



CENTRAL ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY

Winter 2025

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American Orchid Society
Education. Conservation. Research.
Affiliated Society

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CIOS ONLINE:

- www.ciorchidsociety.org
- Facebook Group—[click here](#).
- ??s: info@ciorchidsociety.org

Central Illinois Orchid Society ' Newsletter is published each quarter and delivered by email. Subscription is included with membership in the Society. Send submissions to Lori Garrett at Lorikgarrett@gmail.com.

2024 CIOS Executive Board:

- Joanne Miller, President
- Mark Williams, Treasurer
- Lori Garrett, Editor/web; AOS Rep
- Vanessa DeShambo, Secretary
- John Foran, Sale Chair
- Linda Bailey, Show Chair

From the President . . .

Hello Orchid Members,

I hope you have enjoyed the Holiday Season. As I look at the snow outside this morning I still feel the Christmas spirit! My Orchid is still blooming from our Holiday Party and I think I picked a good one. It is an *Oncidium Wildcat* Garfield, and I've become very fond of it. Sorry we didn't have the best service at our Holiday Party, but the food was delicious and I had a good time. We will pick somewhere else next year.



Now that winter is officially here, I thought I would give you some tips on winter care for your orchids after bringing them inside. We all want to give them the right conditions to help them thrive indoors. Plants may experience a lot of stress when they move inside after several months outside enjoying ample sunlight, rain, high humidity, and breezes. One good practice is to bring them inside gradually—put your orchids in a cooler room for a couple weeks that matches the temperatures outside, and then take them to their permanent room where they will stay for the winter where the temperature ranges from 60 to 75°F.

By now, your plants should be adapting to their winter conditions. Your leaves will tell you if they are still stressed from the move. Dark leaves typically mean that the orchid is not receiving enough light. Yellow leaves may mean your plant is getting too much light. Most happy leaves are light green or a medium green. Orchids will be slow growing, have fewer flowers, or will not bloom at all if there is something wrong with their environment. Check temperatures, humidity, light, watering, and air movement and keep bugs controlled. Do your best to learn and read about the orchids you are growing. If you know about the species' normal habits, you can more easily try to replicate that environment, giving you happy, healthy orchids.

Hope to see you in January 2025. Our first meeting of the New Year is Monday, January 13 at 6:30 P.M. at Hessel Church. We will be watching webinars on *Pests and Diseases*. We will also have a group discussion on what products our members use and what diseases to look for.

We are having some interesting programs this next year! Dates and times will be announced later.

Happy Growing!

Joanne Miller, CIOS President

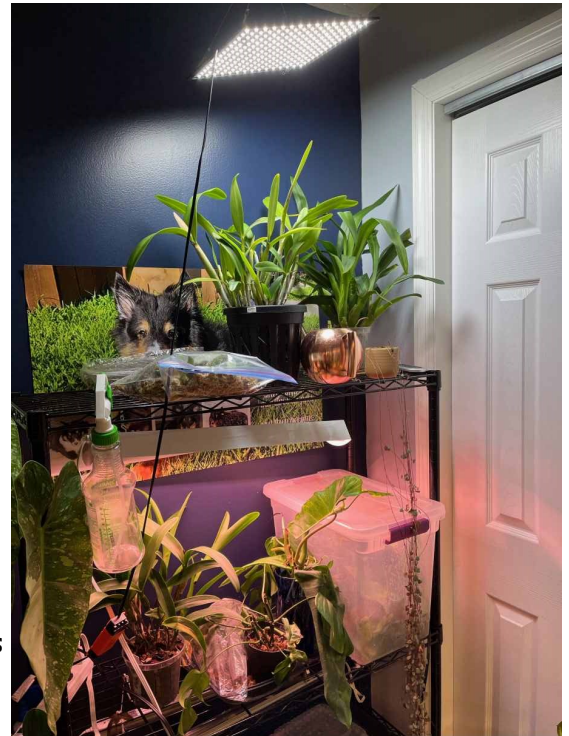


Lessons Learned Last Summer (Seasonal Care)

By Vanessa DeShambo

Now that we are in winter and starting a new year, it is a good time to ponder lessons that were learned last year so we can improve our efforts moving forward. Here are some of mine.

