

# The Sheath

## April General Meeting

Date: April 22, 2011

Time: Doors open at 7:00PM

Place: San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo, CA

Take the Alameda de las Pulgas exit off of Hwy. 92.  
The Garden Center is located between 26th and 28th  
Avenues

Mailing address: P.O. Box 6894, San Mateo, CA 94403-6894

**Social time** in lieu of the  
skill session

**Meeting plus Show and  
Tell Table - 7:45 PM  
followed by**

Speaker:

**Debra Atwood**

**Demo and talk on  
repotting orchids**

Opportunity table by  
**Napa Valley Orchids**

### Repotting Your Orchids

**Debra Atwood**

I've always wanted to do a presentation on repotting, I have a whole lot to say on the subject! Like Thomas Keller from the French Laundry said "even though I've done it a thousand times, each fish I fillet is a brand new experience, a chance to learn and perfect, perhaps even to improve." It's like that for me and repotting, not only do I repot my own, I have a client that for the last 8 years I have taken total care of her 32 x 22 orchid greenhouse and that includes repotting her 300+ orchids, mostly cattleyas.

For myself, mostly species which are more specific in their culture. I have taught dozens of 2 hour classes on the topic, I love to repot, never rush, and savor every moment while wondering what I will discover. As you can most likely tell, it's a subject I'm passionate about, makes me wonder why I haven't spoken to societies about this before.

Napa Valley Orchids was started in March 2001 by third generation Napan Debra Atwood. In addition to growing a greenhouse full of beautiful orchids, primarily species, she also consults, is a regular speaker

at orchid societies and garden clubs, and in addition, performs greenhouse maintenance for a handful of clients. She has also taught orchid classes for many years, and still conducts orchid workshops as time allows. Summers you will find her at the St. Helena farmers' market, and winter is show season, with 7 to 9 shows a year.

Currently Debra grows Angraecoids, species Phalaenopsis, Neofinetias, Maxillarias, and what ever else catches her fancy. Her greenhouse maintains an intermediate temperature range, and her plants thrive in the Mediterranean climate of Napa Valley. Her orchid nursery, Napa Valley Orchids, is open most days by appointment. Call 707-255-8266 or email [napavalleyorchids@gmail.com](mailto:napavalleyorchids@gmail.com). Her website is [www.napavalleyorchids.com](http://www.napavalleyorchids.com).

### Opportunity Table

The opportunity table will be supplied by Debra's Napa Valley Orchids.

### POS Repotting Clinic

May 14th at D&D Flowers Open Greenhouse - see details in this newsletter!

**President's Corner**

I didn't really realize how much I missed the Peninsula Orchid Society during my four years of working Friday nights. I was too tired after work to care about orchids, and just wanted to go home.

But when Todd Kennedy threw out his challenge that the show must go off, I knew I couldn't stand to see us not have our show, though I wasn't really sure why. Then one of the vendors at the Show told me that her firm thought we were the 'friendliest' orchid society they knew, and I realized what I had missed most was the friends I made over the years. We are a friendly society because we encourage friendships that last a lifetime. Orchids may bring us to POS in the beginning, but it is the people who bring us back year after year.

So I am committed to maintaining and celebrating those friendships, and to building on our reputation as the friendliest orchid society. Please join us for a Social Hour (well, 45 minutes, but who's quibbling) this month in lieu of a skill session. Come mingle with friends you know, and friends you haven't met yet, over a cup of coffee and treats, and celebrate.

Mike

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**Editor's Corner**

Last month I gave my second ever skill session, on fertilizers. I don't like talking in front of a group of people, but I know it is good for me to practice. It would have been easy to go in and just tell everyone what I use on my plants, but I knew I needed to have a little more depth than that. I spent a month, using whatever free time I had, to research fertilizers on the internet. I learned a lot of basics, came across a potential solution to the main vexing leaf disease I have in my greenhouse, and found that I need to learn a lot more. I have wanted to look into orchid feeding for quite a while, and giving the skill session was just the motivation I needed to knuckle down. If you have been considering giving a skill session, just let someone on the board know you are interested and it will be scheduled at your convenience!

