



Southern Tier Orchid Society

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October 2017

NEXT MEETINGS:

October 15, 2:00 First United Methodist Church of Endicott

November 19, 2:00 First United Methodist Church of Endicott

IN THIS ISSUE

- CNYOS Orchid Show - STOS won the Best Display!

Meeting NOTES

October meeting will be held upstairs at the church.

Meeting location:

[First United Methodist Church](#)
53 McKinley Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760

EDITOR'S NOTE

Contributions, including pictures, to the STOS newsletter from members are welcomed. Contributions must be submitted by the 5th day of each month to the editor.

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southerntierorchidsociety@gmail.com

minimize or prevent the pest and disease problems that can crop up in the darker and more crowded conditions that often characterize the winter growing area.

General Nutrition

Light levels and temperatures begin to fall at this time of year, and your orchids' nutritional needs change accordingly. Orchid growers can take the following steps now to help prepare their collection for optimal health through the months ahead.

Use a fertilizer low in nitrogen (which should be nitrate nitrogen, not urea nitrogen) and high in potassium; the numbers on the label should read something like 10-5-20. Watering and fertilizing should be reduced in frequency for the cooler autumn season, and orchids that bloom during the winter and into spring should be given a couple of doses of blossom booster in October and November; bloom boosters should have a higher middle number, such as 10-50-10.

Ideally, this change in fertilizer should start by mid-November and continue through the end of January. This regime will sacrifice plant growth in December and January in favor of plant protection, but it can help keep the plant healthier overall.

Some growers recommend using Dyna-Gro Pro-TeKt (0-0-3), a liquid nutritional potassium-silicon supplement for plants. The product is supposed to improve heat and drought tolerance in orchids, as well as boosting their resistance to pests, disease and environmental stress.

Specific Genera

Seasonal nutritional needs differ among various orchid genera, and may diverge still further depending on local climatic conditions in disparate geographic regions. The following guidelines may require modification to accommodate individual growing conditions.

Cattleya: Watering and fertilizing frequency should be reduced, as the plants dry out more slowly in the cooler temperatures and shorter days.

Bud sheaths may yellow at this time of year as temperature fluctuations can cause water to condense inside the sheath. Should you notice condensation in the sheath, it should be opened or removed to allow the developing buds adequate air circulation and prevent bud blast caused by rots. Simply slit open the sheath and carefully peel it down toward the pseudobulb, exercising caution so as not to damage the delicate bud primordia within.

Dendrobium: Autumn and winter needs vary according to the species or hybrid parentage in this diverse genus. *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* and *Dendrobium canaliculatum* hybrids will benefit from a fertilizer with a low nitrogen formula for optimal flowering.

The leaves of *Dendrobium nobile* types and their hybrids begin to yellow and drop at this time of year in preparation for their winter dormancy. Plants should be given plenty of light and good air circulation and kept dry from November through February. Mist occasionally if their canes become overly shriveled.

Paphiopedilum: Generally, these do not require a great deal of fertilizer. This is especially important with the cooler-growing bulldog types to reduce nitrogen levels at this time of year for best flowering. (Bulldog Paphiopedilums have plain green leaves as opposed to the mottled-leaf types. One of the best-known bulldog-type hybrids is *Paphiopedilum Winston Churchill*.) Watch for water accumulating in the growth around the sheath or for late-season warm spells, as either can rot the sheath and destroy the developing inflorescence. While Paphiopedilums should not be allowed to dry out entirely, water needs are significantly reduced in the cooler days. Overwatering can cause root rot or *Erwinia* problems.

Phalaenopsis: Growth slows and inflorescences begin to appear. Reduce watering and fertilizing frequency, and apply a bloom-boosting fertilizer. Many growers also recommend applications of epsom

salts (magnesium sulfate) to Phalaenopsis at this time of year to prevent yellowing and loss of lower leaves and to enhance blooming. Once buds are evident on the inflorescences, keep temperatures and humidity consistent to prevent bud drop. Phalaenopsis grown in the greenhouse are especially prone to bud blast in February and early March, when the heat is still coming on at night and the greenhouse temperatures rise during the day.

Vanda: Aside from *Neofinetia falcata*, vandaceous orchids generally do not tolerate autumn and winter's cooler temperatures (below 60° F [16° C]) well and need to be carefully protected from chills. Vandaceous orchids still need as much light as possible as the days become shorter and light levels fall. Reduce the frequency of fertilizing and watering to accommodate the slower growth period they are entering. Starting the first week of October, Julie Rosenberg at R.F. Orchids in Homestead, Florida, recommends feeding vandaceous genera a blossom booster fertilizer exclusively, once a week for four to six weeks, at 1 teaspoon per gallon of water (15 ml to 3.8 l), with normal watering between. In November, begin fertilizing every other week, using a balanced 20-20-20 fertilizer at 1 teaspoon per gallon (15 ml to 3.8 l), substituting bloom booster every fourth feeding.

Preparing now for orchids' seasonal nutritional needs can mean happier, healthier and more productive plants year round.

By Susan Jones Reprinted from *Orchids* -- The Bulletin of the American Orchid Society. Copyright American Orchid Society -- www.aos.org

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Upcoming Meetings

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| October 15 ~ To be announced | December 17 ~ Annual Holiday Party |
| November 19 ~ Isabel Lopatin | January 21 ~ To be announced |

Please remember that these are tentative and subject to last minute change.

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