- We had a very rainy spring and early summer, which was great since I didn't have to water as much. And then when I did start watering, I typically used a hose with a spray attachment. Typically I will add liquid or granular fertilizer to my watering can indoors, but I generally didn't do this outside. What this meant is my orchids probably didn't receive the fertilizer they needed during the growing season. This year, once the plants return outside, I will give them all a little slow-release fertilizer to help combat this issue.
- I have a NOID (no ID) Oncidium that has bloomed reliably every year for the last 3 years around my birthday in July, until this year. I previously grew this orchid as a windowsill orchid. This last winter, I grew most of my orchids in my downstairs office under mostly artificial lights. This space is also much cooler (55°-65°F). I noticed come spring that the plant just seemed like it hadn't grown much. I put it outside for the summer and it probably needed more fertilizer than it got. I will be giving it a bit of extra attention and a nice windowsill for the winter in the hopes it will forgive me.
- *Growing under lights:* I use LED grow lights extensively in my home for my tropical plants and orchids, especially over the winter. I use mostly Barrina lights with a couple of yescom panel lights, and GE lights. This seems to work very well for most plants and keeps them happy over the winter months. (Excuse my mess, —this photo was taken just after I hauled everything in!)



Save the Date!

Saturday, March 8th

CIOS ANNUAL ORCHID SHOW AND SALE

Hessel Park Church

Watch for details by email.



**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
ERIK SACKS**

How did you become interested in growing orchids?

I started growing plants indoors, in a NYC apartment, when I was in grade school. I got started when a retired neighbor needed someone to water her 100+ houseplants under lights and in windows when she traveled—for my first work assignment, I received \$10 and a fluorescent light setup and I was hooked. Ida, the neighbor, became like a third grandmother to me and took me to horticulture society meetings and field trips (Logee’s, Philadelphia Flower Show, local arboreta and botanic gardens...). By the time I got to high school, I was the youngest member of the Manhattan Orchid Society (perhaps their youngest member ever).

How long have you been involved with orchids and what level of knowledge would you say you have?

I have been growing orchids for more than four decades now. I would say that I have gotten fairly knowledgeable about how to grow them but I’m still learning and that is part of the fun of it.

Are there any special orchid memories you care to share?

One special memory I have is of the incredible orchid displays and seemingly endless sales tables at the Philadelphia Flower Show, which I visited multiple times in the 1980s. In the 1990’s, I was very fortunate to tour the very large Masdevallia and Dracula collection at the Golden Gate Park conservatory in San Francisco and get divisions for the collection at UC Davis, where I did my graduate work. Another special memory is of visiting mountainous Doi Inthanon National Park near Chang Mai Thailand around New Years in 2000 and seeing the native orchids high in the trees while there was frost on the ground during the cool dry-season; this gave me a special appreciation for the environment that some Dendrobium and Coelogyne species call home.

How many do you have now and how old is your longest kept plant(s)?

I currently have 52 orchids at home and another 16 on windowsills at lab (work). I have a few orchids that have followed me around the country for about 20 years.

Any favorites among your collection? And why do you like them?

I especially like Psychopsis, the butterfly orchids, because they are easy to grow (so long as you don’t keep them too wet or repot them too often) and are always in flower because they continuously put out new flower buds, one at a time, on old flower stalks. I have a P. Mendenhall ‘Hildos’ that now has five flower stalks and at least one of them has a bloom on it at all times. I also especially like Wilsonaria Opalescent ‘On The Edge’ because it looks so much like Odontoglossum crispum,



[Member Profile continued: Erik Sacks]

but the former is an intermediate grower, whereas the latter is a cool grower. Lastly, one can't beat Phalaenopsis for ease of care and just how long and big a flower show one gets.

What orchid do you want to grow in the future?

I would like to again grow some *Restrepia* species, a delightful pleurothallid that is easy to flower at intermediate temperatures—I grew some many years ago. For cool growing *Masdevallias*, *Draculas*, and *Odontoglossums*, I am working on setting up a LED-lit growing space in my basement.

When and why did you join CIOS, and if you have been a member for some time, what do you enjoy the most?

It's been a while—not sure which year I joined. I enjoy learning about new orchids and helping those who are new to growing orchids figure out how to best grow their plants.

Other information about yourself—where you were born/grew up, your work, family, pets, hobbies, interests . . .

Born in The Bronx, raised in Queens. When I was in high school, I spent a lot of time at the NY Botanical Garden's conservatory and in their excellent library. Perhaps unsurprisingly, my career has been in plant breeding and genetics. For my graduate studies at UC Davis, I worked on tomato and strawberry. My first job brought me to the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, where I worked to develop a perennial form of rice—my former student stuck with it and succeeded! After the Philippines, I moved to New Zealand, where I worked on blueberry. Upon returning to the US, I moved to MS and worked for USDA-ARS on interspecific crosses to improve cotton. After cotton, I worked for a startup company on miscanthus (a grass) for bioenergy, first returning to northern CA then to Lafayette, IN. In 2010, I joined the faculty at UIUC to work on miscanthus, sugarcane, and still some on rice. In 2012, I led a 3-week expedition to collect miscanthus in Russia's Far East. I currently teach Greenhouse Management (HORT 341) and Crop Germplasm Resources (CPSC 555).

