



November 2024

Southern Tier Orchid Society

WWW.SOUTHERNTIERORCHIDS.ORG

November Guest Speaker: Larry Nau

Exploring Orchid and other Species in Thailand with Larry Nau

We are excited to welcome Larry Nau as our upcoming speaker for this month's meeting! Larry brings a wealth of expertise in water gardening, exotic plants, and horticulture, having spoken to dozen of garden clubs across New York State. His diverse knowledge spans from waterlilies and lotus plants to dwarf conifers and carnivorous plants.

For his presentation, Larry may take us on a virtual journey through Thailand where he visited numerous orchid nurseries, getting a firsthand look at the incredible variety of species that flourish in Thailand's unique climate. From lush tropical environments to intricate greenhouse setups, Thailand is home to an impressive diversity of orchids, and Larry will share his observations and encounters with these beautiful plants

In addition to orchids, Larry's talk may also touch on his fascination with carnivorous plants and waterlilies, adding an extra layer of interest for those of us captivated by unusual and rare species. Larry promised a talk filled with both practical insights and travel tale.

Whether you're an orchid enthusiast or simply enjoy learning about plant life around the world, this is a presentation you won't want to miss. Join us for what promises to be an inspiring and informative evening as we explore his travels through stories, photos, and his overall passion for the natural world.

Larry Nau

Larry has spoken to dozens of gardens clubs which are members of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State over the past 23 years. Larry has served as a Board Member and Executive Director of the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society. He has also served as President of the American Conifer Society and President of the Northeast Region of the ACS.

He has an expertise on the following topics:

- Water Gardening
- Waterlilies
- Lotus
- Lotus in China
- Dwarf Conifers
- Carnivorous Plants



Phalaenopsis Zebrina 'Palawan'
Photo Courtesy of Jean Mint

Orchids & Carnivorous Plants: Special Purchase Opportunity

November Guest Speaker: Larry Nau

Orchids & Carnivorous Plants For Sale

Courtesy of Bergen Water Gardens

Plant Selection Available for Purchase:
Larry may bring a range of plants to the meeting, including orchids, carnivorous plants, and aquatic plants. Here's a preview of what may be available:

Orchid Varieties:

- Vandas and other Vandaceous orchids
- Vanilla
- Tolumnia
- Schoenorchis
- Cattleya
- Oncidium
- Dendrobium
- Chilochista

Carnivorous Plants:

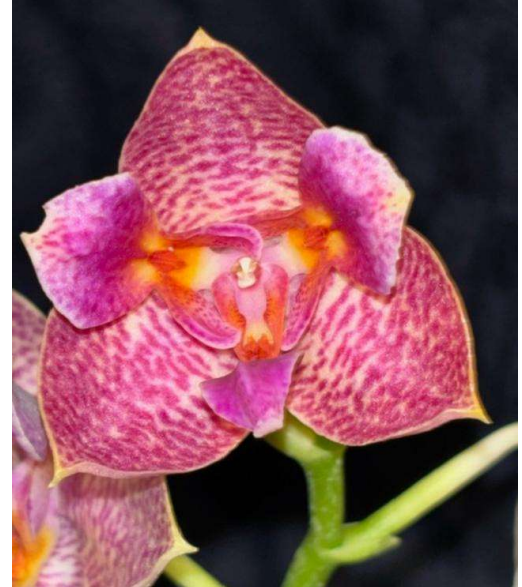
- Venus flytraps
- Droseras (sundews)
- American pitcher plants (*Heliophora*)
- Asian pitcher plants (*Nepenthes*)

For members with ponds or large aquariums, Larry will also bring a selection of water lilies and lotuses to explore aquatic gardening.

Special Requests and Pre-Orders:
Larry may not bring his entire inventory, so if you have a specific plant or product in mind, please visit

<https://bergenwatergardens.com/>

to view their full selection. If there's something in particular you'd like him to bring, make sure to submit your request by **November 13th** to ensure availability.



