



Members Guide

Whatever your particular interest in orchids, the Orchid Growers Guild (OGG) likely has something for you. This Members Guide is sort of a “user’s manual” originally intended for brand new members. But as we were putting it together we soon realized that even our more seasoned members may not know everything the Guild is up to. Read on!

Access the Benefits of OGG Membership

Like most things in life, the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. You already have been tantalized by at least one orchid so the rest is easy! Here are six tips for getting the most out of your OGG membership.

1. Participate in monthly meetings.

Guild meetings are a treasure not to be missed. Very little time is spent on business matters and announcements before getting to the heart of our passion: growing orchids! Here are some of the many opportunities you will find at our meetings.

- Members can show their blooming orchids for ribbon judging. Members get points for blue, red, and white ribbons awarded by the judges. Members also earn points for submitting their plants for judging, and helping with installation and take-down of our exhibits at home and away shows. Points earned are added up at the end of the year for recognition by the guild.
- There is often a wide variety of orchids shown at meetings, allowing members to identify and connect with other members who have similar interests and will share their successful growing techniques.
- A knowledgeable speaker will discuss a topic relevant to our hobby. The speaker may appear in person, or virtually on a large screen. Technology allows the guild to bring in speakers from anywhere in the world, and we do. Speakers’ presentations are also available to members on meeting days via Zoom.
- Orchid plants from various sources are regularly made available for purchase at meetings. These may include harder to find specimens from members’ own collections and specialty vendors.
- Time is allocated at the start of our meetings for members to connect with others, for socializing, getting questions answered, sharing news, and making friends.

This is valuable time, as members who know more are generous to help others improve their growing strategies for reliable blooms, access good sources for new plants, and improve the quality of our collections. We have among our members true experts in the field.

2. Volunteer for committees and projects.

Take a risk and volunteer when opportunities arise to help out with something. Even if you don't know a thing about it, volunteering is a chance to watch, listen, and learn. Helping out with special projects, such as Orchid Quest and "away" shows, is also a great way to get to know people.

3. Show your blooming plants at shows for AOS judging.

The major orchid shows have AOS (American Orchid Society) judging in which many of our members participate. AOS judging is a highly sophisticated discipline. It takes 12 years of training to qualify as an AOS judge. There is an art to preparing your plant to show its best, an art you can learn from guild members who will be willing to teach you. Everybody starts somewhere. You too may one day experience the thrill of an AOS awarded orchid!

4. Join in social events.

The guild does not have a lot of parties, but when we do, you'll want to be there if you can. Orchid fanatics are fun to be around!

5. Share your strengths.

Everybody is good at something, and doesn't it feel good to use your natural talents towards a worthy goal? As each member contributes his or her own special abilities within the guild, not only does the guild benefit, but those talents actually become even stronger. As the guild gives to you, and you give back to the guild, everybody wins!

6. Find your mentor, be a mentor.

As you attend more meetings and get to know others in the guild, eventually you will naturally gravitate towards members with whom you have things in common. You will learn a great deal from them as they mentor you about the guild and experience the thrill and challenges of orchid growing. Before you know it, you will have new members coming to you for advice!

**You won't be good at everything. Nobody is.
Find your niche and be happy.**

Check out our culture sheets specific to Wisconsin at
<https://orchidgrowersguild.org/wisc-based-culture-sheets///>



Orchid Growers Guild of Madison

The Year at a Glance

Like an orchid, there is a seasonal rhythm to activities of the Guild. Here is an overview of what to expect, and opportunities for your participation during a typical year.

Monthly meetings

Guild meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month September through May at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. In summer many orchids take a break, and so do we.

Show season January through April

The beginning of the year marks high bloom season for orchids and the best time for orchid societies everywhere to put on orchid shows. Shows give members an opportunity to exhibit their best blooming plants for judging, and foster public interest in the hobby. Orchid societies in Milwaukee, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota also put on shows during show season in which our members can participate. Vendors at orchid shows often have varieties for sale that are not commonly on the market.

Orchid Quest show & sale fifth weekend of the year

Every year our guild puts together the largest orchid show in the Midwest, Orchid Quest (OQ), held at Madison's Monona Terrace. Vendors from as far away as Ecuador display and offer plants for sale. Orchid Quest is separate from, but coincides with, Olbrich Botanical Gardens' show, Orchid Extravaganza, in the Bolz Conservatory. Orchid Extravaganza starts the same weekend as Orchid Quest but continues through February.

Mother's Day plant sale

Typically on the Saturday before Mother's Day the guild puts on a public plant sale at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Our sale plants are purchased in bulk from an area vendor. It is a great opportunity for guild members to participate in a group road trip to buy and transport plants for this sale.

Summer picnic June or July

Usually held at one of our member's homes, our summer gathering is a chance for guild members to show and see our summer blooming orchids, enjoy good food, and interact in a relaxed, purely social atmosphere.

September

Our monthly meetings resume. Start of the Fall show season.

December member awards

Our last meeting of the year is a time for celebration, review, and recognition of what our members accomplished over the course of the year. This is also time to renew your membership for the New Year!