

# Orchid Society of Santa Barbara

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday,  
September 16, 2009**

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

Meeting: 7:30 PM

**Chris Ehrler**  
will speak about  
**Growers from the  
Kona Orchid Society of Hawaii**

Ever wonder what challenges growers in other parts of the country face? Chris Ehrler of Five Cities Orchid Society visited the homes of a number of Kona Orchid Society growers on a trip to Hawaii. He will show us their growing challenges, such as protecting plants from too much rain. He will also discuss his visit to a large commercial oncidium alliance grower that ships plants around the world (from their three million seedling capacity).

**Setup Help:** President Randall Umland can use some help with setting up tables and chairs before the meeting!

**AOS Judging:** Bring your plant by 6:30 PM to register it for AOS judging.



**Photo:** Your editor, camera in hand, visited Bill Robson shortly after this plant received its AM at the August meeting. *Acinetia antioquiae* 'Sycamore Creek' AM/AOS.

## Calendar

**October 16-18, 2009**

**Southland Show at the Huntington Gardens  
"The Golden Age of Orchids"**

For more on the concurrent AOS members meeting, go to [www.orchidshow.org](http://www.orchidshow.org)

**November 28-29, 2009**

**Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Fall Show  
"Orchids in Paradise"**

Show installation Friday Nov 28, 1-5PM. We will need volunteers, display plants, and plants for the society sales.

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)

## Summary of the August 2009 Meeting

### ❁ Pre-Program

Before our regular program, Doug Hagensen spoke to the members about Backyard Harvest, a non-profit which collects residential and commercial produce that would otherwise go to waste. In the 14 months of its existence, the program has collected 57,000 pounds of fresh produce for donation to the Unity Shoppe, which provides food for impoverished families. As an additional advantage, the produce is local, rather than trucked in at the expense of extra gasoline. Donations are tax deductible. Volunteers will glean your trees/plants or you can pick and they will pick up the produce. For pick up, call 884-8448, or check out the national organization at [www.backyardharvest.org](http://www.backyardharvest.org).

### ❁ Program

Carol Rogers introduced the August speaker, Dexter Friede, sales administrator for Grow More, Inc. Grow More, Inc. manufactures fertilizers, some of which are marketed specifically toward orchids. The company has over 100 products.

Dexter Friede began with a little history on the company, which started in 1918 as a specialty chemical company. In those days, it supplied chemicals for the film industry. But as film was used less, the company began to shift interest. In the 1970s, it began to manufacture fertilizers.

Grow More, Inc. specializes in fertilizers for West Coast soils. In particular, this is a recognition of the fact that most soil in this part of the country is alkaline. In contrast, Miracle Gro is an East Coast company producing products for more acidic soils.

Grow More, Inc. began with a basic water soluble product of 20-20-20. Now they sell fertilizer all over the US and in 35 foreign countries, especially Korea and the Middle East. Italians, Dexter noted, prefer water soluble products for a quick fix.

The company develops their retail lines by association with "experts." For example, their orchid line has been developed in association with orchid growers. The orchid fertilizer line, in fact, is a best seller for Grow More, Inc.

To understand about fertilizer, it is best to begin with

something straight forward, such as a product labeled 20-20-20. These numbers, the NPK, refer to the nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) content of the product. Nitrogen promotes growth and greening of leaves. Phosphorus is good for root structure. Potassium strengthens the structure of the plant, making a tougher leaf that is less palatable to bugs. When mixing a water soluble fertilizer labeled 20-20-20, a tablespoon per gallon will result in 325 parts per million (ppm) each of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Many orchid growers are concerned about the source of nitrogen in a fertilizer, such as urea or ammonia. Ammoniacal nitrogen can encourage too-early bloom. Urea is often used only in the summer, when weather is warmer, or even avoided altogether by orchid growers. Unused urea can stay in the orchid medium and accelerate breakdown of the mix. Gallup and Stribling, for example, uses urea free 20-10-20 for the growing season, and 6-30-30 to promote bloom.

But nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium aren't the only nutrients needed by plants. Secondary nutrients and micronutrients play big roles in proper growth. As an example, Dexter cited a Japanese client with deformed fruit and vegetables; the diagnosis was a lack of micronutrients. Calcium, magnesium and sulfur are considered secondary nutrients, whereas the micronutrients are molybdenum, nickel, copper, zinc, manganese, iron, boron and chlorine.

Furthermore, certain nutrients interact with each other or mimic each other's symptoms, so too little or too much of one nutrient may inhibit the absorption of another. For example, many Western growers see symptoms of iron deficiency in their plants. In reality, there is iron in our soils, but there is a deficiency of manganese, which has similar symptoms.

Other important nutrients include copper, which will make fruits sweeter, and zinc, which helps nutmeats to fill their shells. Calcium is particularly important for orchid growers, especially those who use reverse osmosis (R/O) water. But too much calcium will inhibit phosphorus absorption. Several members of our society use Grow More's CalMag or CalMag plus micros. A

similar product is MaxiCal, which is calcium nitrate with micronutrients; this is particularly good for tomatoes.

The pH of the water also is important to the absorption of nutrients. Grow More products are formulated to have a pH of 5 with use of street water. R/O growers should check the pH in their mixing tank.