We discussed the greenhouse tour for this year at this month's board meeting. We are aiming for a date in June. If you have any input for this year's tour, the April POS meeting is the time to speak up. If you aren't going to be able to attend the meeting but have something to say, do call a board member. Our numbers are listed at the end of the newsletter.

The next board meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 14th at 7:00 PM at the San Carlos Library. Everyone is invited to attend. This is a great place to bring your ideas for future speakers or topics, and for suggestions you feel would make the meetings and our society more enjoyable.

Our show date for next year will be January 28th and 29th. This means there will be no January meeting as we will be at the show accepting entries and judging classes that evening.

Coming up much sooner is our repotting clinic. This year it will take place on Saturday, May 14th at D & D Flowers greenhouse in Half Moon Bay. Dennis Olivas will be having his semi-annual open greenhouse that weekend, so you can get help with repotting some orchids and if you wish, purchase some new ones also. It can be kind of hard to get Dennis to actually part with any though. He loves them all.

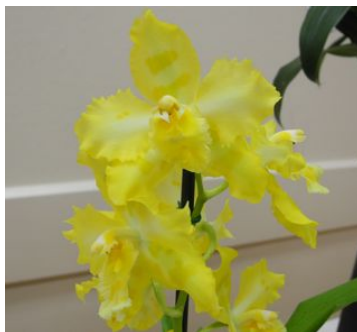
Take care,

Chaunie

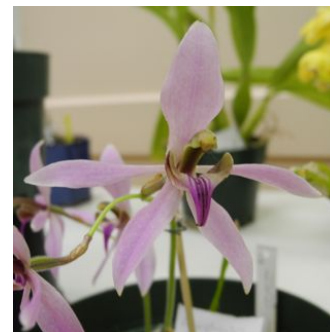
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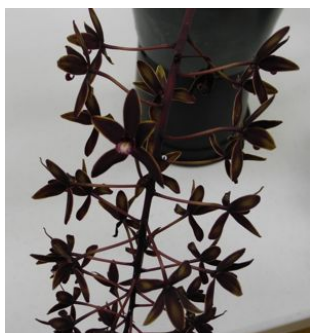
Ron did all the honors at  
the Show & Tell table



*Odontioda* George McMahon  
The Coneys



*Ancistrochilus rothschildianus*  
Kreg Martin



*Cymbidium canaliculatum*  
var. *sparksii* 'Cozette'  
Kreg Martin



*Oberonia toppingii*  
Anna Chai



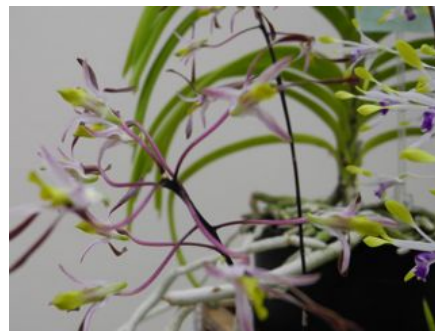
*Dendrobium* Vang Phuong  
The Coneys



*Pleurothallis asaroides*  
Anna Chai



*Odontioda* hybrid  
Janusz Warszawski



*Dendrobium carronii*  
Kreg Martin



*Clowesia* Grace Dunn 'Chad's Ford'  
Ken Jacobsen



Fabulous plant! Don't have a  
photo of the tag for it. Sorry!



