

Western North Carolina Orchid Society
PO Box 874
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Calendar of Events

May 17, 2005 WNCOS Meeting 7:00 CAO.
Members Auction

June 21, 2005 WNCOS Meeting 7:00 CAO
"What's Wrong With My Orchid"
Diagnosis and Panel Discussion

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Exhibit at the Grove Arcade is a Huge Success

MAY 17, 2005 7:00 PM

At Community Action Opportunities (CAO)

"WNCOS Member's Auction"

This will be a great way to expand your collection or allow members to pick up your duplicate plants.

This is always a fun meeting so please plan to attend.

Hosts for May 17th Meeting:

Mary Ann Bevier & Clark Merrill

Growing Tips for MAY

Growing Tips for May
By
Courtney T. Hackney
EMAIL at Hackneau@bellsouth.net

Once again, I forgot to treat for mites in early spring and, once again, I lost leaves to these tiny beasts. Mites usually appear during times when the humidity is low, and affect mostly thin-leaved orchids such as Oncidiums. They first show up in my greenhouse on Phals and each year, I fail to recognize their symptoms until the plants start "screaming".

It is easy to miss mites on your orchids because they are tiny. I use a magnifying glass or high-powered reading glasses. Usually, I can only find one or two on a plant. Mites multiply when the greenhouse humidity is low in late winter or spring. On Phals, mites cause the lower leaves to drop and leaves appear desiccated. Often leaves develop pigments often mistaken for too much sun. Orchid leaves can also burn because mites steal so much water from the plant, that plants cannot open their stomata and cool themselves.

All winter long, hobbyists bring me plants that are not doing well and want to know why their orchid is not thriving. A large majority of these plants are being grown indoors and have had mites this year. The extra long winter in the Southeast combined with home heaters, which dry the air, often leads to mite problems for indoor growers.

The common mite on orchids is the red spider mite and occasionally the false, red spider mite. These are usually found on Oncidium leaves. Phals seem to have other mite species. They also do not seem to be abundant enough to cause much damage. However, when I treat for mites, Phals. improve almost immediately whether the infestation was heavy or not. There are a number of miticides available to commercial growers that work well, but they are expensive and may not be available to hobbyists. A thorough spraying, top and bottom, of leaves with Sun Oil or similar light oil works well enough for me. Once the normal summer's humidity returns, mites cease to be a problem.

Most orchids have already begun their summer's growth, so now is the time to fertilize and increase watering frequency. If you use Nutricote, it is time to make your new application since last years application should be gone, if you used the 6 month release form. New seedlings or orchids that have lost their root systems will benefit from foliar feeding with a dilute liquid fertilizer. There are many good fertilizers available, but be sure to use them at ¼ strength and always flush heavily with plain water once a month.

If you use R/O (reverse osmosis) water or rainwater you will also need to supplement your water with dolomite limestone either by adding it to your fertilizer water, which can be tricky, or applying it directly to the plant in granular form. All plants need calcium and magnesium and agricultural lime has both in just about the right proportion.

Light and heat will soon become an issue. Remember that the sun reaches its highest point next month (21st) so it will be easy to burn the leaves of your

orchids if you are just getting them outside after the long, dark winter under lights. The darker your leaves the more heat they will absorb and the more quickly they will burn. Conversely, indoor growers may find their windowsills are no longer getting the direct light their orchids once enjoyed because the sun is almost overhead.

President's Corner

It looks like spring is finally here after an unusually cold start. Now that the night time temperatures are staying above 50° you can take your orchids outside in a protected area for the season. They will respond very well to the increased air movement, temperature difference between day and night and increased light intensity. It is also time to check for over-wintering pests hiding under the leaves. Spring is also a great time to repot. Rule of thumb is to do this after flowering or as new growths and root growths start. Increased fertilizing is also appropriate as temperatures warm up.

Ralph Coffey

Grove Arcade Show

The WNCOS Put in a display at the third annual Grove Arcade Flower Show. Several unusual blooming orchids including Stanhopea wardii and Dendrobium spectabile created a lot of interest. Everyone wanted to enjoy the chocolate fragrance of a Sharry Baby Oncidium. WNCOS and AOS brochures were passed out to a number of interested visitors. Even though it rained most of the morning there was a record turnout by the public. Over thirty vendors and garden organizations participated. A number of lectures were given throughout the day on various horticultural subjects were well attended.

Ralph Coffey gave a lecture on "Growing Orchids in the Home Environment". Over fifty people attended and asked quite a few questions about growing orchids. Orchid vendors at the show had brisk sales with the huge turnout.

MAY 17th Member Auction

Please come to the Member's Auction And support your WNCOS. Each members can bring 10 plants. WNCOS receives 20% of the proceeds and the member receives 80%. Please bring quality plants or divisions properly labeled and pest and disease free. If you have plants to auction please get to CAO by 6:30.

Next Meeting: June 21 at CAO

"What is wrong with my Orchid"? Members can bring plants that they are concerned about. A panel of experts will try to diagnose problems and offer suggestions.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking Balance 10 May 2005:	\$4,547.40
Expected Balance from closure of old checking account:	\$1,859.28
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	<u>\$4,547.40</u>
Total assets:	\$6,406.68