

Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

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In This Issue

- Spring time for new growth
- Orchid Hill Tour
- Next meeting
- Orchid of the month 1
- Notes and tips
- Insect control for orchids
- Orchid of the month 2
- Events in the area

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

Mitzi Williams, President & News Letter Editor

Jerry Steerman, Treasurer

Nancy Steerman, Secretary

Tim Bowers, AOS rep.

Spring is time for new growths:

By now, most of your Phalaenopsis are either in full bloom or have nice long flower spikes loaded with flower buds. Continue to water them as it encourages new buds to form at the tip well into early summer. Other plants, especially those that bloomed in November and December, have had their rest. They are waking up from dormancy and are ready to make new growths. These include Oncidiums and their hybrids as well as Cattleya/Laelia types.

But, watch out! The orchid plants are not the only things that are waking up—the insect pests are also feeling the rise in temperature and are mobilized to damage these new growths, or fill up the leaf folds to consume the entire plant. Careful inspection of your plant this month is necessary in order to keep the damage to a minimum, and prevent infestation spreading to other plants. Scales, mealy bugs, and aphids are particularly problematic. For more information about the insect pests, see p. 3 of this issue.

Another ‘new’ is change in the sunlight. Spring officially begins on March 21, and with it comes the longer day length. Your plants on window sills are positively responding to the increased intensity of the sun as well as to the daylight length, but soon, they will need some sun screen or be moved away from the window to avoid sun damage. Don’t forget to increase humidity around the plants on warm sunny days, too, especially if they are planted in small pots.

Mitzi Williams

Orchid Hill Tour:

The talk given by Roger Jansen of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources about the wild orchids at Orchid Hill was very interesting. Orchid Hill is a protected area within Dynergy property, accessible only with a guide from DNR. According to Roger, several species of orchids including the yellow slipper orchids (*Cypripedium pubescens*), twayblade orchids (*Liparis lilifolia*), and a few *Spiranthes* species are found at Orchid Hill. They bloom at different times of the year, but there will be at least one tour possibly in May. Stay tuned for an announcement in a future issue.

Next meeting:

- The next CIOS meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on March 18, 2008 at the Urbana Free Library. The meeting will be in the Conference Room as usual. The program this month include a report of the Pacific Orchid Expo held in San Francisco, and repotting, so bring in your pot-bound orchids for consultation. As usual, members are encouraged to bring blooming orchids for show and tell.
- The April program on April 15th is on orchid corsage making where we will make our own orchid corsages. There is no cost to the members and the meeting is open to everyone. Because of the cost of the supplies, however, non-members are asked to register and pre-pay a nominal fee **if one wishes to actually make a corsage**. If interested, please register by calling 344-5762 or e-mailing mwillms1@uiuc.edu by April 7, 2008. We cannot guarantee the types of orchids that you will receive for your corsage. More details will appear in the next issue.

Orchid of the month: 1



Slc. Jewel Box 'Dark Waters' AM/AOS is a hybrid between SLC Anzac and *C. aurantiaca*. Mature plant stands at about 14 inches, so some growers consider this a compact Cattleya type.

This plant is truly a joy to grow not only because of its brilliant red flowers, but also for its vigorous habit. It consistently produces several new growths every year with each new growth opening up to a cluster of several slightly fragrant flowers in late winter.

Notes and tips:

- The Conservatory at the Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is located at 1201 S. Dorner Drive in Urbana. It is open to the public Mon. – Fri. 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and features many tropical plants including orchids. The epiphyte tree, created in 2005, is home to several species of orchids and bromeliads. To find out more about epiphytes and how this amazing tree was made, click on “epiphyte tree” at www.life.uiuc.edu/plantbio/greenhouse/. Also seen in the conservatory are nun’s orchid (*Phaius tankervillei*) and a type of *Brassavola* growing on a rock (by the small pond), though they may be out of flower by now.

Insect control for orchids:

Probably the most this time of the year are scales, mealy bugs, and aphids, even though some environmental conditions may cause other types of pests to become problems. Less common might be red spider mites as they thrive in a warm and dry atmosphere, but are discouraged by high humidity.

Scales (shown below left): In their adult stage, these insects look like tiny round brown bumps on pseudobulbs as well as the upper side of the leaves. They are less than 1/8 inch in diameter, and do not move. The immature scale bugs are light yellow or white in color, slightly oval, and often found on the underside of the leaves, especially along the center vein. If not on orchids, you may notice them on other house plants such as rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*), weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*) or hibiscus as the leaves and the floor under the plant become sticky. The adult or semi-adult scales can be easily squished, but because the eggs and the highly mobile young larvae are invisible to the naked eye, it is best to treat it chemically with an insecticide that targets scales. Treat the plant weekly for 9-12 weeks. Repotting the plant in a new medium will also help control the infestation.



Mealy bugs (shown above right): These white insects, each about 1/8" long and resemble a little white fuzz or a mass of cotton. They are often found in the fold of the leaves of *Oncidium* alliance. For *Cattleya*-types, check the leaves and inside the paper-thin dry sheath by peeling them off. It is best to first wipe off the cottony mass with a slightly wet paper towel or a tissue, or carefully dig out the bugs from the leaf fold before spraying the area with insecticidal soap. If the infestation is limited to only a portion of a plant, control is possible by swiping or daubing the bugs with a Q-tip or cotton ball dipped in rubbing alcohol before treating the whole plant. As in the case of scales, repeated application for at least 3 weeks is necessary to completely rid of these insects. Repotting is also recommended.

Aphids: Pinhead-sized and globular, aphids are usually found on growing tips and new leaves. They can be removed by hand, or washed off with water. Weekly use of insecticidal soap for 3 weeks is recommended.

All these insects suck the sap out of the plant, and excrete sweet, sticky material called honeydew. This honeydew may become host to black, powdery fungus called sooty mold which further ail the plant and/or attract ants. The area attacked by these insect pests may remain discolored until the leaf falls off. Unless it can be quarantined and treated diligently, a heavily infested plant should be discarded. For images and detailed information on these insects, see:

<http://nathist.sdstate.edu/orchids/pests/scales.htm>

<http://nathist.sdstate.edu/orchids/pests/mealybugs.htm>.

Also, good information is available in the Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter July 2002 issue posted at www.iosoc.com/Newsletters/IOS2002-07.pdf

Orchid of the month: 2



This Phalaenopsis Mini Mark 'Holm' grown by Carla Yambert was among the plants displayed at our 2008 show. The lightness of the image does not do justice to this delightful mini which shows lavender spots on the upper sepal and lateral petals. The spots become increasingly orange-pink towards the lower sepals and the lip which is tangerine orange in color.

This plant requires nearly the same care as Paphiopedilums and Phalaenopsis.

Events in the area:

- March 15-16, 2008
54th Annual Michigan Orchid Society Palm Sunday Show
MSU Management Education Center - 811 W Square Lake Rd
Troy, MI 48098
- March 28 – 30, 2008
Illowa Orchid Society Spring Show,
Putnum Museum and IMAX Theater,
1717 W. 12th St., Davenport, IA
309-764-3160
- April 5-6, 2008
Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show
Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL
847-991-5434
- April 8, 2008 (1 p.m.) and April 10, 2008 (7 p.m.)
Orchids 101: Learn how to select orchids suitable for the home and how to keep them alive once you get them. This program is a part of the 4-season gardening telenet conference sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension. 801 N. Country Fair Drive, Ste D. Champaign, IL
No charge, but registration is required one week before you plan to attend. Call 333-7672.