*Dipteranthus estradae*  
Anna Chai

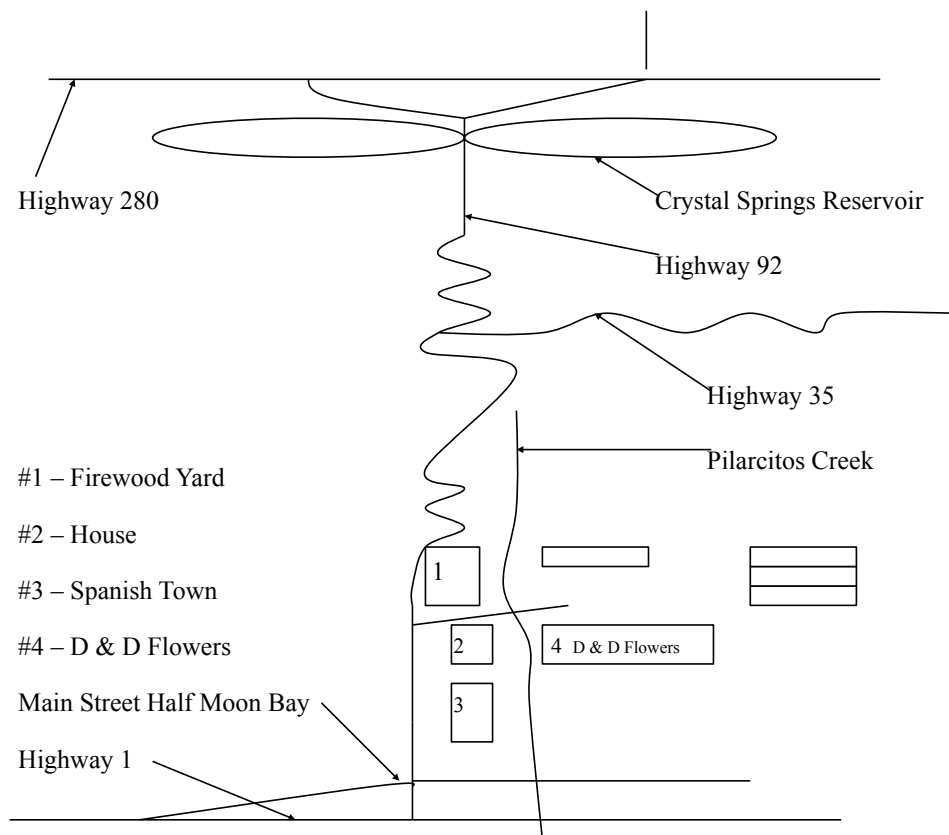
## D & D Flowers Half Moon Bay (925) 969-1246

**Spring Open House  
May 14 & 15, 2011  
9:00 AM to 3 PM**

(D & D Flowers is not open to the public except for our bi-annual open house events)

Really good deals... priced to sell. There is no list of plants available and divisions are sold on first come for serve. We will be having a \$7.00 sale on many cattleya, oncidium and cymbidium seedlings and back bulbs. We accept cash or checks but no credit cards.

Help your local orchid society. For every \$25 you spend, you may enter your local orchid society in a raffle for their monthly opportunity table. 40 healthy plants (some in bloom) will be award to the winning society. Winning society will be picked at the end of Sunday. The society must redeem their prize to D & D Flowers by the next open house which will take place in October of 2011.



Half Moon Bay 1/3 mile east of Main Street off Hwy 92.

Just east of Spanish Town on Hwy. 92 there is a house and firewood business. Turn onto the street between the house and firewood business and go over the bridge into the greenhouse complex. D & D Flowers is the first greenhouse on the right. If you go beyond the large dinosaur statues in front of the house and Spanish Town and you are at Main Street, you've gone too far.



## Member News



**A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** Dan Alvear, Karen Bartholomew, Greg Corrales, Don Creavy, Glenda Derman, Mary Donoghue, Cassandra Gaunt, Lynn Gentry, Michael Green, Carl E. Jukkola, Mark Khoo, Japheth Ko, Tanya Lam, Eric Langland, Elizabeth Lee, Joe Lee, Jr., Elaine Levenson, Valerie Tonkin and Ted Wuerthner.