Chilochista viridiflava
Photo Courtesy of Jean Mint

Member Info

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Linda Mittel

Vice President

Ruth Allen

Treasurer

Angel Caoile (Interim)

Secretary

Chris Higgins

AOS Representative

Polly Dillon

Members-At-Large

Jeff Hackett

Loi X Tran

Gail Gunsalus

Auction Committee Jane Trey, Jean Mint,
Jeff Hackett

IT Specialist Melissa Bennett

Librarian Laurel Shaefer

Marketing TBD

Membership Anitra Murphy

Newsletter Editor Jeff Hackett

Program Coordinator Jean Mint

Social Media Loi Tran, Renee DePrato,
Jean Mint

Show Chair Sam Hance, Jeff Hackett

Web Master Carol Bayles

Web Site:

<http://www.southerntierorchids.org>

Email addresses:

STOSorchids@gmail.com

STOSorchids.auction@gmail.com

STOSorchids.marketing@gmail.com

STOSorchids.membership@gmail.com

STOSorchids.newsletter@gmail.com

STOSorchids.shows@gmail.com

Google Group (Listserv)

STOSorchidgroup@googlegroups.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernTierOrchidSocietyNY>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/SouthernTierOrchidSociety/>

STOS Calendar 2024

Meetings are 2-4 pm (1:30-2 is 'social time')
at the Vestal United Methodist Church,
328 Main St. Vestal, NY.

In 'The Belfry' on the 2nd floor. Elevator available.

- Jan 21** General Meeting via Zoom.
Speaker: Bill Goldner "Next Generation of
Miniature Phragmipediums and other New
Lines of Breeding"
- Feb 18** General Meeting In Person and via Zoom.
Speaker Ron McHatten
- Mar 17** General Meeting, Show Planning
Spring Online Auction Kickoff, Speaker Carol
Klonowski on Tolumnias
- Apr 20-21** Orchid Show at Roberson Museum
- April 26-28** GROS Show (Rochester)
- May 19** General Meeting, Repotting Workshop
- June-Aug** Summer Break, no meetings or newsletters
- Aug. 11** Picnic at Tioga Gardens
- Sep 15** General Meeting with nominations for
officers. **Fall auction** Live, in Person
Set up at 1:00.
- Oct 20** General meeting, voting for officers.
Luis J. Matienzo, Ph.D.
- Nov 17** General Meeting.
Larry Nau (Bergen Water Gardens)
- Dec 15** Holiday Party

SAVE THE DATE 2025

Southern Tier Orchid Society Show

April 11th – 13th

30 Brocton St, Johnson City, NY 13790

STOS Meeting Minutes

October 20th Meeting Notes

Location: Vestal United Methodist Church and Zoom

Call to Order: President Carol Bayles 2:10 pm

Attendees: ~ 38 members (not all signed in) see the sign in sheet. 1 person present on Zoom

Reports

Secretary Linda Mittel, Present, did not read the minutes. Carol stated that the minutes of the September 15th meeting have been published in the October, 2024, STOS Newsletter. Members approved the minutes.

Treasurer: Angel Caoile, Present

Angel reported the club balance

American Orchid Society (AOS) rep: Bernice Magee

Bernice stated that we have extra *Orchids* magazines from the AOS that can be borrowed for a month. These are in our STOS library. Bernice also encouraged everyone to join AOS. The New AOS rep must be an AOS member. Bernice, our outgoing rep, was thanked for her service.

Executive Board Meeting

We need to schedule a meeting soon.

New Business:

Elections of officers for the 2024-2025 year.

(Terms begin in November):

President: Linda Mittel

Vice-President: Ruth Allen

Treasurer: Angel Caoile (Angel requested help with this position. Anyone willing to help Angel, please contact Angel or Linda through STOS.)

Secretary: Chris Higgins

AOS representative: Polly Dillon

Executive Board members at large: Jeff Hackett

Other members at large are Loi Tran and Gail Gonzales. Colin Dimon's term has expired. Linda will organize an executive board meeting a few times a year.

The Executive Board will soon discuss officers, committees, and other pertinent information.

The meeting may be conducted via Zoom, and the date will be determined.



A Democracy in Action
Photo Courtesy of Melissa Bennett



Many Raffles on Offer
Photo Courtesy of Melissa Bennett

October 20th Meeting Notes cont.

Committee and Other Positions:

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Hackett

Show Committee Co-Chairs: Sam Hance and Jeff Hackett

The new venue is at the Senior Center in Johnson City. The show chairs can visit the center to see it. Make arrangements with Kim, the center's director, to visit Monday through Friday.

Auction Committee: Co-Chairs; Jane Trey and Jeff Hackett

*We need to plan for the December holiday party and order gift orchids.

All the officers and committee chairs were elected unanimously by the 38 members in attendance at the STOS meeting.

