

# Massachusetts Orchid Society

P.O. Box 1041  
Medford, MA 02155



**JAN 2020**

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## Minute Minutes

### Notes from the Board

*We are always interested in new topics for demos and speakers at the regular monthly meetings. Feel free to stop a Board member and tell them what you'd like to hear about.*

- ◆ We have a new feature on our website, called "The Forum". It is a place to post your questions about anything orchid or MOS related. You'll find it located far right on the menu bar. Click, write and post!
- ◆ Hats off to Cindy D, Cindy S and the rest of the Board for putting together a fabulous holiday party and auction! The tables were beautifully decorated with linens, flower centerpieces and candles, creating a never-before achieved elegant ambiance ☺. The food was delicious, and the room felt especially warm and friendly this year!
- ◆ Speaking of the party, member Leslie Buchanan would like to find out who brought in a dessert she describes as "dense, sticky green 'cake' squares" and wonders if it may be Asian recipe using rice, instead of flour. Leslie said it was absolutely delicious and she'd love to have the recipe to bake for a family member with glucose intolerance. If you are this amazing mystery baker or know who is, please email [newsletter@massorchid.org](mailto:newsletter@massorchid.org), or speak to Leslie at our meeting.
- ◆ In anticipation of our 2020 MOS show on November 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, the board will begin recruiting for volunteers. 2019 ran smoothly with very few blips and prompt for-planning will only continue this trend. A list describing tasks will be posted on our website soon.
- ◆ CAIOS is hosting "All That Orchid Jazz" this month and we need blooming orchids for our display! Please email Brigitte Fortin, head of the display, at [Brigitte@massorchid.org](mailto:Brigitte@massorchid.org) with the number and descriptions of your blooming plants. 🌸

Cape and Islands Orchid Society  
presents  
**All That Orchid Jazz**  
Saturday & Sunday  
January 25 & 26, 2020  
9am-5pm  
The Resort & Conference Center at Hyannis  
35 Scudder Avenue  
Barnstable, MA  
Hyannis West End Rotary  
Admission is \$10  
For more information,  
call: 774-255-1316  
<http://www.caios.org>

UPCOMING EVENTSMonthly AOS Judging \*Note change of location

04 Jan 2020 10:30 AM

Boylston Town House

599 Main St,

Boylston, MA

Monthly Meeting - Bob Hesse: Orchid Murders

14 Jan 2020 7:30 PM

Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St,

Winchester, MA

CAIOS 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Show: "All That Orchid Jazz"

25–26 Jan 2020

The Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis

35 Scudder Ave,

Hyannis, MA

Monthly AOS Judging – Location Change

01 Feb 2020 10:30 AM

Tower Hill Botanic Garden,

11 French Dr, Boylston, MA (this month only)

Monthly Meeting – TBD

11 Feb 2020 7:30 PM

Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St,

Winchester, MA

Amherst Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale

22–23 Feb 2020

Smith Vocational High School

80 Locust St (Rt 9),

Northampton, MA

Monthly AOS Judging

07 Mar 2020 10:30 AM

Tower Hill Botanic Garden

11 French Drive,

Boylston, MA

## About our speaker, Bob Hesse

Bob's lifelong love affair with orchids began as a graduate student in London, at the Chelsea Flower Show. "It was the incredible variety and exotic forms of the orchids that blew me away," he claimed.

Upon graduating in the late '60's, Bob moved to Winchester, MA. He was unable to own a greenhouse, but wanted to cultivate his interest in orchids, which were rare and exotic plants at the time. Orchid growing was like polo; a rich man's sport, he said. A person could spend hundreds to thousands of dollars buying high quality orchids. High costs were driven in part by slow breeding techniques and flowering of plants; pricing most people out of the market.

Bob's interests brought him to MOS where he discovered members growing orchids in their homes. Intrigued by this, he joined the society. At meetings, members displayed whatever happened to be in bloom. Seeing these flowers up close is what made the meetings most remarkable to Hesse.

As a result of new breeding and propagation techniques, orchids have become more affordable and today, they are one of the most popular selling potted plants. "There has been a monstrous change," Bob said. "What has not changed, is the incredible forms and varieties of these plants." Likewise, generated by this proliferation, MOS grew, too. In the early days, members had to be unanimously approved by the board to join the society. Today, anyone can be a member who pays an annual due. "It was a very different and maybe not as admirable society as we have today," said Bob.