Please share an interesting or unusual fact or interest of yours.

I have twice sailed around the Banks Islands of Vanuatu on the brigantine training ship, *Søren Larsen*. I enjoy travel and being at sea.





Exciting 2025 Programs Being Planned

Our Executive Board met at Joanne's before the holidays to start planning for this year's monthly programs. The following is a list of what we have planned. Please understand that some of these are still tentative, but I thought I would give you a sneak peak. As a reminder, most of our monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of the month, 6:30 to 8 P.M., at Hessel Park Church, 700 W. Kirby Avenue, Champaign IL 61820. Some special events may be scheduled or held at other times/locations, to be determined (TBD).

- January 13—*Pest & Diseases* Webinar.
- February 10 —*2025 Project Plant*. We will first learn a bit about *Catasetums*, then all club members who attend will get to plant their own *Catasetum* from Fred Clarke.
- March 1—*CIOS Orchid Sale* in Bloomington at UI Extension Home, Lawn, and Garden Show.
- March 8—*CIOS Annual Show and Sale*. Watch for details. We need as many members as possible to help with this, our major fundraiser of the year.
- April 14—TBD
- May 12—*Don White* from *Anything Orchids* will give a talk and bring orchids for sale!!
- June 9—(tentative) Eric Sacks; topic to be determined.
- July—*Annual Picnic*; date and location TBD.
- August—Seminar Day with Prairie State Orchid Society in Springfield *or* trip to Missouri Botanical Garden for the Orchid Society of Greater St. Louis' Annual Orchid Auction.
- September 8—*Dr. Larry Zettler* from the *Orchid Recovery Program* will discuss *Orchid Conservation*.
- October 13—*Member Auction*, presentation of 2026 Executive Board, and short program (TBA).
- November 8 or 9—*CIOS Annual Holiday Party*—All members attending will get a free orchid!

Worth the Trip: **Chicago Botanic Garden , Glencoe IL**
The Orchid Show: India Blooms
February 8 - March 23, Daily 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.



A Celebration of Color in Full Bloom

Through the harmony of tradition and modern design, this Orchid Show sweeps you away to India. Look for a blooming peacock, a colossal banyan tree, and 10,000 orchid blooms, all inspired by the beauty of India.

- **Orchid Marketplace.** Weekends: February 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, March 1-2. Shop for orchids, growing supplies and other horticultural products from a variety of featured vendors and local growers.
- **Illinois Orchid Society Show & Sale.** Saturday & Sunday, March 8 - 9, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. See orchid displays, arrangements, a judged show, plus shop for orchid varieties, growing supplies, books, clothing and more.
- **Indian Community Marketplace.** Saturday & Sunday, March 22-23, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Meet and shop local small businesses selling Indian products including spices, snacks, clothing, art and home goods.
- **Post-Orchid Show Plant Sale.** Thursday, March 27 at 9 A.M. While supplies last, shop for plants that were in the Orchid Show.

Information: <https://www.chicagobotanic.org/orchid>



Growing Phaiocalanthe

By Lori Garrett

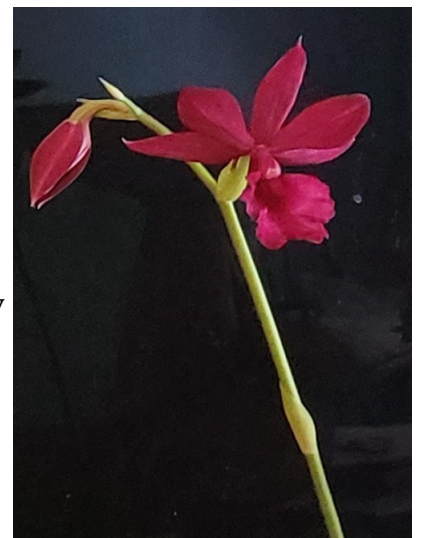
Several years back, when my orchid purchases far exceeded my orchid knowledge, I purchased a lovely Phaiocalanthe 'Kryptonite' that was in spike and bloomed beautifully, with unusually deep magenta-burgundy blooms. A couple of years later, it rebloomed just in time for our annual show and sale, where it was quite popular. I loved it and bought a few other similar Phaiocalanthe varieties . . . most of whom languished and landed on my ever-growing list of "Orchids I've murdered." A couple of the plants hung on, although their leaves told a tale of betrayal.

