



Kunia Orchid Society Newsletter

August 2022

<http://www.kuniaorchidsociety.org/> or www.facebook.com/KuniaOrchidSociety

Edited by Denise Stewart

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Aloha Kunia Orchid Society Members & Friends,

There is currently some new activity amongst some of the orchid societies on Oahu. I understand that recently the Windward Orchid Society and the Mililani Orchid Society have held actual meetings. The Honolulu Orchid Society, so far, has continued with their monthly virtual meetings. A quick survey of the attending members at the last HOS virtual monthly meeting resulted in the majority expressing a preference to continue meeting virtually for the time being due to Covid.

I personally thought that when we eventually could meet personally, it would provide KOS with a boost that we seem to need at this particular time. In consultation this past week with our Board of Directors, we all felt that we should cancel our August in person meeting scheduled for the Mililani Ike Elementary School cafeteria, have our scheduled virtual meeting in September, and conduct a further evaluation if having an actual meeting in October would be the right thing to do. The decision was made mainly due to the Covid infection numbers reported. One can only guess about the number of positive tests that have gone unreported.

Our Education Committee has done a fantastic effort for all of us in the Kunia Orchid Society and more. They have been providing an orchid education opportunity for you, other societies and anyone who wanted to join us at our monthly virtual meetings in 2021 and virtual meetings every other month in 2022. I want to encourage all our members to take advantage of the great education sector of our virtual meetings that have been offered to you. In my years of attending various orchid society meetings, there were some months that the subject of the month did not appeal to me. I have found that not to be true of any of our virtual meeting speakers/topics offered by your Education Committee. Thank you, Brad Lau and Jan Takamiya.

I was so disappointed that only about 18 members joined us at our July virtual meeting. Brandon Tam, the Orchid Collection Specialist at the Huntington in Los Angeles, provided us with a virtual tour of The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Garden's Orchid Collection. It was a virtual, but it seemed like we were actually there at The Huntington. For those that have a conflicting commitment on meeting nights, you still have a chance to view the education part of the meeting in the following days of the month. If you are not taking advantage of either, you are truly missing out on many special presentations.

At our November general membership meeting, we will be electing our new officers and replacement board of directors for 2023. We are now accepting nominations for our officers and needed board of directors. Please contact me, or any of our officers and board members if you would like to volunteer or nominate one of our members.

I encourage you to continue implementing what you have learned about cultivating healthy orchid plants and beautiful orchid flowers with your collection. The Honolulu Orchid Society is currently planning for their annual orchid show in October. If circumstances permit and they do have their show, we may be invited to participate in some way. Let's get to work with our orchid plants in our back yards or mini orchid nurseries to prepare for future possible show events. If you don't have any orchid plants, and would like to try growing one, I got to have at least one plant that I can share with you, so call me. We can figure out what type of orchid might be best for you to grow in your area. If I don't have the right one, perhaps we can make a call to one of our members who might be willing to share?

Take care everyone,
Ken Ching
Cell: (808) 228-2800

A New Trend in Orchid Growing: Hydroponics Anyone?

By Brad Lau

While most of our orchids are growing in some form of media, we have learned you can also grow orchids with no media. Taken to the next extreme, you can grow orchids in just water or with minimal media and in a low level of standing water.

Orchids need air so some roots out of water and a few roots touching water or with close access to water is OK. Media provides moisture for roots and usually works best when allowed to dry out between waterings. But media breaks down and rots which is harmful to the plant over time.

With no media, there is nothing to replace but roots are exposed and can dry out. Having roots in contact with some water helps them to stay moist and not dry out. The water needs to be clean and changed.

In nature, *Phragmipedium* species orchids grow on the sides of rivers with roots always wet. They have adapted to thrive in constant wet conditions. They are great orchids for those who love to water plants.

Hydroponic culture

Full water culture uses no media and just an empty plastic or glass container for the roots and water at the bottom or in contact with the root tips. One tip is to use young plants with newer thick roots which may adjust better to hydroponic culture than old established plants with a heavy root growth.

Avoid using orchids that prefer terrestrial culture like *Spathoglottis*, *Phragmipedium*, or *Phaius*. They grow better with some media and nutrients touching fine roots.

Watering cycle - you don't need to soak roots in water constantly, you can give them a two-day water exposure followed by a 4 or 5 day drying out cycle. Adjust the time of drying for each plant so that it gets enough moisture and doesn't dehydrate.



