

# Greater Akron Orchid Society

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society & the Mid-American Orchid Congress

**Feb 2021**

President

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**Darlene Thompson**

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Secretary

**Pam Everett**

Editor

**Brandon  
Spannbauer**

Trustee

**Jane Bush**

## **Minutes of Jan Meeting**

We had a Zoom meeting where Dave Miller discussed "Managing an Orchid Collection"

### **GAOS Meeting Goes Online!**

The GAOS meeting will be online, hosted by Dave Miller and Darlene Thompson. Anyone who is interested will be able to participate in the meeting or just view it from home using your personal computer, smart TV or smart phone.

**Our meeting will be from 7:00 to 8:30 pm on Monday, Feb 8 with people able to join the meeting as early as 6:30 pm where we will chat and answer questions until the meeting starts officially.**

If you have any pictures of your blooming orchids for the show table, please send them to ([darlenejthompson@gmail.com](mailto:darlenejthompson@gmail.com)) by the Saturday before the meeting to be included in the Show Table presentation

**More info below.**

## **Upcoming Business**

GAOS yearly dues are now due, details below



## **Next Meeting**

Our Feb meeting will be online using Zoom where Ray Barkalow will present "Understanding Orchid Nutrition"

**Zoom meeting details below.**

**Website:** [www.thegaos.com](http://www.thegaos.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/theGAOS](http://www.facebook.com/theGAOS)

**Email:** [greaterakronorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:greaterakronorchidsociety@gmail.com)

## Letter From the Editor

By Brandon Spannbauer



Greetings!

We are partnering up with nearby societies to promote our online Zoom meetings to members for those interested in checking them out and their interesting speakers. Details on future free online meetings will be periodically emailed out to you with instructions on how you can join and participate if you wish.

This month we have West Shore's on Wednesday, February 17 with Carson E. Whitlow speaking on 'The World of Cypridiums'.

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Topic: West Shore OS February Meeting  
Time: Feb 17, 2021 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86738628179?pwd=azBKdXBaQXNrZDNkTWtMdVieStXUT09>

## Meeting Schedule

GAOS meets the second Monday of each month (except December) Beginner's Corner starts at 6:45pm and the meeting at 7:15pm, at the Portage Lakes Kiwanis Center, 725 Portage Lakes Dr., Akron, Ohio 44319

Members are encouraged to bring orchids from their collection for exhibit. **All are welcome; you do not have to be a member to attend.**

Feb 8	Understanding Orchid Nutrition Ray Barkalow
Mar 8	Mini-Catts: Delightful Cattleyas in Miniature Peter T. Lin of Diamond Orchids
Apr 12	Understanding Light Cheryl Erins



**Photo of the Month:** *Cattleya leuddemanniana*  
Photo © Sabine Furtwangler

## Greetings GAOS members!

Our next meeting will be Online. Here are the details on how to enter the meeting (this info will also be emailed to you so you can follow the links that way).

You can use your Windows PC, Mac, iphone or android phone to connect and participate in the meeting. Preferred equipment will be speakers and a microphone but members have connected using only phone or computer screen and no camera attached. People have found it beneficial to test their equipment prior to the meeting so if you have questions contact:

Dave Miller at 330-307-7189 or [dcmjpasml@aol.com](mailto:dcmjpasml@aol.com)

Darlene Thompson at 901-210-5502 or [darlenejthompson@gmail.com](mailto:darlenejthompson@gmail.com).

The meeting will open early at 6:30 pm to allow everyone plenty of time to connect to the Zoom Conference room we are using. You can text or email either of us if you have trouble connecting using the information below. The actual meeting content will start at 7 pm and end at approximately than 8:30 pm.

### Agenda

**6:30pm – Virtual Doors Open for Member Mingle**

**7:00pm – Meeting Starts with Society Updates**

**7:15pm – Virtual Show Table**

**7:30pm – Presentation**

If you have any pictures of your blooming orchids for the show table, please send them to me ([darlenejthompson@gmail.com](mailto:darlenejthompson@gmail.com)) by Saturday before the meeting. I would love to showcase your beautiful orchids. (Darlene Thompson)

## February 2021 Zoom Online Meeting Info

Our next Greater Akron Orchid Society (GAOS) meeting will be on February 8th. Doors open at 6:30pm for mingling and chatting. The meeting starts promptly at 7pm.

