

Key West Orchid Society

Newsletter

Jay Pfahl, President

Liza Bray, Editor

Sunday, 8th December 2024 – 1:00
Toppino Chapel

Key West Tropical Forest and Botanic Garden

KWOS Meetings

8 December

19 January 2025

17 February

28 February - 2 March Orchid Fair
West Martello

16 March

20 April

16 May - Trip to Redland

KW Garden Club

Meets Mondays from 9:00 to noon for potting, rooting, weeding, etc., and general clean up. Stop in to help anytime you have a free Monday morning.

KW Tropical Forest /Garden

Volunteers meet at the nursery every Wednesday and Saturday from 9 to 12 for propagation and to clean up the Garden. Come in and help anytime you can.

Tamiami International Orchid Festival

17- 19 January 2025

Miami Dade County Fair Expo Center

10901 SW 24th Street
Miami, Fl. 33165

The December meeting of the KWOS will be at the Toppino Chapel of the Key West Tropical and Botanic Gardens on December 8th. This is our traditional Christmas meeting, but we are departing from the normal routine in not having an expensive lunch at a seaside venue. Instead we will be bringing in sandwiches and drinks. There will be gift plants for members.

In order to make sure we are prepared for the people attending, please RSVP to Leigh Coolidge at leighcoolidge@gmail.com by 1st December.

The speaker will be Lynne Bentley Kemp who will demonstrate orchid photography. Please bring in your blooming plants, not only to show, but as subjects for Ms. Bentley Kemp's presentation.

Ms Bentley Kemp is professor of photography at the College of the Florida Keys.

November Meeting

Francisco Miranda gave a very professional and informative presentation on orchids of the Amazon.

As with Brazil itself, there are five distinct habitats of the Amazon: sub-tropical rain forest which is similar to Key West in that it has uniform temperatures. It differs in that it only has only two seasons: rainy and rainier, and due to the dense vegetation, there is no wind. Sometimes Key West can feel like a desert island, and we do have wind. The rain forest also has very little drainage, and the canopy of very tall trees blocks most light to anything below; it only gets full sun in



L. rubescens semi alba

gaps of dead foliage. These gaps then allow more growth by opportunistic species closer to the forest floor. There are some 2000 tree species, and different orchid species grow on different tree species.

The campina means grassy fields in Portuguese, and comprises large stretches of sub-tropical forest, along river banks, and features a much lower tree canopy and better drainage. There are many micro-habitats, which receive much more light than the sub-tropical forest and it is home to more than 70% of the Amazonian orchid species. Some of the species found here are *encyclia fragrans*, *epidendrums*, *maxillaria*, and *cattleya eldorado*. The open campina, closer to the rivers, provides a home for many varieties of *catasetums*.

The next distinct habitat is the dry forest, which never floods and supports less than 1% of the orchid species found in the Amazon.

The Igapó consists of backwater flooded forest, characterised by seasonal flooding and lakes, a medium canopy, and interconnected rivers, which supports epiphytes, shrubs, and trees. The permanent Igapó, which remains flooded, supports *Acacalia cyanea*, *c. violacea*, *coryanthres macrantha* (bucket orchid), *Zygopetalum*, about 176 species of *Catasetum*, and *Stanhopia*. In the seasonal igapó, hardwood dies off, and its long decomposition process provides wonderful growing conditions, possibly similar to the hardwood hammocks in the Everglades.

At the confluence of the Rio Negro and the Amagónas what we know as the Amazon forms in Manaus. After Manaus, it can stretch up to 20 miles wide.

Further down the Amazon, there is higher, drier land, with rock ledge outcrops and extreme conditions. *Sobralia macrantha* grows in cracks in the rocks. On reflection, it is amazing that we are able to grow so many varieties of Amazonian orchids here in the Keys, when their natural habitat is so different from the conditions here.

Future Meetings

The rest of the meetings for Spring of 2025 will revert to the third Sunday of the month at West Martello. The speakers will be announced in the newsletter, but are also listed on the KWOS website.

Orchid Fair

Plans for the Orchid Fair are well underway, and as usual, we will need volunteers to fill all the various tasks essential to putting on an event of this sort. More detailed tasks will be outlined at future meetings.

You should also be preparing your plants for the March Orchid Fair, both for sale and for show. As usual, there will be forms to be filled out for both.

"Friends of Key West Orchid Society".

It is located at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1505314023598455>

You can request to join and will be admitted by the moderator (Leigh)

Website: www.keywestorchidsociety.org and Facebook



*Nell Smets with her prize-winning *L. rubescens*, chosen as best by Francisco Miranda, as well as being the members' choice*



V. Pakchong Smile