At MOS, Bob learned quickly about orchids. Before long, his passion led him to become an American Orchid Society judge. It took six years to complete his certification; the first three as a student judge and the following three as a probationary judge. "By [the end] I had seen a lot of incredible orchids," he said. When

scoring, judges look at three major areas: form, color, and presentation, using a scale of 1 to 100 points, where 100 is perfection. "An orchid judge tries to carry in his mind what the perfect orchid would be for a given type," Hesse said. What the perfect orchid looks like changes, but Hesse said that is part of the excitement and challenge.

After more than 40 years of judging, Hesse's love for orchids has not abated. More so than any other plant, he said, orchids have the ability to startle and amaze. To novice orchid lovers, Hesse offers the same advice as author Joseph Campbell, "Follow your bliss." He suggests people should grow what they love and what excites them, rather than what others say are easy to grow. "Follow what you love," he said.

**Bob's reputation as a photographer has earned him many accolades. He has garnered medals at the Miami International Orchid Show, the MOS, Cape and Islands and the New Hampshire Orchid Society shows. In addition, Bob has been awarded by New England Wildflower Society and his photos are in the permanent collection of the Boston Athenaeum; two of which were commissioned by the Athenaeum. There will be some of Bob's photos for sale or for auction at the meeting (TBD).**



Ben Larson shared with us some of his gorgeous photos of last November's MOS show. Thanks, Ben!



Above: Meg Bright-Ryan's *Catasetum Frilly Doris* that received two ribbons.





Left: Brian Leib conducting A repotting demonstration.



Right: Holiday party and auction



for the novice

# Try New Things

Text by Sue Bottom/Photographs by Terry Bottom

Orchid growers are always tinkering with their growing regimens and experimenting with different approaches. Courtney Hackney likes to see how newly purchased orchids growing in different commercial mixes will fare in his greenhouse. He watches the plant carefully, of course, to see whether the mix will get thumbs up or thumbs down under his growing conditions. Some cattleyas he has purchased in cypress mulch have had a fabulous root system and growth response, so the search is on for a reliable source of high-quality cypress mulch (a product that unfortunately is quite variable in quality based on our local experiences). Some of the plants he has gotten in sphagnum moss were found to have compromised root systems. Whether the moss was too old, of low quality or just stayed too wet, the experiment was terminated and the plants repotted in his mix of choice.



**CATASETUM HERESY** Today's catasetum growers are told repeatedly that catasetums require a dry winter, and that all water should be restricted during dormancy. I have generally followed this advice except for the couple of plants that refused to drop their leaves such as *Catasetum discolor*. This year the resting catasetums were put in a dryish section of the hoop house, but they did receive some overspray from the overhead misting system. Not only did they not suffer any negative consequences from the misting, the pseudobulbs remained plump, showing no signs of winter desiccation. For some interesting observations on winter watering, take the time to reread Stephen R. Batchelor's article on catasetum culture as a function of growth cycle (Batchelor 1983).

The new growths began to appear in December and January, so it was time to start repotting. The root systems were so robust that it was difficult to get the pseudobulbs out of the pot, even with a knife. Time for catasetum heresy No. 2: Each pot was set in a bucket of water so the roots could absorb moisture, allowing the plants to be removed more easily from



the pot. With a little urging from the knife, they popped out of the pot without too much damage to the roots. This clearly violates the rule about no watering of plants until the new roots and growths are 4–5 inches (10–12.5 cm) tall.

Then it was decision time; cut away all the old roots and pot up the pseudobulbs, as has been my practice for so many years? After hydrating the root mass, it was easy to tell whether the roots were healthy or distressed. When there was a dense mass of white, thick roots throughout the pot, this pot was simply dropped into a larger pot with a little extra sphagnum moss. Grayish, dry looking roots were removed,

[1] Some of the catasetums with healthy root systems were slip-potted — dropped into larger pots with a little extra moss. This means the pots are larger than in prior years, but the plants do not seem to mind as long as there is enough Styrofoam at the bottom for drainage.