Ray Barkalow of First Ray's will be speaking all about orchid nutrition. First Ray's has been operating for over 27 years. To learn more about Ray Barkalow and First Ray's, check out his bio here: [First Ray's](#).

Ray is offering 15% off all products from <https://firstrays.com/shop/>. Just use the coupon code "GAOS". The coupon code is valid until February 14th. The zoom information is below.

Also, if you have blooms to share on the virtual show table, please send photos and plant names by Saturday, February 6th.

Looking forward to seeing all of you!

Darlene

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Meeting opens at 6:30 pm for social time. Meeting starts at 7 pm.

Dave Miller is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Greater Akron Orchid Society February meeting

Time: Feb 8, 2021 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88087332143?pwd=ajlrSzJqSUZ0ejNtYURqeVZpcW50Zz09>

## GAOS January Meeting Notes

By Pam Everett

On January 11, GAOS held its monthly meeting on Zoom. 41 individuals attended, including members from other orchid societies. Those who signed in early participated in an informal "greenhouse chat", and Darlene called the meeting to order at 7:00. Items of business included the confirmation of the new slate of officers for 2021 and a reminder that GAOS is entering the year without a named president. Therefore, the association requests that members volunteer their services to help cover the responsibilities of that position until a candidate for president comes forward.

Next, Darlene presented the virtual show table, which included 23 photos of blooming orchids as submitted by several members. Darlene then introduced Dave Miller for his presentation, Managing an Orchid Collection. Dave started by listing and explaining the five steps to successful growing: appreciate, own, grow, flower, and divide.

Dave then went on to discuss the importance of (1) sanitation in our work and grow areas; (2) the organization of our tools, potting materials, and media; (3) water quality, in which he recommended the use of pH and TDS meters; (4) a consistent watering schedule; (5) preventive maintenance for plants; (6) a regular feeding schedule; (7) keeping an orchid list in order to understand your plants' blooming and repotting cycles.

Dave also discussed how to properly stake orchid spikes and the importance of clean clips and stakes, and how to cut leaves properly. He concluded by covering the three things that most trigger orchids to bloom: light sensitivity, temperature sensitivity, and plant maturity.

The meeting concluded at 9:00.



**IS THIS FOR YOU?**

**The American Orchid  
Society Judging  
Program**

**is seeking highly  
motivated orchid  
enthusiasts to join the  
judging ranks.**

*Work with other such people  
and help maintain our  
awards programs and  
educational efforts.*

