venustum* received a 79 point HCC. Bryce Augustine's *Paph. fairrieianum album* was awarded a 76 point HCC. And Don Brown brought in a *Den. Avril's Gold* with huge flowers bearing distinct red spots on golden yellow that earned a 79 point HCC.

Congratulations to these winners and thanks to all those who brought in plants to show or for judging. It is always delightful and educational to see orchids in bloom.