[2] The white, plump roots on the left are healthy and ready to fuel this year's growth; this plant was slip-potted. The plant on the right has some healthy roots and some not so healthy; these roots were cut away so the plant could regenerate fresh roots.

often to the base of the pseudobulbs. Sometimes there was a very healthy section of roots in one area of the pot and not so healthy roots in other sections, for these a hybrid approach was used in which only the viable roots were maintained and surrounded with fresh sphagnum. The lesson learned from this experience is you should know the rules as well as understand the reason behind the rules. After that, trust your instincts. Do not be afraid to break the rule if it seems like the right thing to do.

There are some new products we will be trialing this year, as well as some new ways of using old staples from the potting shed.

**SHEEP HOOF TRIMMING SHEARS** Christmas arrived early when I received a package from Keith Davis containing two sets of shears along with a catalog from the Mid-States Wool Growers. The shears are tough, sharp and durable, designed for cutting sheep hooves. One of the shears is the ARS Hoof Shear, described as being "made of a high carbon steel, precision ground, and hardened for strength. Because of the thickness and strength of their blades, they can be sharpened many times over." The second was a Saboten Hoof Trimmer described as "lightweight, easy action, very sharp, making for easy cutting." I am hoping this will solve my shears dilemma where I buy five or six pairs each year and the torch dulls them quickly. Even though Terry sharpens them, they have to be replaced at the end of the year. So far, these shears are great. Only Keith would come up with the idea of using these on orchids. Of course, this is the same guy that gets iron fillings from the shop that turns brake drums as a supplement for his rupicolous laelias and uses a clothespin to train his flowers to display properly.

**BRAN FLAKES FOR LUBBERS** Grasshoppers, and more particularly, lubber grasshoppers, can do quite a bit of damage to your orchid plants and flowers. Lubber control used to consist of "capture and stomp," until a friend in my orchid club told me about NoLo bait, also sold as Semaspore Bait. Linda spreads the bait around her property in the spring when the lubbers first emerge from the ground. They are attracted to the bran and consume the *Nosema locustae*, a target-specific pathogen that infects and kills 90 species of grasshoppers, locusts, and crickets. The Arbico Organic website states "Death may occur in 1 to 3 weeks in juvenile grasshoppers. Third instars or older may take more time to



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die. The insect pathogen multiplies in infected grasshoppers and passes from grasshopper to grasshopper throughout the season." The product is easy to apply, certified for organic production and reported to be harmless to humans, pets, birds, beneficial insects, and other wildlife. I got the product midsummer after the lubbers were mature, so also ordered some EcoBran from Planet Natural. This bran bait is treated with Carbaryl, the active ingredient in liquid Sevin, and is intended for a quick grasshopper and cricket kill. Next year the applications will

- [3] Tired of your shears getting dull and rusted after a few months of torching? Try the more heavy-duty shears sold for trimming sheep hooves. They are thicker, stronger and more resistant to dulling. Hat tip to Keith Davis.
- [4] Lubber grasshoppers are attracted to the bran at this bait station. You can use NoLo bait early in the year to infect them with a pathogen, or poison them with EcoBran later in the year. Hat tip to Linda Stewart.

start much earlier, with hopefully even better results.

**DIP 'N GROW LIQUID ROOTING HORMONE** There are many different substances that orchid growers use to stimulate root growth; from natural products such as kelp extract that contain rooting hormones to synthetic products of various formulations and strengths. Dip 'n Grow is a synthetic auxin formulation containing 1.0% indole butyric acid (IBA) and 0.5% naphthalene acetic acid (NAA) dissolved in an isopropyl and ethyl alcohol solution. The IBA in alcohol-based products is designed to be readily absorbed into the plant tissue. John Stanton of the Orchid Trail in North Carolina told Courtney his trick for applying the auxin to get the best response. He uses the midrange 1:10 dilution rate and places the liquid in a spray bottle. When he has prepared the plant for repotting, he sprays the forward part of the rhizome to encourage root growth and then repots it, letting it dry slightly before drenching the pot. This seems to be a more targeted approach than just drenching with a seaweed solution after repotting and letting much of the active ingredient be washed from the pot. This product in and of itself is not that unusual, it is the way in which it is applied that is so clever. We will be using this during the repotting season and will report on the results. We hope to get the profusion of roots in recently repotted orchids as John reports, particularly for those sometimes-difficult bifoliate cattleyas that are so sensitive to repotting mistakes.