When using a water soluble fertilizer, Dexter recommended that the product be used right after being mixed, as some components will settle to the bottom if the solution sits overnight. He also recommended feeding plants in early morning or at dusk to avoid stressing the plant in the heat of the day.

For those of you eager to figure out how much water soluble fertilizer gives a desired parts per million (ppm), here is *the formula*:

$$\frac{1 \text{ ounce}}{5 \text{ gallons}} \times \text{concentration} \times 75 = \text{parts per million}$$

This formula is written for using one ounce of fertilizer for five gallons of water. 75 is a conversion factor and the concentration is the number on the fertilizer container. For example, if the container is labeled 20-20-20 and one wants to know the concentration of nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium in one's vat of mixed fertilizer, the formula becomes:

$$\frac{1 \text{ ounce}}{5 \text{ gallons}} \times 20 \times 75 = 300 \text{ ppm of N, P or K}$$

If the label lists .5 as the concentration for a micronutrient, that vat of 5 gallons with 1 ounce of fertilizer in it gives the following equation:

$$\frac{1 \text{ ounce}}{5 \text{ gallons}} \times 0.5 \times 75 = 7.5 \text{ ppm of micronutrient}$$

Grow More, Inc. has numerous other products. These are a few of the products detailed in my notes:

Seaweed Extract (0.10-0.10-1.5)—has micronutrients, growth hormones, and natural

gibberilic acids, which encourage root growth. Seaweed grown cool in Nova Scotia has lower salt content. Also good as a dip for cuttings.

Sea Grow (16-16-16)—NPK plus kelp, micronutrients, plant hormones. Promotes darker leaves, plus more blooms and produce in fruits and vegetables.

Hawaiian Bud & Bloom (5-50-17)—ideal for plumeria. Pushes blooms.

Citrus Grower Blend—provides additional micronutrients for fruits and vegetables.

EZ Wet Soil Penetrant—leaches salts out of soil.

As a foliar spray, helps fertilizer stay on leaf.

Siphon Mixer—use 16 scoops in one gallon of water, and what emerges from the hose will be equivalent to one scoop per gallon.

Soil Builder (2-1-1)—micronutrients and humic acid. Humic acid is deficient in our soils.

Organic fertilizers—granular, not water soluble. Inoculated with microrhiza.

Dexter had a few last recommendations. Fertilizers with calcium nitrate are best dissolved in warm water, because calcium nitrate does not dissolve easily, particularly in alkaline water. It is okay to mix the concentrate in warm water, then use regular water to dilute. Also, do not mix two water soluble fertilizers together at one watering. It is better to alternate them. Lower phosphorus is good for container growers. Grow More's website is [www.growmore.com](http://www.growmore.com).

### ❁ August AOS Judging Results

Several awards were given in August, including an 83 point AM to Larry Vierheilig's *Coelogyne usitana* 'Chocolate Drop' and an 82 point AM to Bill Robson's *Acinetia antioquiiae* 'Sycamore Creek'. The other plants got away before I could record them.

### ❁ Refreshments

	Food	Drinks
September		Janet and Paul Gripp
October	Wayne Ferrell	Jeff Thompson
November	Don Brown	

## AOS Corner

The Southland Orchid Show Committee and the Huntington Botanical Gardens, outside Los Angeles, invite you to Arcadia, California on October 14–17, 2009. You can get the details from the AOS web site: [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org) under “Events” and then ‘Members Meetings’ although you do not have to be an AOS member to attend. All orchid people are welcome! You can also call Simone Friend at 562-431-1247 for a registration packet. This is a great orchid show at a fabulous

botanical garden where you will be able to listen to orchid lectures as well as tour the gardens. The Huntington has 150 acres with 12 specialized gardens so it is worth going for the gardens alone but even better when there is an orchid show. If you are an AOS member you will want to attend the AOS Town Hall Meeting on Saturday morning. You can wear your AOS pin to show your support—if you don’t have one they can be purchased for \$25, postage included, from the AOS web site. -- Carol Holdren, Affiliated Society Committee Chair

## Ribbon Judging Results

Since your editor has been out of town for several meetings, some of the ribbon judging results may not have been recorded. The May results appeared in the June newsletter. I do not have results for winners of the June meeting ribbon judging, but thanks to those who brought plants: Larry Vierheilg, Laurel & Chris Clayton, Don Brown, Josh Davis, Mary Sadeghian, Jeff Thompson. There was no ribbon judging at our July special meeting.

In August, first place went to Bryce Augustine’s *Phal. bellina*. Second place was a tie between Bill Robson’s

*Trichoceros sp.* and Larry Vierheilg’s *Zygonisia* Cynosure ‘Blue Bird’. Third place was another tie, this time between Larry Vierheilg’s *Coelogyne usitana* ‘Chocolate Drop’ AM/AOS and Jeff Thompson’s *Dracula tsubotae*. Thanks also to Don Brown for bringing display plants.

For those of you who were as clueless as I was about the parentage of *Zygonisia* (I’d never heard of that one before), it is *Aganisia* × *Zygopetalum*. *Aganisia* was described as a genus in 1839 by Lindley. Jay Pfahl’s Internet Orchid Species says there are only two species in the genus, but the RHS says *Acacalis cyanea* is really *Aganisia cyanea*...and one parent of *Zygonisia* Cynosure. The other is *Zygopetalum* Skippy Ku.