Invitation:

The Central Pennsylvania Orchid Society invited STOS members to participate in their show on January 18-19th in State College, PA. The show is approximately 3 ½ hours from Vestal.

Requests:

Angel Caiole, treasurer, informed members that dues are due in December at the annual holiday party and are for 12 months. Luis encouraged members to write notes for the STOS Newsletter. Jeff Hackett is also asking for pictures of orchids. A reminder: we have an Instagram account and a Facebook page you can follow and post on. Anitra Murphy mentioned that STOS should become more involved with Facebook. Carol stated STOS has a X page, Facebook group, and Instagram.

Additional Information:

Show Table: 12 Members brought approximately 18 Orchids.

Raffle Table: John Zygmunt and Gail Gonzalez donated plants. Other orchid accessories were also raffled off. Colin reported that \$70.00 was received from the raffle.

The notes were compiled by Linda Mittel, Secretary (2022 - 2024) and Christopher Higgins, incoming Secretary for (2024 - 2025).

Speaker: Luis Matienzo. Topic: "Discovering the World of Orchids" (Presentation to be continued at our next meeting.)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:10 PM.



A Filled Show Table
Photo Courtesy of Melissa Bennett



The Show Table Overflowed!
Photo Courtesy of Melissa Bennett

2025 Officer Election Results & Committee Chair Assignments

The Southern Tier Orchid Society is pleased to announce the election results for our 2025 Executive Board and Committee Chair Positions! We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all members who participated in the election process and showed their support for the continued growth and success of our society. Your involvement is what keeps our community vibrant and thriving.

Please join us in congratulating our newly elected officers, continuing board members, and committee chair assignments:

- President
Linda Mittel
- Vice President
Ruth Allen
- Secretary
Chris Higgins
- Treasurer
Angel Caolie (Interim)
- AOS Rep.
Polly Dillon
- Member at large
Jeff Hackett
- Show
Sam Hance
Jeff Hackett
- Plant Auction
Jane Trey
Jean Mint
Jeff Hackett
- Meeting Program Coordinator
Jean Mint
- Newsletter Editor
Jeff Hackett
- Webmaster
Carol Bayles
- Social Media
Loi Tran
Jean Mint
Renee DePrato
- Librarian
Laurel Shaefer
- IT Assistant
Melissa Bennett
- Marketing Committee
(Open)
- Membership Committee
Anitra Murphy

Jeff Hackett will be joining Loi Tran and Gail Gunsalus as the third member at large.

We are still actively seeking a permanent treasurer to fill the role currently held by Angel Caolie on an interim basis. If you, or someone you know, is a responsible individual with experience in accounting or proficiency in Excel, we encourage you to apply. The treasurer is a vital position that helps manage the society's finances and supports our ongoing activities. Please reach out to Linda Mittel via email to STOSorchids@gmail.com if you're interested or would like more information on the responsibilities.

We look forward to a productive year ahead, with our new leadership guiding the society toward exciting events, engaging programs, and continued fellowship amongst orchid enthusiasts. The new officers will officially assume their responsibilities on November 1st. Let's work together to make 2025 another fantastic year for the Southern Tier Orchid Society.

New officers and chairs have assumed their responsibility effective November 1st.



Tribute to Their Service: Celebrating Key Members of STOS

As we look ahead to a new chapter in the Southern Tier Orchid Society, we want to take a moment to recognize and express our deep gratitude to three outstanding members whose years of dedication have profoundly shaped our community. Carol Bayles, Bernice Magee, and Colin Dimon have all be instrumental in ensuring the success and stability of our society, even through the most challenging times.

Carol Bayles has served with dedication and incredible commitment in numerous roles. As President for two terms and Vice President for another two, Carol's leadership helped steer STOS through both growth and transition. Beyond executive board roles, she has also taken on additional responsibilities as newsletter editor, webmaster, and show chair. Thanks to Carol's careful oversight, the club is now in a strong financial position, well-prepared for future endeavors. We are especially grateful that she will continue to serve as our webmaster, and we know we can always count on her support wherever STOS need a helping hand.

Bernice Magee has been an invaluable AOS representative since 2018. She has kept our members informed of various AOS activities and consistently highlighted the benefits of AOS membership. Bernice has gone above and beyond by organizing AOS tables and educational activities, engaging younger audiences, and helping us all learn more about the broader orchid community. Her enthusiasm and dedication to promoting orchid knowledge and appreciation have enriched our society, and we are grateful for her contributions.

