



August



2026

Board Members:

- * President: Jim Pearce
- * Vice President: Erin Nelson
- * Secretary : Edwin Weber
- * Treasurer: Jo E. Cook
- * Show Chairperson: Linda Drummond
- * AOS Representative: Harvey Singleton
- * Newsletter Editor: Suzanne Sawyer
- * Member at Large: Donna Foreman
- * Member at Large: Ernie Smith

Committee Chairs:

- * Librarian: Scott Rettenmund
- * Refreshments: Jeanne McKinnie

Email:

Email: sosorchidsociety@gmail.com

Newsletter:

spokane.orchid.newsletter@gmail.com

Website: www.spokaneorchids.org

President's Thoughts

Hi Everyone

I want to begin by saying that I know the Spokane fire has created inconvenience and concern for many of us. Even if we have not been directly impacted, it has still affected routines, plans, and peace of mind. I hope everyone is staying safe and taking care.

For now, our monthly meeting is still on as usual, and I'm glad we'll have the chance to come together. Sometimes just being around friends who share a common interest can be a welcome break from everything else going on.

Many thanks to Donna for doing a great job organizing our trip to the Spokane Indians game on August 7th. Events like this do not just happen, so her effort is truly appreciated.

Our Botanica trip on Saturday morning (August 15th) will be led by whom? I can't do it this year, and I appreciate that help as well.

I also want to mention something that is important to the future of our society. We continue to struggle with getting enough members to volunteer - whether for projects, programs, or the everyday work it takes to keep the society running. A small group of people have been carrying a lot for a long time, and we really do need more participation. You do not have to take on a huge role to help. Even volunteering in small ways can lighten the load and make a big difference.

The Spokane Orchid Society is a special group, and it stays special because of the people who show up, contribute, and care. Thank you for being part of it, and I hope to see you all at the meeting on the 12th. *Jim*

SOS 2026 Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time/Location
*Wednesday, August 12, 2026	SOS Meeting Refreshments: Penny & Suzanne	5:30 PM Social time 6:00 PM Meeting start Manito Park Mtg. Room
*Saturday, August 15, 2026	Open House at the Botanica Orchid Greenhouse	Botanica 3112 S. 3rd st. W Missoula, MT 59804

More Info and Up-coming Summer Events & Dates

* **Wednesday, August 12th:** Jim will talk about the care and culture of *Cymbidium* orchids at the Society meeting. Jim has many beautiful *Cymbidiums* and a lot experience with their culture.

* **Saturday, August 15, 2026:** Opportunity to vist the Botanica Orchid Nursery in Missoula, Montana. Carpooling will need to be arranged by the people who are planning to attend the Open House. Please identify yourselves at the Aug. 12th meeting and discuss carpooling during the refreshment break. Jim will not be able to attend, so you will need to coordinate your own transportation. If you have never been to Botanica, it is worth the trip Missoula just to see it and of course, you can shop too. Botanica specializes in Angraecoid species, but they have many other species and some hybrids as well.

Up-Coming in September, October & November

A breakfast tour of Ernaldo's Orchid growing area is being planned for September, but no date has been confirmed yet - stay tuned. Also in September is a "New Grower Workshop" at Jim's Greenhouse on **Sunday, Sept. 20th**. We usually host a table at the Spokane Fair, which is Sept. 11-20, but need a volunteer coordinator. Anybody willing to coordinate this?

The Annual SOS Orchid Auction will take place in October at our regular monthly meeting on **October 14h**. Please set aside a few orchids that can be donated to the auction, as it is an important fundraiser for the society.

Remember Michael from Mizu Mori Tropicals? He was a guest speaker at a society meeting last year and he will be back again at our November Society Meeting on **November 11th**. Mizu Mori means "Water Forest" in Japanese and they specialize in terrarium plants and jewel orchids. Michael is a great speaker!

AOS CORNER with Harvey

The American Orchid Society has unlocked a members-only Orchids magazine supplement devoted entirely to Phalaenopsis. It provides expert tips, breathtaking photos, and deep-dive features you won't find anywhere else. You can download it for free by going to the American Orchid Society website www.aos.org.

It is Summer Break time for AOS webinars. However, recorded webinars are available as normal on the AOS website.

Happy Summer.

Grow Well.

Harvey

Photos from the July 12th SOS Picnic Thank You to Sharon Chatterton for hosting!



Orchid Tips and Information for New Growers

Understanding The Importance of Humidity

Source: American Orchid Society

Orchids and Humidity

Humidity is one of the least understood factors about plant growing. You will see many online articles that espouse that you should “mist your plants every day”, but that’s not really the case for most other tropical plants, or even some orchids. Spritzing your plants is an added bonus – something that keeps the plant from losing water temporarily. Spritzing your plants does NOT raise humidity; if it does, it’s temporary, maybe for 20 minutes until it dries out. The volume of air around a plant is too big to have the humidity go up from simply spritzing.