*For more information contact us at  
[judges@aos.org](mailto:judges@aos.org)*

# Greater Akron Orchid Society

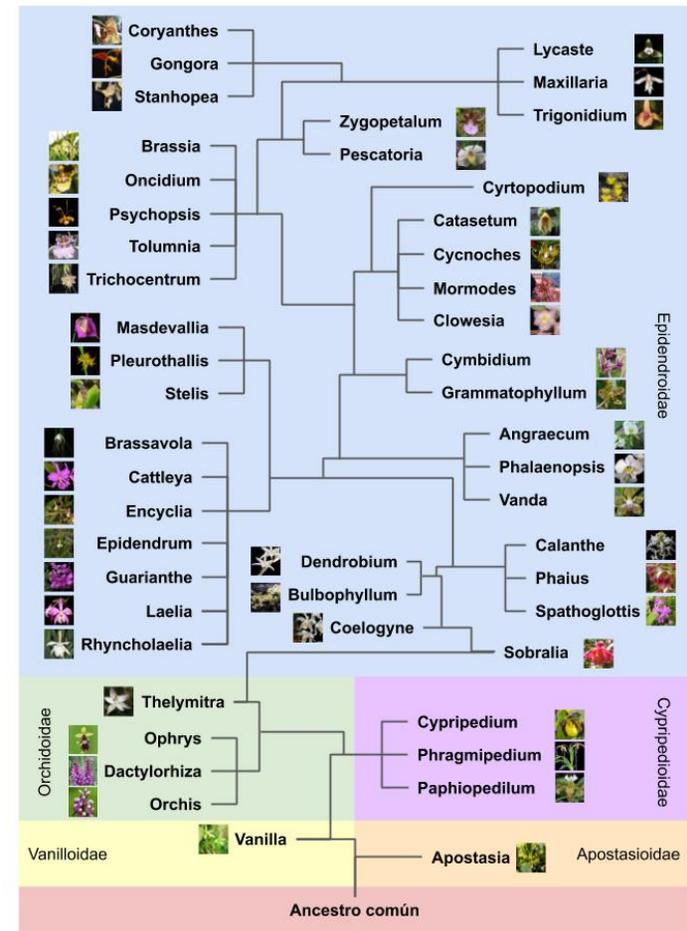


## 2021 GAOS Program Calendar

- Jan 11 Managing an Orchid Collection – David Miller
- Feb 8 Understanding Orchid Nutrition - Ray Barlow
- Mar 8 Mini-Catts: Delightful Cattleyas in Miniature – Peter T. Lin of Diamond Orchids
- Apr 12 Understanding Light – Cheryl Erins
- May 10 Curating an Ever-Blooming Collection – Darlene Thompson
- Jun 14 Summer Picnic  
1<sup>st</sup> Member Plant Auction
- Jul 12 “Tolumnia Species and Hybrids” with Edgar Stehli
- Aug 9 TBD
- Sep 13 2<sup>nd</sup> Member Plant Auction
- Oct 11 TBD
- Nov 8 Holiday banquet / Elections
- Dec 13 No meeting

## Phylogenetic tree of the most common orchid genera

Árbol Filogenético de los Géneros Orquídeos más Comunes



\* En todos los casos se ha incluido la fotografía de la especie tipo de cada género.

Fuente: The Royal Society Publishing.

## GAOS 2021 Dues

By Jane Bush

Greetings GAOS members and friends,

GAOS membership dues are **now due**. The deadline for applying for 2021 membership is March 15, but The Board would appreciate payment this month so that we can better budget for future speakers and activities. Dues are our biggest income and determine how much financially we can do as a society.

Attached (to the email along with this newsletter) is the correct **application for 2021**. **An application must accompany dues money**. The application is GAOS's record of your membership.

Because we are not meeting in person, you **must mail** your application and check to our treasurer Claudia.

Please note that there are some old forms of membership applications in cyber space. If you have not refreshed your browser, you may get one of these old forms. Please be sure to use the form attached to this email or the internet form that has **January 2021 (21-03)** in the bottom right corner.

Thank you for your support of GAOS through membership dues,

Jane Bush, Trustee

## Greater Akron Orchid Society Membership Application

To become a GAOS member or to renew your membership, complete the following form and present it or mail it with your payment to the society using the address below.

Dues are \$25 for a single/family membership

Make checks payable to GAOS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Primary e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if you do not want your contact information on the published member list

Mail to:

**GAOS**  
830 Zeletta Dr.  
New Franklin, OH 44319



*Note – At this time, electronic or credit card payment is not available.*

## **‘Like Finding Life on Mars’: why the underground orchid is Australia’s strangest, most mysterious flower**

By Mark Clements, [theconservation.com](http://theconservation.com)

If you ask someone to imagine an orchid, chances are pots of moth orchids lined up for sale in a hardware store will spring to mind, with their thick shiny leaves and vibrant petals.

But Australia’s orchids are greater in number and stranger in form than many people realize. Rock orchids, fairy orchids, butterfly orchids, leek orchids and even onion orchids all look more or less the same. But would you recognize a clump of grass-like roots clinging to a tree trunk as an orchid?

What about a small, pale tuber that spends its whole life underground, blooms underground and smells like vanilla? This is the underground orchid, *Rhizanthella*, and it’s perhaps the strangest Australian orchid of them all.

Even to me, having spent a lifetime researching orchids, the idea of a subterranean orchid is like finding life on Mars. I never expected to even see one, let alone have the privilege of working on them.

### ***Known for almost a century, but rarely seen***

The family Orchidaceae is the largest group of flowering plants on Earth, comprising more than 30,000 species. Australia is home to around 1,550 species and 95% are endemic, meaning they don’t occur naturally anywhere else in the world.

*Rhizanthella* has been known to science since 1928, when a farmer in Western Australia who was ploughing mallee for wheat fields noticed a number of tuber-like plants among the roots of broom bushes. Recognizing them as unusual, he sent some specimens to the Western Australian Herbarium.



In 1931, another underground orchid was discovered in eastern Australia at Bulahdelah in NSW by an orchid hunter who was digging up a hyacinth orchid and found an unusual plant tangled in its roots. Three quarters of a century later, I was involved in conserving the population of *Rhizanthella* in this location when the Bulahdelah bypass was built.

And most recently, in September, I confirmed an entirely new species of underground orchid, named *Rhizanthella speciosa*, after science illustrator Maree Elliott first stumbled upon it four years ago in Barrington Tops National Park, NSW.