Colin Dimon has been a steadfast presence in STOS for many years, serving most recently as Member at Large. His contributions to our society's shows have been immense – from helping with show setup to offering tours and answering questions from visitors. Colin's friendliness and dedication have been responsible for organizing meeting raffles since at least 2012, a highlight that members have come to enjoy and look forward to at each gathering.

These three members were vital in helping STOS navigate the challenges of the pandemic, a time where we could not meet in person. Their unwavering support ensured that our society continued to thrive and grow, despite the obstacles. Carol, Bernice, and Colin, thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for STOS. Your contributions have not gone unnoticed, and have left a lasting legacy for our community.



Membership Renewal & Osmunda Fiber

2025 Membership Renewal

It's that time of the year again! Membership renewals for 2025 are now being taken! To maintain your active status and continue enjoying the benefits of being part of the Southern Tier Orchid Society, please ensure your dues are paid by the deadline. Thank you to those members listed below who have paid ahead of time. If you believe there is an error, please see Angel Caolie at the next meeting to resolve any discrepancies.

Renewal Options:

- Cash
- Check made out to the Southern Tier Orchid Society with "Membership Dues" written into the memo
- Paypal through the club website

Renewal Cost: \$20

Per the STOS bylaws:

- Annual dues are payable at the annual meeting in December and become delinquent after the February meeting.
- Members with delinquent dues cannot vote in membership decisions.
- If dues remain unpaid after May 1st, the membership will be dropped from the rolls, and you will no longer receive newsletters or other mailings until full payment is made.

Don't miss out on another exciting year of orchid events, educational programs, and community fellowship!

Members Who Have Prepaid

<i>Ruth Allen</i>	<i>Luis & Paula Matienzo</i>
<i>Carol Bayles</i>	<i>Peter O'Connell</i>
<i>Angel Caoile</i>	<i>Judith Simpson</i>
<i>Christine Chin</i>	<i>Joseph Sniezek</i>
<i>Josh DeMaree</i>	<i>Renee Sparrow</i>
<i>Bernice & Brian Magee</i>	<i>John Zygmunt</i>

Your timely payment significantly helps the club and is much appreciated by our membership committee and treasurer.
Thank You.

Osmunda Fiber: Special Purchase Opportunity

Osmunda Fiber from Osmunda regalis
Courtesy of Dr. Luis Matienzo

Offer to STOS members: \$15 for a 1-gallon bag

Osmunda, fern genus of the family Osmundaceae, with divided fronds and often growing to a height of 1.5 meters (5 feet). The matted fibrous roots of these abundant ferns are called osmunda fiber, osmundine, or orchid peat; they are broken up and used as a rooting medium for epiphytic orchids (those that grow on other plants).

This potting medium is expensive and very difficult to find and it lasts at least three years. It provides air to the roots and also serves as an organic fertilizer as it ages. A comparable product is New Zealand tree fern which sells for \$18 for 1/2-gallon bag. (see for example Amazon.com).

Two - One-gallon bags will be for sale at the November STOS meeting.



Beyond the Blooms: The Stories of Our Members

Jean Mint

Jean Mint has been a valued member of the STOS since 1999, taking a break in the middle to start a family. She and her friends: Sam Hance and Renee Sparrow, joined the society together as a dedicated trio. Over the years, Jean has become an active and dedicated member, contributing significantly to the society's growth and success.

One of Jean's primary roles within the STOS has been organizing and planning speaker presentations. She has held this position for 3-4 years and is currently serving as the Program Coordinator for the 2024-2025 term. Jean has a knack for connecting with vendors and speakers, often developing strong relationships with orchid nursery owners and experts. She has personally visited numerous nurseries, including Waldor, Woodstream, Ecuagenera USA (in Florida), RF Orchids, AOS Headquarters and Bergen's (our November speaker).

Jean's passion for orchids extends beyond her volunteer work. She cultivates a diverse collection of approximately 200 orchids indoors, with a particular interest in the odd and unique orchids. She also enjoys fragrant plants and is drawn to floriferous orchids of all sizes. One of her favorites is *Brassavola yaki* (*cuculata* × *nodosa*), as you may have seen at the last meeting.