Most orchids are epiphytes, and as epiphytes, will respond to spritzing – spritzing can be used as a tool for yielding certain results. Lithophytes will respond to spritzing too, but terrestrial orchids will not respond to spritzing. This is because of the mechanisms that each habit (growth form) has developed. Epiphytes and lithophytes do not know when their next drink is coming, and have no media to draw water from. If the mist hits their exposed roots, they will absorb that water. Terrestrials have a supply of ground water, so they never really evolved a way to utilize mist. It’s pointless to mist terrestrial plants in general because they have no mechanism to absorb the water on their leaves.



Ice cube trays can be used as easy “Do-IT-Yourself” humidity trays

Virtually all orchids do best when humidity ranges from 40% to 70%.

Raising the humidity lowers the rate of transpiration (water loss) from the plant. For outdoor and greenhouse growers, the higher the humidity is in your greenhouse, the less frequently you will have to water your plants. The caveat to that is, is that you lose your leverage to cool the greenhouse if the humidity is too high, and that fungi, pests, etc. also like moist conditions. The catch-22 to recreating the natural environment for your plants is that you also are creating an environment that is favorable to all the other organisms that would live with the orchids too, both good and bad! That requires diligence, but just remember that if the humidity is high, you water less; if the humidity is low, you water more.

Indoors, humidity is typically low, and that is especially challenging when growing mounted orchids. We generally recommend not growing mounted orchids indoors unless they are in a vivarium/terrarium. For folks who want to raise humidity indoors, the only effective way to raise humidity indoors is through a humidifier – one that can push several quarts per hour into the air. The smaller humidifiers have a negligible impact on the humidity of a room. Humidity trays will help, but will only increase humidity by a small amount. Remember that most of the water that a plant absorbs is through its roots – the humidity only affects the time that any one plant will dry out. For many of the more succulent species like *Cattleya*, growing in low humidity is not a problem – provided they are watered frequently enough. However, for thin-leafed species, and smaller orchids, humidity is essential, and humidity must be maintained at higher than average levels.



There are a number of ways to increase humidity in your growing area. If you only have a couple of plants, addition of some ferns or other houseplants to your growing area may be sufficient. These plants do a reasonable job of adding humidity to the air around them. For small collections grown under lights or windowsills, humidity trays may be sufficient. These trays are nothing more than a water-holding tray filled with small gravel (aquarium gravel works well). The gravel-filled trays are filled with water to a level just below the surface. To prevent plants sitting on constantly wet gravel the plants are placed on small saucers or pieces of plastic or metal grid placed on top of the trays. The next step up in the humidity game would be an ultrasonic humidifier or one of those fog-generating ultrasonic devices you see sold for terrariums. If you are fortunate enough to have a greenhouse or grow your plants outside, you might want to invest in a set of misting nozzles connected to a timer or humidstat but just simply wetting down the growing space during the mid to late afternoon may be sufficient.

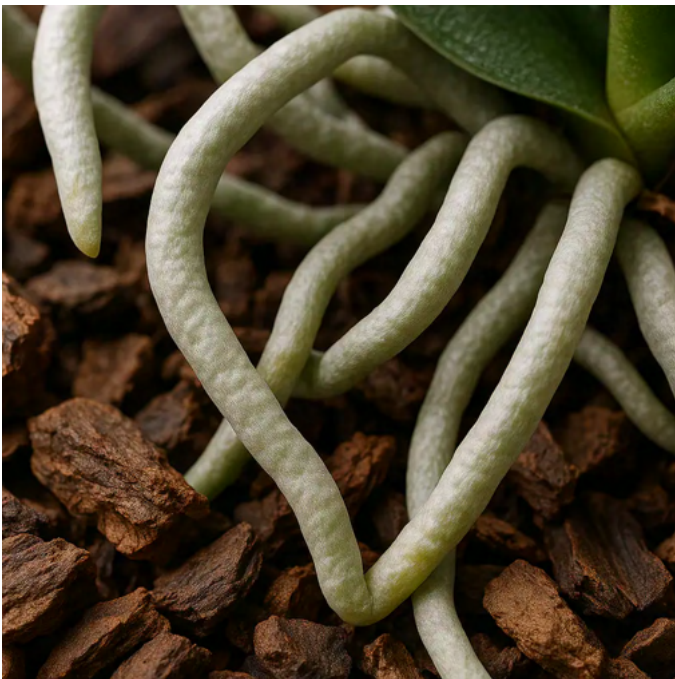
In greenhouses, the higher your humidity, the higher your air movement. should be Air movement is beneficial to your orchids but, under certain circumstances it can be detrimental as well. If you have adequate humidity, air circulation helps to carry stale air away from your plants and replace it with fresh air. This is especially important on hot humid nights. High humidity coupled with minimal air movement is a terrific recipe for the growth of fungus or physiological problems created by the buildup of moisture within the leaf tissues.