Elliott's discovery brings the total number of *Rhizanthella* species known to science to five, with the other two from eastern Australia and two from Western Australia.

### **All species are vulnerable**

For much of its life, an underground orchid exists in the soil as a small white rhizome (thickened underground stem). When it flowers, it remains hidden under leaf litter and soil close to the surface, its petals thick and pink, its flower head a little larger than a 50 cent coin.

Its pollinator is probably a tiny fly that burrows down to lay eggs in the orchid, mistaking the flower for a fungus.

Today, all *Rhizanthella* species are vulnerable: the species *R. gardneri* and *R. johnstonii* are listed as critically endangered under national environment laws, while *R. slateri* and *R. omissa* are listed as endangered. The most recently discovered species hasn't yet been listed, but its scarcity means it's probably highly vulnerable.

The conservation of the underground orchid is complicated. Knowing where it exists, and where it doesn't, is one problem. Another is knowing how to grow it.

All orchid species need a buddy, a particular soil fungus, for their seeds to germinate, and *Rhizanthella* must have its habitat to survive. Unfortunately, it's extremely difficult to just grow it in a pot.

### **Seeds like ball bearings**

We also know very little about the biology of *Rhizanthella*. But here's what we do know.

We've discovered the fungus that buddies up with underground orchids in Western Australia is indeed the same as that in eastern Australia. We know underground orchids tend to grow in wetter forests and that burning will kill them. And we know that after pollination, the seed head of an underground orchid takes 11 months to mature.

Most orchids have wind-dispersed seeds. Some are so light that drifting between Queensland and Papua New Guinea might be possible, and might explain its vast distribution.

The seeds of underground orchids, however, are like ball bearings and the fruits smell like the famous vanilla orchid of Mexico, whose seeds and pods add scent and flavour to everything from candles to ice cream.

In nature, bats disperse the seeds of the vanilla orchid. So we set up infra-red cameras in Bulahdelah as part of the bypass project to find out what animals might disperse the seeds of the underground orchid. We observed swamp wallabies and long-nosed bandicoots visiting the site where *R. slateri* grows.

We suspect they disperse the seeds of underground orchids via their excrement, finding the orchid among truffles and other goodies in the leaf litter and soil of the forest floor.

In Western Australia, these animals are locally extinct. Without bandicoots and wallabies to transport seeds away from the parent plant, the natural cycle of renewal and establishment of new plants has been broken. This cannot be good for the long-term survival of the two Western Australian *Rhizanthella* species.

### **An alien in the floral world**

Conservation of the underground orchid might require intricate strategies, such as reintroducing bandicoots to a protected area, preventing bushfires and using alternatives to burning to manage the land.

An important first step is to find more populations of underground orchids to help us learn more about them.

Our work with DNA has shown, in the orchid family tree, *Rhizanthella* is most closely related to leek orchids (*Prasophyllum*) and onion orchids (*Microtis*).

But as you can see from the photo of a leek orchid above, it bears no resemblance to a subterranean flower, like an alien in the floral world.

## Judges Viewpoint

by Dave Miller, Great Lakes Judging Center

### Picking the Right Orchid

I am sure this discussion is one that a lot of you have been waiting to hear. Selecting the right orchid is not always an easy thing to do even if you are accomplished grower or buyer.

Most everyone is enamored with a beautiful flower and usually you have to barge your way to the front counter in order to get the best flower. The thing about flowers is they appeal to different people differently. If you see one you like, you should buy it because you are the one who will anxiously await the coming of the next blooming. I have plants in my collection because of quirky color combinations or because I simply like orange flowers! It does not matter if others like them or not.



Which Plant? What's not to like about this UFO orchid flower? Looks pretty alien doesn't it? Or how about the stunning combination on this Miltassia with hollow spots on a stunning purple background?

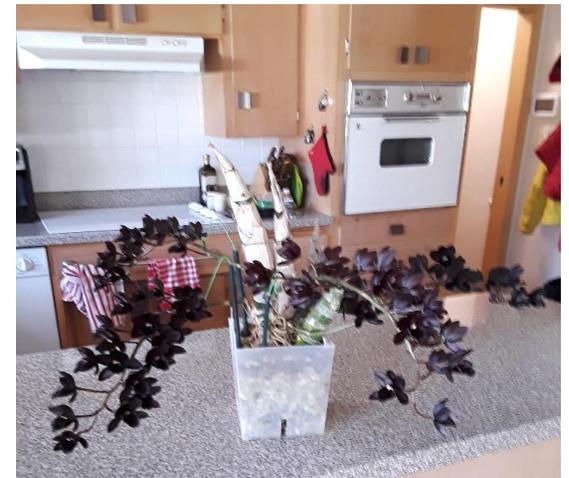
Orchids like these may be talking to YOU directly. Buy them then find out how to grow them; it is part of the challenge of our hobby.