Last spring, I repotted them both. One seemed to perk up a tiny bit; the other started looking so ratty that I moved it behind a lawn chair—away from all my other outside vacationers and suspiciously close to the garbage can. Both survived the summer and revived enough that I deemed them worthy of a second

chance, and in they came. Seemingly out of nowhere, one of them surprised me with a spike. The photos show the results, although I cannot capture the color—it truly is a much darker flower. I have two blooms— a nice start from a plant I was about to get rid of—but happier healthier plants put up spikes that can have 10 to 30 flowers! And in better hands than mine, these usually fall-to-winter bloomers can bloom twice year, and if there are multiple buds they may stay in bloom for 2 to 3 months. Wow!

If you run across a Phaiocalanthe and want to give it a try, here are some things to know. The flowers can be stunning, but the leaves can become rather unsightly. They are very thin and easily sunburned. Healthy plants have yellow-green longitudinally pleated leaves, like Phaius. However, they often get spots, sometimes wither away, and can unexpectedly turn yellow, which is normal. You can cut the ugly ones close to their pseudobulbs if you want to tidy them. More shocking, these plants often drop their leaves in the winter, often around the time of blooming. Phaius don't do that, but these guys do. Sometimes. Not always.

These plants may grow year-round and just slow down a bit in the winter, but they do not need a true winter rest—just back off on the water and fertilizer some if there is still active growth. If they do drop all their leaves, fertilizer should stop and watering should occur only when the pseudobulbs start to shrivel or when new growths start. However, for most of the year these plants have high demands—lots of water and lots of food. One vendor from whom I purchased described seeing an awarded specimen plant that was grown always sitting in a tray of water. The plants do not ever like to dry out. They like medium light, although my bloomer is under grow lights, and intermediate to warm temperatures. They are semiterrestrial. Mine are in a medium bark mix but are not thriving. One source recommends a coco and peat mix, which turns lighter colored as it dries—a visual cue for watering. Because Phaiocalanthes are such heavy feeders and drinkers, they really appreciate fresh media and seem to do best when repotted annually. And, similar to Phalaenopsis and many others, cooler nights (55°) in the fall may promote blooming. And those last two points may be what tipped the scale and got mine to finally rebloom. Now that it has, I am once again intrigued by this plant and now I think I may even understand it.





Submission Guidelines for CIOS Newsletter

Central Illinois Orchid Society's Newsletter is published quarterly. Please follow these submission guidelines.

The deadline for each edition is the 10th of the month prior to publication as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Submission deadline, For newsletter edition. Rows include March 10th (Spring Edition), May 20th (Summer Edition), August 20th (Autumn Edition), and November 20th (Winter Edition).

Your original articles, pictures, and thoughts are welcome—please send them! Submissions may include but are not limited to instructional articles (“how-to”), successes and/or failures, book reviews, travelogues about visits to orchid shows or exhibits, conservatories, etc., “before-and-afters” about your own orchid projects, poems, photos, and most things related to orchids. Also, we would love to see your plants—send your photos.

- In accordance with copyright laws, all submissions must be your own original work. We cannot reprint items that have been published elsewhere without written permission from the author/copyright holder.
• Photos and images must also be your own work. With few exceptions, most photos/images on the Internet are copyright protected and cannot be used without written permission. Members’ images posted to our CIOS Facebook group may be used in our newsletter.
• All submissions undergo an editorial process and may be edited for accuracy, clarity, and length as needed.
• Please do not format your submissions—that is done by the Editor for proper layout, visual appeal, and to ensure style consistency.
• Please submit articles as Microsoft Word documents (not as PDFs please). If you work on an Apple/Mac product, please save your documents as either DOC, DOCX, or RTF (not their default PAGES) and save photos as JPEGs (not their default HEIC).
• Please submit all photos as JPEG files separate from articles and please include a list of captions/plant names (if possible)/explanations for each photo. For photos accompanying an article, although you may indicate where you would like the photo inserted, please realize the final layout is at the Editor’s discretion for proper fit and visual impact.
• Send all newsletter submissions or questions to Lori Garrett, newsletter/website Editor: Lorikgarrett@gmail.com.



Thanks for reading! Next Newsletter: Spring Edition
Submission Deadline: March 10th.