*Thank You!! The following people brought refreshments to share with everyone:*

**Rene Biggs, Gloria Bygdnes, Anna Chai, Fred Cox, Jon-Michael Irvin, Paul Reeve, Ginette Sanchou, Janusz Warszawski, and Carol Zoltowski all brought treats for the refreshment table at our March meeting.**

Half Moon Bay Cymbidiums & Other Orchids Sale		
	<p>Hosted By:  Greg Corrales, Ken &amp; Amy Jacobsen, Eanghak Quach,  Bill Weaver &amp; Audrey Young-Tarter</p>	
	<p>Choice Plants from Our Private Collections for Sale  Blooming, Past Award Winners, Recently Divided,  First Bloom Seedlings, Pendulous, Pelorics, Etc.  ***** Some for the First Time Ever *****</p>	
	<p>When:  <b>One Day Only !</b>  <b>Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011</b>  <b>11 AM to 3 pm</b></p>	
<p>Where:  <b>Schickenberg Topiary Nursery, 2351 North Cabrillo Hwy,  Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 (Highway 1, across from Young  Avenue, 3 minutes from Hwy 92)</b></p>		
<p>( Questions? Email AudreyYoungTarter1@Yahoo.com )</p>		

## Upcoming Events

**April 26 Marin Orchid Society Spring Auction,** Silent Auction Tuesday at 6:30 PM, followed by live auction at 7 PM. Marin Art and Garden Center (MAGC), 30 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Ross, CA. Wine, cheese and other refreshments provided! Auction paddles \$2.00. Website <http://www.marinorchidsociety.com>.

**April 30 Half Moon Bay Collective Greenhouse Sale,** Schickenberg Topiary Nursery, 2351 Cabrillo Hwy., Half Moon Bay, 11AM to 3PM. Buy plants from a group of well known amateur growers, including POS members and Gold Coast members.

**May 7 & 8 Carmel Orchid Society Annual MayFaire Show & Sale at CVGS** - 9 AM – 4 PM, at Hidden Valley Institute of Arts, 88 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley Village, 11 miles East of Highway 1, ADMISSION IS FREE, Lots of Free Parking. For more information go to [www.carmelorchidsociety.org](http://www.carmelorchidsociety.org).

**May 6 - 8 Orchid Society of California Mother's Day Weekend Show & Sale** - Noon to 6PM Friday, 10AM - 5PM Saturday & Sunday. Show information is posted at: <http://www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com/aboutshow>. The show will have AOS, CSA and ribbon judging. You are all invited to participate in the show. The general setup for the show will be on Friday, May 7th, 8AM to 1PM. You may bring your plants for judging or exhibition by 6PM Friday May 6th or 8:30AM Saturday May 7th. Judging will commence at 9AM Saturday, May 7th. For the list of classes, go to [http://www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com/May\\_show\\_schedule.html](http://www.orchidsocietyofcalifornia.com/May_show_schedule.html) A wide variety of blooming orchids and orchid related materials will be for sale.

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**May 14 Peninsula Orchid Society Potting Clinic** will take place at the D&D Spring Open House in Half Moon Bay from 10AM to 2PM. Society members may bring up to two orchids (but not cymbidiums) up to a six inch pot size for free repotting. Additional plants, and plants belonging to guests may be repotted for \$3 for pots up to 4 inches and \$5 for pots up to 6 inches.

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**May 14-15 D&D Spring Open House,** Half Moon Bay. See details on page 3.