Image by Gardening Know How

For full water hydroponics you have the leaves and stem of the orchid above the container and roots in the jar or pot with water filling partially. Monitor the water in the clear container and keep fresh. Adjust the water level to keep the lower roots moist while some roots contact air.

To promote air flow, you can create or cut extra holes in the pot or container above the water line. This allows air around the roots above the water at the bottom.

For some orchids like *Phalaenopsis*, they like roots that are evenly moist from the upper to lower roots in the pot. If only the bottom roots are wet, the upper roots may dry out if there is not enough moisture.



Semi-hydroponic culture

Hydro Clay pebbles (Leca) are made from 100% natural clay and are used for hydroponics, aquaponics, plant growing, or decoration. They are pH Neutral and inert, providing aeration and water retention. Rough cost is about \$30 for 10 lbs. While they can be mixed with orchid bark to help keep the media loose and from breaking down, you can use only clay pebbles for Semi-hydroponic culture (standing water at the bottom).

In Semi- hydroponic, water is kept at the bottom of the container and allowed to provide moisture to the roots or clay pebbles, but the roots are not sitting directly in water. The water needs to be kept fresh and exchanged regularly.

Moving plants from bark media or sphagnum moss to hydroponic setup requires complete removal of all media and thorough cleansing of the roots. Remove everything but the healthiest roots. Use the clay pebbles to support the roots and allow the clay to reach the water level about 1/2 inch deep at bottom of container.

Plastic or glass clear containers can be nested or used so you can see the water level and roots. You can check that the water is clean or ready to be changed. Taller jars or containers work well to provide limited water exposure at the base for the pebbles.

When working with hydroponics the water level will change depending on evaporation rates so monitor it regularly until you know what works. The key is to keep the roots from drying out completely and provide some moisture and air.

You can use rainwater, distilled or RO water with low total dissolved salts with hydroponic culture.

As with anything new, monitor how your plants are doing. Start with just a few plants and see how they do. If grown in direct light it is possible some algae can grow in your pots or containers, if so just scrub off the algae and renew the water.

Note that since this is a new method you may need to study your plants to see if they are staying healthy and growing. Shifting to hydroponics may not save you time, it is complex.

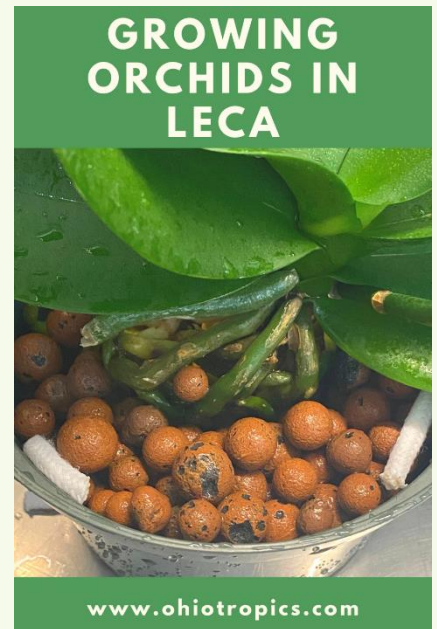
It's nice to learn new methods so keep a journal, take some pictures, write down your methods and steps. And share your successes and best practices.

Resource links:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/orchids/growing-orchids-in-water.htm>

Step by step guide

[GROWING ORCHIDS IN LECA & WATER: 5 STEPS FOR A GREAT SET-UP](#)



GROWING ORCHIDS IN LECA & WATER: 5 STEPS FOR A GREAT SET-UP

How to grow orchids in LECA and water. In this post, I lay out 5 steps to convert your moth orchid into a semi-h...

Organic Expanded Clay pebbles

https://www.amazon.com/Hydroponics-Succulents-Aquaponics-Garden-Conditioner/dp/B00GN9A6LK/ref=asc_df_B00GN9A6LK/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=167123712426&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=9082833200801941203&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvmqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmidl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9032800&hvtargid=pla-370253126357&psc=1



KUNIA MEMBERS SHARE



Blc. Lois McNeil 'Hilo' - Ken & Aileen Ching



C. Atalanta 'Hawaii' Ken & Aileen Ching



Cym. Suzie Q 'Rudolph's Nose' - Bill Takamatsu



Bulbophyllum Wilbur Chang - Bill Takamatsu