Jean generously shares her knowledge and plants with fellow members. She frequently contributes to the show table with blooming orchids and splits plants to share with others. She is currently exploring the possibility of building a "green" greenhouse, utilizing geothermal heat pumps for sustainable energy.



April 2024 STOS Orchid Show
Jean Mint Pictured Left
Alexandria Mint Pictured Bottom
Linda Mittel Pictured Right
Photographed by Christine Chin

When not tending to her orchids, Jean works as a licensed veterinary technician at Cornell University. She and her husband, Ray, along with their daughter, Alexandria, and various pets, including dogs, cats, frogs, lizards, and fish, share a love for nature and its wonders.

We are grateful for Jean's dedication and contributions to the STOS. Her passion for orchids and her commitment to sharing her knowledge with others make her an invaluable asset to our community.



Monthly Checklist for November & December

Cattleya

Growers of just about every level of expertise will have begun to notice autumn conditions by now. Days are becoming shorter, hence cooler; the sunlight has less intensity as a result of the sun's lowering angle, nights are longer and generally cooler. Plants are responding by slowing and ripening their growth in preparation for winter.

The first cultural change noticed should be a reduced frequency of watering, as the plants dry out more slowly. This is a function of both the reduced day length and lower temperatures, as well as the plants' slowing growth rate. Reduced water needs signal a reduced need for fertilization. Note that the key word is reduced, not eliminated. Feed less frequently and at lower dosage, but feed. Growths, made during summer's heat, and relatively soft and green, will be ripening -- hardening -- in preparation for a brief period of rest (in many cases).

Many of these ripening growths will have a sheath, presaging the coming winter or spring flowering season. In some cases, these sheaths will have been evident since as early as July. (Early sheath development does not mean early flowering on plants with winter-spring seasons.) You may notice that some of these sheaths are showing signs of yellowing. This is not abnormal. Autumn's more pronounced temperature fluctuation can lead to water condensation inside the sheath, hastening the normal process of senescence, so yellowing sheaths can be left on the plant only so long before they must be carefully removed to preserve the bud primordia within. Water condensation left unchecked can rot the bud primordia. The sheaths can be safely removed by slitting open and peeling down toward the pseudobulb.

Paphiopedilum

The flowering season for the "toads" or "bulldog" paphs is just getting underway. These cannot be grown everywhere, but where cooler summer nights allow their growth, there is no longer-lasting or more exotic display than these. Paphiopedilums are, in general, not heavy feeders, and it is especially important with this type to reduce nitrogen levels now for best flowering and spike length. Be watchful for water accumulating in the growth around the sheath, or for the late-season warm spell, either of which can lead to the sheath's rotting. As the spikes emerge, do not change the orientation of the plant toward the light, as this can lead to a crooked or twisted spike.

While paphiopedilums rarely like to dry out entirely, water needs are significantly reduced beginning now. Overwatering at this time of year can quickly lead to root rot or erwinia problems. Now is the time to practice good sanitary practices in your greenhouse or growing areas, as pest and disease problems have a way of multiplying rapidly in the darker and more crowded conditions that generally mark the winter growing area. With paphiopedilums, especially, "cleanliness is next to godliness" and if the growing area is littered with old foliage, weeds and dying flowers, keeping the plants alive and flowering will be next to impossible.

Phalaenopsis

Shortening days and cooler nights are the signals for inflorescence initiation in phalaenopsis. In more northern climates, or on the west coast, growers have already begun to see the early inflorescences that may be ready for Christmas. In the eastern areas, nights in the greenhouse will now be in the low to mid 60s, depending on the thermostat setting, so the first of our phalaenopsis will not begin to bloom until Valentine's Day at the earliest.

A reduction in nitrogen levels will go a long way to giving the best possible spiking, as will a boost in potassium and phosphorus. In other words, a "bloom booster"-type fertilizer is definitely indicated in the next few months. Disease and pest problems are best dealt with now, especially as mealybugs hide in the bracts and flower buds. Once they have established themselves, they are difficult to eradicate, and flower damage or crippling results. Potential disease problems can be dealt with by the application of a copper-based compound to control/alleviate rot problems before they start. There is nothing more frustrating than to have shepherded your plants through a growing season, only to have them decline before your eyes.