Other than these show-stoppers and others like them, buying orchids is a more selective process. Hopefully, the plant you decide to acquire will present you with many years of flowers. For that to happen, you will need to look beyond the pretty flower.

With very few exceptions, I buy my plants based on the quality of the plant. Are the leaves strong? Does the plant wobble in the pot? Does it have more than one growth? Are the leaves clean without blemishes? Which plant on the table is larger and has more growths than the other ones like it? If there are pseudobulbs present, are they nice and plump?

Lots of questions and let's dig into them. Strongly supported, firm leaves are usually an indicator of a quality plant that has a strong root system and has been getting the amount of light the plant likes. This kind of strength will reward in the future with better production. The same goes for wobbly plants. You should be looking at plants which are firmly rooted in the pot. Good roots are the heart of every good orchid. I will sometimes buy a smaller plant because the root system is so much stronger than the other choices. Sacrifice the present for the future.

Well, easier said than done. Sometimes you just need to buy the pretty flower for immediate satisfaction. GO FOR IT without remorse.



In the beginning when I was building my collection (do we ever stop building), I would buy lots of little plants so I would expand my orchid diversity. What I have found is that we end up with a bunch of immature orchids that take years to give us a little show. These days I am trying to buy fewer plants but more mature, hence more expensive, plants but the upside to that is actually more immediate performance. More mature plants give you better performance and more flower production. Follow this tip and you will find yourself on the show table before you know it. On the left is a small *Fredclarkeara* bought in 2014 and on the right is the same plant after five years and after several divisions. Which would you put on the show table? Sometimes it is best served to spend more and buy the larger plant.

One more thing about this topic. As you gain experience and success with growing orchids you will develop your culture skills and then consider populating your collection with more immature plants, seedlings, and even flasks but don't forget they are much more demanding to grow than mature plants and divisions.



Evaluating Flowers On to the part you wanted to know anyhow. With a couple pointers you will be able to seek out the really good flowers. A little botany first. Orchid flowers are zygomorphic. Duh, maybe too much botany. What zygomorphic means is they are bilaterally symmetrical. Another duh. It means the left half of the flower folds over perfectly over the right half. Okay, there it is.

When you are looking at orchid flowers, left and right half need to match. There are a few exceptions to the rule but that topic is way too complex for us now. On the right is a pretty *Bletilla* orchid flower and you can clearly see

it follows this guideline of left half, right half. The more perfect the match, the better the flower. Look for nice flat flowers where the edges are not rolled over or look like the dog sat on them. Again, some orchids don't display in such an orderly fashion but again this is simply a general rule. Do not be afraid to ask for help.



Another guideline is color consistency. Find the flower that has color and patterns when the flower tissue is solidly colored throughout the flower. Not a solid color flower but the color is the same density (saturation) where it is supposed to be that color. This *Gilded Tower* shows all the aspects for color and pattern. The solid colors are rich. The patterns are clearly separated by a crisp margin from each other. Also, see how the dorsal sepal and petals are balanced and somewhat erect. Good form which is why I still have this plant in my collection. Well, two things, good form and it is still alive after many years. Hah. Finally, let's visit the *Gilded Tower* again but look at the plant. Many orchids we buy are known for their multifloral inflorescences (flower spikes). Look at all the flowers on those spikes. We want to see uniform spacing between the flowers, prefer enough distance between them to see each flower, and the flowers match each other in color AND form. Some of that comes from culture but at the sales table we must use what we see and hope we can maintain that good culture. Don't be afraid to ask the seller about culture. Most orchid sellers love to help you learn to grow your plants. If not, put your other society members to work. In the end, my motto is "If you walk past an orchid on the sales table and it turned your head, then immediately turn around and buy it".

Contact Dave at [dcmjpasmil@aol.com](mailto:dcmjpasmil@aol.com) or call or text to 330-307-7189.

# Photo Gallery

Home Displays  
Jan 2021