Moving air keeps leaf temperature down. Some orchids close the pores that allow transpiration of air and water from their leaves during the day. The leaves of these plants can rapidly become overheated and damaged without adequate air movement to cool them. Air movement avoids the stratification of cool moist air below the growing area and warm dry air above, where the plants are and “dead spots” are minimized and, equally important, damp stagnant areas - breeding place for disease - are eliminated.

However, where natural humidity is low, rapid air movement can be destructive by draining away humidity in the growing area, drying out the plants and retarding growth. Under these situations the roots of the plants simply cannot take up enough moisture to balance that lost through the foliage resulting in shriveling of the leaves and growths and, in the worst cases death of the plant.

When balance of humidity and air movement is achieved, coupled with adequate water at the roots, your orchid plants will thrive and their physical appearance will clearly be healthy. That look is hard to explain but it's one of those things that once you've seen it you will recognize it. Many orchids have growth cycles that involve the formation of pseudobulbs that are full and smooth in their early stages followed by the formation of features like angular edges or furrows at maturity but outright wrinkling isn't normal.



Adequate humidity will result in roots that are green, plump and have bright green or green-ish brown root tips. Healthy roots usually equate to a healthy plant.

What is adequate air movement? The answer depends on humidity to a certain extent (see below), however in general enough to cause GENTLE movement of thin foliage is about right. A hurricane is a hurricane - not air movement. If the leaves of your cattleyas are moving you might have too much air movement depending on humidity levels. In general, the roots of plants grown in an environment with balanced humidity and air movement will be plump and their tips will remain green and active throughout the growing season.

Orchid Show & Tell

I did not receive any blooming orchid photos from any of our members this month, so this is what is blooming in my greenhouse.

Suzanne Sawyer

*Send me photos of your blooming orchids by the 5th of the month to be included in the digital Show & Tell



Galeopetalum Arlene Armour 'Conching'
(Zygo. type hybrid - nice, spicy fragrance)



Bulbophyllum Wilbur Chang
(rotten meat fragrance/stinky)



Paphiopedilum Pinocchio
(No fragrance at all)

Orchid of the Month

Aerangis punctata



I purchased this *Aerangis punctata* (top photo) at the SOS orchid auction two years ago and it is about to bloom for the first time.

Aerangis punctata is endemic to Madagascar and the surrounding islands and is not found anywhere else. It is a miniature orchid that stays small and compact, but produces a fairly large flower relative to the size of the plant.

Like many other orchid species found in Madagascar, the flowers have a long nectar spur and are pollinated by moths with a long tongue. The flowers produce a strong, pleasant fragrance in the evening to attract their pollinators. This orchid is known to occasionally self-pollinate, for reasons that are not really understood.

It is a thermophilic plant, meaning it likes warm temperatures up to 80 degrees F in the daytime, but likes temperatures of about 65 degrees F at night. This species will do best if mounted, but will need humidity levels around 70% if mounted. This orchid can also be grown in a small slatted basket with loose chunky bark that drains well and allows the roots to come out of the basket.

The common name for this orchid is the dotted *Aerangis*, not because the flowers have dots, but because the roots have silver speckles. The roots of this species are unique in that they are flattened out and appear to be ribbed and are covered with silvery “dots”.

Provide bright, but well filtered light levels. Provide water generously during active growth along with weekly, weakly fertilizer. Reduce water and fertilizer in winter, but do not withhold water.



Orchid Trivia & Fun Facts

Can Orchids Grow in the Deserts of South Africa?



Turns out the answer to that question is a surprising “Yes!”. *Eulophia petersii* is a large, showy, terrestrial orchid that has adapted to the hot and dry conditions of a true South African desert environment. I took these photos of *Eulophia petersii* two years ago when I visited the Minnesota University’s Botanical Research Greenhouses in St. Paul. Their greenhouses are organized by habitat and I spent most of my time in the tropical greenhouse looking at hundreds of beautiful blooming orchids. I then decided to explore the other greenhouses and was surprised to see an orchid in full bloom in the desert habitat. The orchid in the top photo was taller than me and had nearly 100 flowers. Here is more information from the Ecomandurban Blog:



Eulophia petersii orchids consist of clusters of squat, fat, green to yellowish stems called pseudobulbs connected by short rhizomes that bear a small number of succulent, sharp-edged leaves. The plants are evergreen and the leaves can persist for several years, but the actual growth of the plants is highly seasonal.

New pseudobulbs and foliage are produced in spring and summer, and tall racemes of flowers are produced in mid-summer.

In the winter, the plants are dormant and can withstand long periods without water.

Traditional uses:

Flowers of *Eulophia petersii* are used as a love charm.