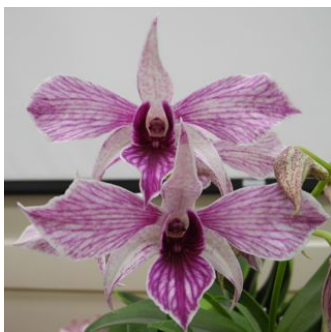
**June 3 San Jose Orchid Exposition Orchid Conservation Fund Raiser.** Miraido Club House, 550 N. Sixth St., San Jose. 6:30PM to 9:30 PM. How many fund raisers can you attend for \$10? All of the entrance funds raised go to the Orchid Conservation Alliance (<http://www.orchidconservationalliance.org/>) Have first choice of plants for sale by Andy's Orchids, Cal-orchid, Gold Country Orchids, Golden Gate Orchids, Oz Gardens, Paphanatics Unlimited, Seed Engei and Tanya Lam Orchid Supplies; the vendors will pay the sales tax during the fund raiser. There will be wine tasting, party food, and a special speaker.

**June 4-5 San Jose Orchid Exposition.** Miraido Club House, 550 N. Sixth St., San Jose. Saturday 9AM - 6PM, Sunday 10AM - 5 PM. Vendors listed above. FREE admission and skill sessions. Wine tasting. Come and buy orchids you don't get to see in bloom during the show season!

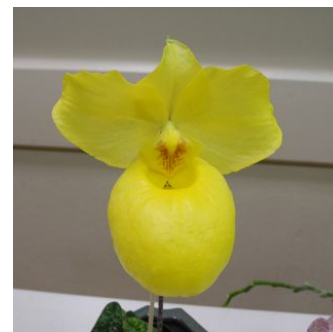
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*Prosthechea cochleata*  
Dan Williamson



*Dendrobium* Big Alex x Silver Wings  
Gloria Bygnes



*Paphiopedilum armeniacum* '3'  
Cordelia Wong



*Leptotes bicolor*  
Cordelia Wong



*Bulbophyllum falcatum*  
Mary Gerritsen



*Phalaenopsis cornu-cervi*  
Jon-Michael Irvin



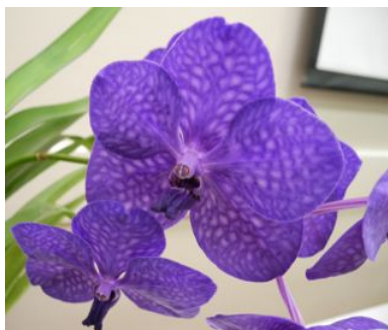
*Phalaenopsis* Brother Fancy x  
Maholo Cordelia Wong



*Leptotes poblitinocoi*  
Mike Drilling



Love this color, wish I  
had a photo of the tag!



*Ascocenda* Princess Mikasa  
Annie Green



*Dendrobium williamsonii*  
Ginette Sanchou



*Ascocentrum*  
*christensonianum*



*Bothriochilus triptera*  
Kreg Martin



## Epsom Salts and Orchid Culture

by Peter Spencer

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There have been a fair amount of interest and discussion at recent MOS meetings about magnesium sulfate, ( $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), or Epsom salts, and orchid culture. Do I need to use it? How much and how often do I need to apply it? Can I mix it with my regular fertilizer? These are the questions I wish to address in this article.

### Do I need to use Epsom salts?

Dr. B. Pressman (3) in an internet article cites percentage composition of dry orchid tissue from the book the *Physiology of Tropical Orchids in Relation to the Industry* published in 1998. He present the following data:

	nitrogen	phosphate	potassium	calcium	magnesium	iron
leaves	1.8	0.2	4.2	1.3	0.5	0.01
roots	20	0.3	22	0.8	0.8	0.04

Apparently, the different orchid species have essentially the same percentage composition of minerals. Pressman concludes that every ingredient shown in the chart "... must be supplied by the fertilizer if orchids are to go grow, prosper and flower." Thus, if an orchid plant does not receive even one of its essential nutrients one cannot expect it to grow and flower to its maximum potential.

Bob Gordon (2) advocates the use of Epsom salts in October to encourage *Phalaenopsis* orchids to set flower spikes and maximize the number of flowers per spike. For general health City Floral (1) recommends the use of Epsom salts as a regular additive to a balanced fertilizer such as 10-10-10. City Floral also suggests the use of Epsom salts in conjunction with a bloom-boosting fertilizer to induce a recalcitrant orchid to bloom.