- Abridged Article Courtesy of the American Orchid Society
Written by Ned Nash & James Rose

Upcoming AOS Webinars

AOS Culture Day "Know More November: Orchid Culture, Conservation And You!"

with John Romano, Jason Fischer, Lucy Matos-Lodato, Keith Clark, and Ben Oliveros
Sunday, November 10th, 10:00 AM EST

How to Grow Award-Worthy Species Orchids, Growing Vanilla, Installing and Maintaining Orchids with the Flamingo Orchidteers, Hawaiian Sunrise and Greenhouse Growing.

Citizen Scientists Meet Native Orchids with Bob Sprague

Tuesday, November 12th, 8:30 PM EST

Bob talks about the work of orchid enthusiasts studying and caring for native orchids and their habitat.

Greenhouse Chat November 2024 with Ron McHatton

Tuesday, November 19th, 8:30 PM EST

Join Dr. Ron McHatton as he answers your questions about all things orchids. Please send your question and pictures to Sandra Svoboda at greenhousechat@aos.org by November 17th, 2024. Greenhouse Chats are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC BUT REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

See AOS.org/orchids/webinars



Phalaenopsis NOID
Photo Courtesy of Kelly Genevieve

Preface

Welcome back to our orchid journey! This month, we shift our focus from the rugged landscapes of Australia to the tropical rainforests of Borneo, where we encounter the majestic *Phalaenopsis gigantea*. Known for its impressive, broad strap-like leaves and cascading spikes of pale-yellow flowers adorned with red spotting, this orchid is truly a spectacle. Join us as we explore the captivating features of *Phalaenopsis gigantea*, uncover its natural growing conditions, and share insights on how you might be able to cultivate this magnificent species at home.

Phalaenopsis gigantea

Found in the lush lowland forests of northern Borneo, particularly around Sabah near Merutai and Tiger Mountain and westward toward Sarawak, as well as in parts of Java, *Phalaenopsis gigantea* stands as a captivating and unique member of the orchid family. Known for its impressive size and slow growth, this species is cherished worldwide by orchid enthusiasts.

In terms of classification, *Phal. gigantea* belongs to the *Polychilos* subgroup of *Phalaenopsis*, along with species like *Phal. leudemannia*, *mannii*, *cornu-cervi*, *fasciata*, and *venosa*. This subgroup is distinct within the genus for certain floral characteristics and growth habits, though all *Phalaenopsis* species share similar cultivation requirements. Beyond *Polychilos*, the genus is divided into other subgroups including: *Phalaenopsis*, *Stauroglottis*, *Esmeraldae*, *Amboinenses*, *Zebrinae*, *Proboscidioides*, and *Parishinae*.

Phalaenopsis gigantea is a warm to hot-growing, monopodial epiphyte like most *Phalaenopsis*. Its large, leathery, bluish-green leaves can reach lengths up to 36 inches which create a sprawling dramatic presence as it matures. This orchid, however, notoriously is extremely slow growing – one of the slowest in the genus. In cultivation, it often can take 10-12 years to bloom, testing the patience of those who take on the challenge of growing this plant.



Phalaenopsis gigantea 'Tejas' CCE/AOS (92 points)
Exhibitor: Ken Avant || Photographer: James Harris
Date: Aug 18, 2007



Phalaenopsis gigantea 'Krull's Ruby' AM/AOS (87 points)
Exhibitor: Krull Smith || Photographer: Greg Allikas
Date: Nov 14, 2013

Continues next page...