**ORTHENE DRENCH FOR THRIPS** If you have been tortured by thrips ruining your buds and flowers, you might consider an Orthene drench. When sharing my thrips frustration with Ben Oliveros of Orchid Eros, he mentioned that he had tried everything to get thrips under control including some of the new, multi-hundred dollar insecticides. Then one day he decided to use an Orthene drench despite the oft-repeated admonition that many pests have become resistant to Orthene. He added Orthene to the Dosatron suction bucket at a rate equivalent to 1 tsp/gal (1.3 ml/l) and drenched his plants. The Orthene was absorbed up through the roots into the plant and prevented thrips damage for 4 to 6 weeks. I repeated his experiment with the same great results and seem to have broken the cycle of recurring thrips damage in the greenhouse. After mentioning this success story with George Hausermann, he laughed and talked about his experience when EFG first relocated to



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DeLand, Florida where there were many local fern growers for the florist trade. At that time, Orthene was ineffective in his greenhouse due to resistance problems. Many of these fern growers sustained damage after the hurricanes of 2004, and never rebuilt their operations. Now George can use Orthene again with great results, because his insects have not been exposed to it so they have not had a chance to develop resistance to the active ingredient Acephate.

**HAMMER FOR VIRUS SAMPLE PREP** I continue to test for and find virus in my cattleyas. The good news is that the cattleyas exhibiting the symptoms of virus

- [5] Using seaweed and rooting hormones is not new, but spraying a root stimulant on cattleya pseudobulbs and roots during repotting is a novel approach. Hat tip to John Stanton via Courtney Hackney.
- [6] Orthene is a very affordable systemic pesticide that has been used by orchid growers for ages. Try applying it as a drench to eliminate damage to your flowers and buds from thrips. Hat tip to Ben Oliveros.
- [7] If you are looking for something to mash up the plant tissue in the mesh bag when testing for virus, keep a hammer in your potting area. Hat tip to Plato Matthews.

in their leaves are gone, but I continue to find color break and necrotic streaking and spotting in the flowers. At one of the Cattleya Symposiums, I overheard Plato Matthews talking about how he prepares the leaf sample for testing with an Agdia strip with a hammer. Hmm, much more effective than the meat tenderizer I had been using. I have yet to determine how the virus is being transmitted despite all my sanitation precautions. I have not made the leap to using gloves during repotting. Perhaps I will this year or perhaps I will just keep a spray bottle of Lysol General Cleaner handy and wash my hands between plants.

Do not be afraid to try new things. You do not want to be stuck in the “this is the way I have always done it” mindset; neither do you want to try out every new suggestion on your entire orchid collection. Approach the change as you would a scientific experiment. Consider what you are trying to achieve; think through what result would constitute a success and what would be considered a failure. After that, your powers of observation will tell you if it is time to cut your losses and end the experiment or expand it to a larger trial. Try new things, as my sainted mother used to recite, “Every day, in every way, I

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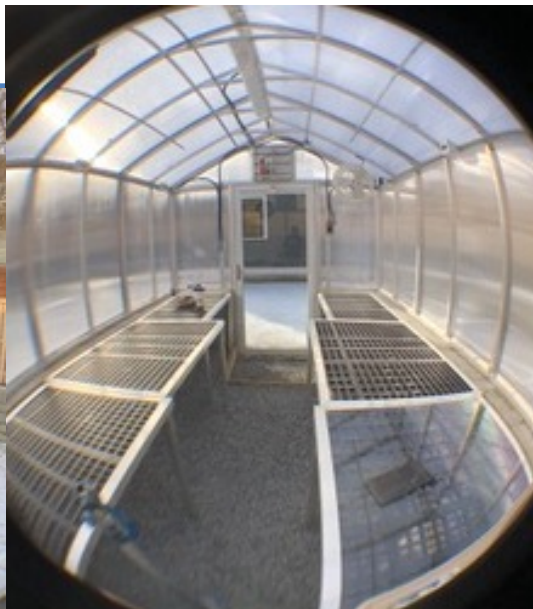
am getting better and better.” Citations and Additional Reading Batchelor, S.R. 1983. *Beginner’s Series 30, Catasetums and Cynoches — Part 6 — Culture Influenced by Growth Cycle.* American Orchid Society Bulletin 52:1163–1169. [www.aos.org/am/images/pdf/beginners\\_series-ctsm6.pdf](http://www.aos.org/am/images/pdf/beginners_series-ctsm6.pdf).

— Sue Bottom started growing orchids in Houston in the mid-1990s after her husband Terry built her first greenhouse.