Spurred on by this information, I visited several garden stores and read the percentage content of fertilizers available on their shelves. All had the usual nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium content in the various percentage ratios. Some had trace elements added (iron, copper, molybdenum, etc.) which plants need; however, not one contained magnesium! So, unless dissolved magnesium is present in our water supply, with a concentration of at least 24 parts per million, it will be necessary to add it to the water used for orchid plants (Gordon 86).

### How much and how often do I need to apply Epsom salts?

Like most cultural practices about orchids, the dosage and means of application vary from one source to another. Once again, you are left to do your own experimentation with the amount and frequency of Epsom salts application. The information below can be a good starting point for your own experimentation. I have selected recipes based on whether you like to fertilize at every watering, once a week, or seasonally.

1. One half teaspoon of Epsom salts to one gallon of fertilizer solution every time you water, (3).
2. If you fertilize your plants once a week, then use one tablespoon of Epsom salts per gallon of fertilizer solution (1).
3. Bob Gordon recommends five teaspoonfuls of Epsom salts per gallon applied twice in a row in October for *Phalaenopsis* orchids.



**Note:** since these recipes are from American sources, one gallon is probably 128 oz. (3.5 L), vs. 160 oz. (4.55 L) for an Imperial gallon.

### Can I mix Epsom salts with my regular fertilizer?

Concerns were raised at our recent MOS meeting whether there would be a solubility interaction between  $\text{MgSO}_4$  and the fertilizer, resulting in the formation of a precipitate. The information in the section above suggests that you can mix these chemicals without a problem. However, I will offer (a) a practical way to determine if an interaction occurs between your brand of fertilizer and  $\text{MgSO}_4$ ; (b) if a precipitate does occur, what it is likely to be; (c) what solubility theory says about precipitation reactions and the effects on the  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  ion's delivery to the orchid roots.

- (a) Make up your fertilizer solution and add the desired amount of  $\text{MgSO}_4$ . Stir well. Then fill a tall clear glass tumbler (jar) with the mixed solution. Next, go to a darkened room and shine a flashlight beam through the glass tumbler. If there is a precipitate in the liquid, you will see the light beam in the liquid. (The fine solid particles will scatter the light beam and make themselves known.) This test is very sensitive - even a small amount of suspended matter will reveal itself.

*(The Sheath Editor's note: some fertilizers do not dissolve completely. I recommend that you first do this light test with just your fertilizer mixed in water in the normal amount. If you see evidence of non-dissolved particles at this point, there is no need to add the Epsom Salts to look for a precipitate. I urge you to have a control sample for any experiment you do, if at all possible.)*

- (b) In the *Handbook of Chemistry and Physics* I checked for possible interactions of magnesium with other components of the fertilizer. The only significant interaction would be between the magnesium ion,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ , and the phosphate ion,  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ , of the fertilizer. Magnesium can form six possible compounds with the phosphate ion: two soluble, two slightly soluble, one very slightly soluble and one,  $\text{Mg}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$ , insoluble. However, this may not be as problematic as it sounds. Let me explain why in section (c).
- (c) Solubility theory states that a precipitate will form only if the product of the concentrations of the ions ( $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ ) is greater than the  $K_{sp}$ , the Solubility Product Constant, for  $\text{Mg}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$ . However, we are using very small amount of fertilizer and Epsom salts dissolved in a relatively large amount of water (remember, fertilize weakly weekly). This triple combination results in very low concentration of ions. Probably, the product of the ion concentrations will not exceed the  $K_{sp}$  value, and therefore  $\text{Mg}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$  will not precipitate. Secondly, even if precipitation does occur, not all the ions will precipitate from the solution (precipitation occurs only until the product of the ion concentrations is again equal to the  $K_{sp}$  value).