Phalaenopsis gigantea cont.,

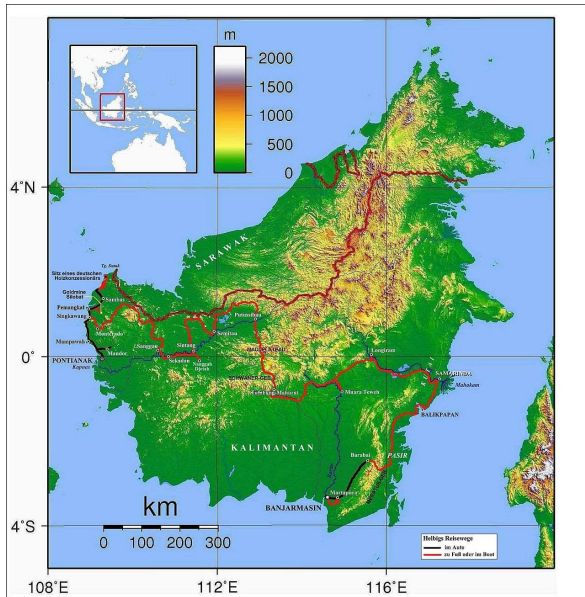
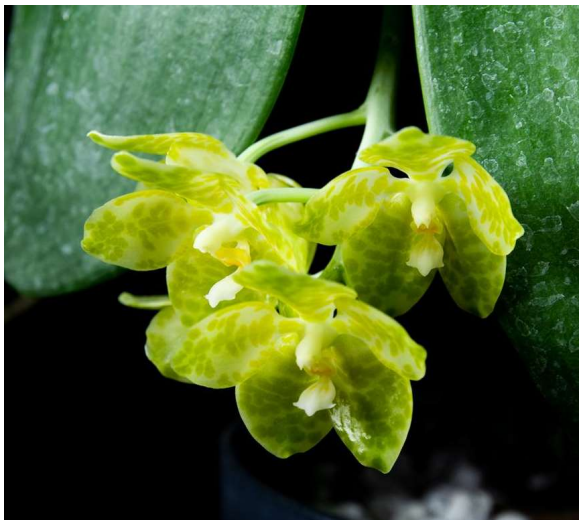


Photo Credit: Wikipedia Article on *Phalaenopsis Gigantea*



Phalaenopsis gigantea alba 'Queen' JC/AOS
Exhibitor: Prince Orchids || Photographer: Yeh, Jen-Chieh
Date: Nov 11, 2019

When it finally blooms, typically in late summer to early fall, it produces a woody raceme or spike measuring 6-15 inches long. Each inflorescence can bear an impressive 20-50 long-lasting, fleshy flowers that range in size from 1.5-3 inches. The flowers are typically white, cream, or yellow-green and are adorned with a small white lip and prominent reddish-purple/brown spotting. Unlike many other *Phalaenopsis*, the blooms are not only beautiful but also intensely fragrant, filling the air with a sweet scent. Additionally, *Phal. gigantea* is a sequential blooming, meaning that its spike can produce flowers multiples times as long as it remains healthy and viable.

Cultivating *Phalaenopsis gigantea* presents unique challenges. Unlike other *Phalaenopsis* species, it thrives in exceptionally bright light levels, closer to those needed by *Cattleya*. The plant is highly prone to disease and genus, making strong air movement essential to keep it healthy. In its natural habitat, high humidity (around 70-75%) is constant, so replicating these conditions can help prevent growth issues and promote steady, healthy vigor.

Maintaining consistent moisture throughout the year is crucial for this species. This plant should never be allowed to dry out completely, as it is sensitive to fluctuations in moisture. It is equally as sensitive to repotting; its root system does not respond well to disturbance. As a result, mounting this orchid may be preferable to potting – allowing it to establish without the need for repotting over time.

In terms of feeding, this orchid benefits from a “meekly weekly” approach to fertilization with a diluted fertilizer applied regularly to support its slow, steady growth.

Phalaenopsis gigantea cont.,

Phalaenopsis gigantea and other *Polychilos Phalaenopsis* have a unique trait that sets them apart from other orchids; their petals do not wilt and fall off after pollination. Instead, they turn green and begin to photosynthesize, supporting the growth of any developing seed pods. This adaptation is invaluable to the species, where it allows the plant to allocate more energy to reproduction without sacrificing the overall health of the plant.

When used in hybridization, *Phal. gigantea* contributes several desirable – and sometimes undesirable traits to its progeny. Most hybrids inherit its reddish-brown spotting. Sometimes this spotting appears more like the striping you might see with *cornu-cervi* or *amboinensis*. Hybrids oftentimes also inherit the smaller, less prominent lip and well-spread petals. These hybrids often retain the sweet fragrance of *Phal. gigantea* and the ability to bloom sequentially on a woody spike. Due to these qualities, *Phal. gigantea* remains a popular, but rare choice among hybridizers aiming to create ornamental *Phalaenopsis* with distinctive color patterns, fragrance, and large growth.

Whether you're drawn to its immense, glossy but leathery foliage, its fragrant blooms., or its role in orchid hybridizations, *Phalaenopsis gigantea* offers a rewarding challenge for orchid growers. With patience, care, and good culture, the plant may become a true masterpiece in your collection.

- By Jeff Hackett



Photo Credit: Jeff Harris, *Phalaenopsis gigantea* in Borneo



Photo Credit: Jeff Harris, *Phalaenopsis gigantea* in Borneo