

Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

April 2008

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Contact Us

http://ci_orchid_society.tripod.com

Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter is published irregularly. Subscription is through membership in the Society.

Membership is \$10/person with \$5 for each additional family member. Checks payable to CIOS should be sent to Jerry Steerman, 507 N. Coler, Urbana, IL 61801.

CIOS Officers for 2008

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Jerry Steerman, Treasurer

Nancy Steerman, Secretary

Tim Bowers, AOS rep.

April rush:

The sun is brighter than ever, and there is a sense of urgency in the air, i.e., of repotting and providing spring care for your orchids. April is the month to check your plants for new growth or new roots and evaluate its need for fertilizing and repotting. Many growers repot orchids every 2 years, but if the plant has filled the pot, or roots and new growths are too close to the edge of the pot, it is better to repot it because the new growth and the roots will be spilling over the side of the pot by mid summer. Sometimes, the medium looks fine at the top, but completely decomposed inside the pot, so it is good to loosen the plant out of the pot and check the medium.

Below are several basic steps to follow:

1. Carefully remove the plant from the pot. Watering before decanting makes it easier to remove the plant.
2. Check each root and cut or pull off the dead ones. Dead roots are soggy and dark if wet, or white and flat if dry. Feel with your fingers to find where the live part is. It should feel round and firm. Be careful not to damage the tender new round roots which are greenish white with purplish tips.
3. Match the pot to the root size, not the plant. The old pot can be used for the same plant as long as the pot still fits. If a different pot is to be used, make sure it is clean.
4. Specific care may be needed for different orchids. A common error for Phalaenopsis is that they are planted too high. Cattleya types may have to be divided before repotting can take place. Oncidiums should be repotted with the newest growth in mind. (See illustration under Notes, tips, Q &A.)
5. Make sure the cutting tools are sterile. Use Lysol or Listerine at full strength to dip the cutting edges of your tools. ("Sterilized pruning tools: nuisance or necessity", by Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott. <http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~Linda%20Chalker-Scott/FactSheets/Pruning.pdf>)
6. Use fresh potting medium. In general, small plants and those with thin, hair like roots should be planted in fine bark mix, while those with spaghetti size roots should be planted in medium to coarse bark mix.

Orchid of the month: 1



The two miniature plants shown at left are from (guess who?) -- Don McClure's collection. *Koellensteinia graminea* (grassleaf orchid) at right has light orange-pink flowers with spots all over them.

This species come from northern South America, from Ecuador to Bolivia on the west coast, and from Venezuela to northern Brazil on the east coast.

The yellow flowered plant that resembles lily-of-the-valley is *Pleurothallis giesbrechthianum*.

Orchid of the Month: 2

Jerry Steerman purchased this extraordinary plant last year from Oak Hill Gardens. It is Blc. *Liese Pigores*, named after the wife of Herman Pigores, the Founder/Owner of Oak Hill Gardens.

The flower is about 6" x 6", and when clustered together as seen here, it is difficult to tell where one flower ends and another begins. The weight of the flowers has bent the flower stalk about 90 degrees.



Did you know?

The smallest orchid is *Platystele jungermannioides* which has flowers only half a millimeter or one-hundredth of an inch in diameter. The entire plant is only about a quarter of an inch or half a centimeter tall.

Next meeting:

The April meeting will be on Tues. April 15 at the Urbana Free Library, starting at 6:30 P.M. as usual. The program is corsage making. Supplies including the flower will be provided for the members, and for non-members who pre-registered. The basic corsage will be made of a Cymbidium flower, but many orchid flowers can be made into corsages, so you are welcome to bring your own flowers to try. Christa Carroll of Rick Orr Florist will be present to give us professional assistance. Bring your blooming plants for show and tell, and other plants for care suggestions, especially repotting.

Notes, tips, Q & A:

- Repotting Oncidium type orchids:

The Oncidiums often perish from dehydration when repotting is not done correctly and in a timely fashion.

The new growth appears next to last year's growth (pseudobulb), and often shows many new roots that just stay above the potting medium. It is important to repot the plant with the newest growth as a target. In the example at right, the left-most pseudobulb is from last year; the right most pseudobulb is from two years ago, and the newest growth (has not formed a pseudobulb yet) is in the middle. The oldest bulb is leafless and hidden at back.

It is essential to cover the plant with potting medium just up to the base of the newest growth, while older pseudobulbs will be partly buried.

If the plant has several new growths, it can be divided, as long as each new growth is accompanied by 2-3 older pseudobulbs.



Events in the area:

- April 26 (11 A.M. – 5 P.M.); April 27 (10 A.M. – 4 P.M.) - Greater Cleveland Orchid Society Show, South Euclid Community Center, 1370 Victory Dr., South Euclid, OH. Contact: Dawn Schlote, 7916 StanhopeKellogsville, Williamsfield, OH 44093; (440) 364-9590; columbianwolf@aol.com.