This fact means that there will be residual  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  and  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  ions remaining in solution available to the orchid roots. Finally, if a precipitate does form and ends up lodged in the potting medium, it will dissolve with subsequent waterings as long as tap water is used. The crux of these arguments is that the orchid plants will receive the magnesium they require, even if some precipitation of the  $\text{Mg}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$  occurs.

1. City Floral: [Orchids](#).
2. Gordon, Bob: [Culture of the Phalaenopsis Orchid](#), Laid-Back Publications, Rialto, California, 1990.
3. Pressman, Burt: [Care and Feeding of Orchids](#).

**Note from The Sheath editor:** The original article, as printed in Ezine, referenced a web site for City Floral and for Burt Pressman. These website addresses no longer work, so are not referenced in this printing. Also, the original article referred to a diagram for the particulate experiment. There was no diagram contained in the Ezine version of the article, so the reference to the diagram has been omitted.

Our thanks to CLAN - aka Camp-Lot-A-Noise Tropicals- for permission to reprint this article. They are located in Sarasota, Florida. Check them out on the web at [www.clanorchids.com](http://www.clanorchids.com).



*Maxillaria minuta*  
Ginette Sanchou



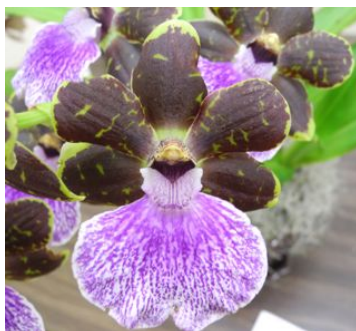
*Campylocentrum sellowii*  
Ginette Sanchou



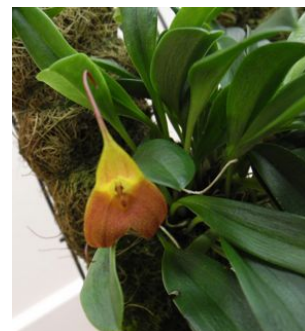
*Mediocallcar bifolium* 'Marion'  
The Staals



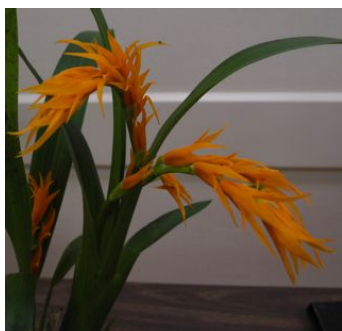
*Restrepia* hybrid  
The Staals



*Zygopetalum* Mishima Goddess x New Era  
Pierre Pujol



*Masdevallia* Rose Pellegrini  
The Staals



*Ada aurantiaca*  
The Staals



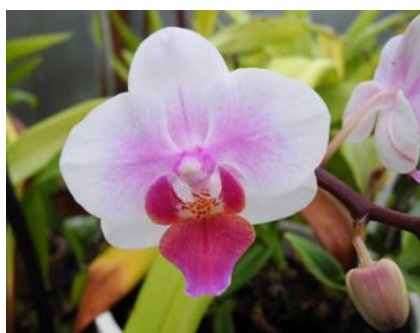
*Phalaenopsis javanica*  
Chaunie Langland



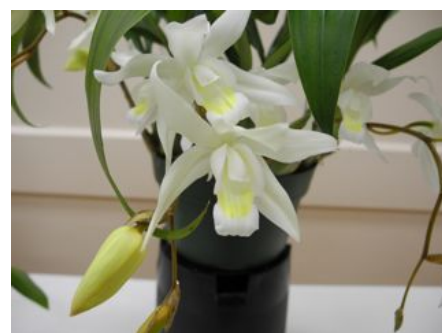
Cattleya alliance hybrid  
Pierre Pujol



*Aerangis modesta*  
Anna Chai



*Phalaenopsis* Be Tris  
Chaunie Langland



*Coelogyne mossiae*  
Anna Chai

**Unclassifieds**

Members may advertise orchid related items. The ad is free. E-mail your ad to [the\\_sheath\\_editor@earthlink.net](mailto:the_sheath_editor@earthlink.net) or mail to 878 Cashew Way, Fremont, CA 94536. Be sure to include your name and phone number. Ads must be received by the 1st of the month to be included that month's newsletter.