They settled into St. Augustine, Florida, Sue with her orchids and Terry with his camera and are active in the St. Augustine Orchid Society, maintaining the society’s website and publishing its monthly newsletter. Sue is also a member of the AOS Editorial Board ([sbottom15@gmail.com](mailto:sbottom15@gmail.com)).

As Monty Python famously said, “And now, for something completely different!” I (your trusted newsletter editor) want to tell you about my new greenhouse! Long in the planning, this itty-bitty, 100 sf thing is just the right size to satisfy town zoning regulations and house my orchids. It’s safely nestled in a corner of a low hillside and gets loads of sunlight. Inside, there are 6 aluminum benches, a fan mounted in one corner and fog machine in the other (not shown). An electric heater sits beneath the protective plexiglass covered bench and there’s an irrigation pipe with hook-ups for 4 hoses (also not shown). There’s also an ambient weather station that works off my Weather Underground App (pictured right) and a monitor in my house, to tell me wherever I am about the growing conditions. Personally, I love the fact that visibility inside is always 10 miles! I purchased the greenhouse and equipment through Arcadia Glasshouse Co., which is advertised in AOS. After growing in a basement room under lights for over 10 years, this is a dream come true, but a mildly terrifying one— until I master this new way of taking care of my orchid family. To be updated in a few months... until then,

Best to all in the New Year!  
Anne



Close Today's Weather Conditions

51°  
FEELS LIKE 51°  
Partly Cloudy

Precip Since Midnight	0.01 in
Wind & Gusts from N	0 mph   0 mph
Humidity	68%
Dew Point	41°
Visibility	10 mi
Pressure Falling	30.15"
UV Index Low	0-Low Risk



## • THE AOS CORNER •



# Seasonal Orchid Care: JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Click [here](#) for Checklist

Now you can access the MOS website  
from your smartphone with this new app!

The new [Wild Apricot for Members App](#) allows members to log in and view content from [www.massorchid.org](http://www.massorchid.org).

### What can your members do with the member app?

- View the member directory
- View a member's profile
- Email fellow members
- View the event calendar and event details
- Register for an event
- Specify the number of guests if the registration type was set up to collect the total number of guests only
- View your existing event registrations
- Pay an outstanding event registration fee
- View your member profile
- Download the app on Apple or Google Play.

# Officers, Directors & Committee Chairs

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Secretary	Meg Bright-Ryan	<a href="mailto:meg@massorchid.org">meg@massorchid.org</a>
Treasurer	Ellen Shapiro	<a href="mailto:ellen@massorchid.org">ellen@massorchid.org</a>

## Directors

Mike Badia	<a href="mailto:mike@massorchid.org">mike@massorchid.org</a>
Sasha Crotty, Past President	<a href="mailto:sasha@massorchid.org">sasha@massorchid.org</a>
Brigitte Fortin	<a href="mailto:brigitte@massorchid.org">brigitte@massorchid.org</a>
Zash Hudson	<a href="mailto:zash@massorchid.org">zash@massorchid.org</a>
Anne Pfaff	<a href="mailto:anne@massorchid.org">anne@massorchid.org</a>
Cindy Sykes	<a href="mailto:cindy@massorchid.org">cindy@massorchid.org</a>

## Committee Chairs

AOS Trustee	Howard Bronstein	
AOS Representative	Brigitte Fortin	<a href="mailto:aosrep@massorchid.org">aosrep@massorchid.org</a>
Conservation	Robert Hesse	<a href="mailto:conservation@massorchid.org">conservation@massorchid.org</a>
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Library	Open	<a href="mailto:librarian@massorchid.org">librarian@massorchid.org</a>
Membership	Zash Hudson	<a href="mailto:membership@massorchid.org">membership@massorchid.org</a>
Newsletter Editor	Anne Pfaff	<a href="mailto:newsletter@massorchid.org">newsletter@massorchid.org</a>
Orchid Digest		
Representative	Ellen Shapiro	<a href="mailto:ellen@massorchid.org">ellen@massorchid.org</a>

## Orchid Show

Board of Directors [show@massorchid.org](mailto:show@massorchid.org)

## Show Table

Brigitte Fortin [brigitte@massorchid.org](mailto:brigitte@massorchid.org)  
Mike Badia [mike@massorchid.org](mailto:mike@massorchid.org)