**Tanya Lam Orchid Supplies** - for all orchid growing needs

Plastic Pots, Clear Pots, Net Pot, Baskets, Fir Bark, Coconut Chips, Coir, Perlite, Lava Rock, Sphagnum Moss, Fertilizer, Hangers, Superthrive, Plant Clips, Cork Bark, Tree Fern Mount and many more items!

Contact Tanya Lam at 408-644-3996 or [tanyalam.orchids@gmail.com](mailto:tanyalam.orchids@gmail.com)

Free delivery to SCOVS, MOS, POS, OSC, SFOS Monthly Meetings

*Have you paid your 2011 dues?* The Sheath will not be sent out to anyone who has not renewed by May 5th. Also, Janusz is making the new membership roster to give out and we would like to include you.

Renewal forms can be found in this newsletter or at the meeting. Please don't make me write those letters again this year. Please. I need that time for repotting. Thanks! Chaunie

PS Not renewing? Please let me or Janusz know.

**2011 Board of Directors**

*President:* Mike Drilling 650-692-8998

*Vice President:* Wanted!

*Treasurer:* Sharon Langan 650-365-7160

*Rec. Secretary:* Mike Rector 650-366-3401

*Corr. Secretary:* Judy Evans 650-593-8625

*Membership CP:* Janusz Warszawski 650-964-0560

*Ways & Means CP:* Dan Williamson 650-963-9403

*Director at Large:* Monica Irvin 650-921-4699

*Director at Large:* Jon-Michael Irvin 650-921-4699

*Director at Large:* Chaunie Langland 510-494-8850

**Chairpersons**

*AOS Rep:* Mary Gerritsen

*Librarian:* Rex Castell 650-576-4637

*Refreshment Chairpersons:* Jon-Michael Irvin and Monica Irvin

*Sheath Editor:* Chaunie Langland 510-494-8850 [the\\_sheath\\_editor@earthlink.net](mailto:the_sheath_editor@earthlink.net)

*Sheath Snail Mail Co-ordinator:* Jackie Becker

*Accountant:* Sue Rose

*Web Editors:* Fred Cox & Cordelia Wong

*Society Mailing Address:* P.O.Box 6894

*Website address:* <http://penorchidsoc.org>

San Mateo, CA 94403-6894

2011 Peninsula Orchid Society  
Membership Application or Renewal  
Mail to: Janusz Warszawski - Membership  
1227 Monte Verde Ct., Los Altos, CA 94024

Member Information (Please Print):

Name(s)

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ZipCode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note: We really need your current e-mail address to save postage and printing for *The Sheath*. Also, you will receive last minute information about orchid related events if we have your e-mail address. Your contact information is never sold! Thanks.**

**E-mail:**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:

☐ Individual \$20.00

☐ Additional Member Same Household \$10.00

☐ Senior (55 and over) \$14.00

☐ Additional Member Same Household \$10.00

☐ Business \$26.00

(Membership fees are the same for all or part of the year.)

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Membership Chair's area

Date paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check No. and amount \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cash Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Our membership year runs from February 1 through January 31 of the next year, regardless of the date on which you begin or renew your membership



*Our meeting is on the 4th Friday of  
each month, not the last Friday!  
Don't miss this month's meeting by  
coming a week too late.*

*If you have not renewed, this will be your final newsletter - we will miss  
you!*

*Peninsula Orchid Society  
The Sheath  
Chaunie Langland, Editor  
878 Cashew Way  
Fremont, CA 94536*