



Greater Whorled Pogonia

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The Newsletter of the **AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY**

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Volume 29 Issue 2

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Announcements

Monthly Meetings

The library is closed due to coronavirus restrictions, no monthly meetings will be held at Munson Library until further notice.

News from the Treasurer

Checks have been sent to the two scholarship winners from 2020. The Club has made our annual donations for 2021. We hope to buy some table skirts before next year's show. We have requested the use of Smith Voke for the 2022 show. Annual contributions for 2021 have been made.

The board of directors have decided to suspend dues payment for this year (2021). However, there are fixed expenses that the club must meet such as the rent for the storage space at Munson Library. For that reason, payment of dues would be welcomed. Current dues stand at \$25.00 for an individual and \$30.00 for a family membership. Mail to:

Steve Reardon

157 Shea Road

West Brookfield, MA 01585-2605

American Orchid Society Presents- **Orchid Madness**

Orchid Madness celebrates the diversity of orchids. We've hand selected 64 AOS award winning plants for you to admire. What's more, you get to select your favorites, with a bracket style contest to name the AOS People's Choice Champion. Follow the tournament on [Facebook](#) or check here regularly to see the latest stats and winners:

<https://orchidmadness.aos.org/>

The tournament runs until April 17

Small but Mighty Snails

Liz Marinelli

Years ago, when I was first trying to grow orchids, I was puzzled to sometimes see damage to emerging root tips. The new roots would look perfect one day, then the next there would be small pock marks or the entire tip would be missing. It was a mystery; I could see no bugs or other pests around that might be responsible. I suspected there was something living unseen in the medium, so I weighed the pot down and submerged it in a bucket of water for several hours. To my surprise, tiny brown snails made their way up the vegetation and waited patiently for the water to recede so they could return to their home. Of course, it was a one-way trip...

A little research revealed that these cute but malicious mollusks were *Zonitoides arboreus*, sometimes called bush snails or quick gloss snails. They are native to North America and live in forests where their preferred habitat is under the bark of rotting wood. So, a snail that stumbles upon a pot of orchids growing in bark must think it has found a five-star resort, with fresh tasty orchid roots featured in an all-you-can-eat buffet.

How much of a problem are they? Probably not as much of a problem as a good size slug which can cause heartbreak when it consumes an entire new growth or developing bud. But if a snail nibbles the tips of newly emerging roots, it can set a plant's growth back significantly, especially if the plant is one that only sends out new roots once a year. I am also suspicious that a snail bite in a larger root can puncture the root's protective membrane and allow pathogens to enter, which could eventually kill the root and spread disease to the plant.

How to get rid of them? The internet has not provided any sure-fire methods of eradication. I have continued my initial approach of submerging pots in water to evict them from the medium where they hide to perform their nefarious deeds in secrecy. It's not a perfect solution, as some snails might have devious methods to breathe underwater while the pot is submerged, and no doubt there are eggs left behind. I polled a few of our fellow growers in AmOS to see if they have snail problems and what solutions they might have come up with:

Steve Reardon: Sluggo, EscarGo and Worry Free- These snail and slug controls are organic baits in which the active ingredient is iron phosphate. They are safe to use around pets and wildlife. Once the baits are eaten, snails and slugs stop feeding and die within a few days. The baits are biodegradable, so whatever is not consumed will degrade into the soil over time.

Steve Steiner: At one time there was a chemical called metaldehyde on the market. The trade name was Slugit. For some reason, it was taken off the market, I presume it was because it harmed other things besides mollusks. It was used as a drench and poured onto the media. I do sprinkle those iron granules, but I never see dead snails or slugs nearby. My main method of control is to go into the greenhouse at night with my iPhone flashlight and kill the ones I find, usually after they have chewed through the spike. Supposedly, if you see new roots chewed off and you don't find a slug, it's snails. If they would just eat algae, we would get along just fine.

Maryanne Laukaitis: I've had a few of those snails, but not as many as the nasty slugs. But they are both mollusks. I generally inspect plants and surfaces for the snails and slugs, and remove by hand (with a little piece of paper towel or tissue which helps to firmly grasp the slippery devils, but also keeps your fingers from getting slimy! Yuck. If I have an extra moment, I take the slugs to the chickens for their snack. I also used the bait product "Sluggo" (brand name), which Bill Hutchinson recommended. It's NOT attractive or poisonous to pets. The active ingredient is Iron Phosphate. Recently, various brands introduced iron phosphate bait granules, which include "Spinosad" which is also effective for pill bugs and sow bugs. Spinosad is also approved for organic

gardening use, so I am now using the new combination. I scatter the granules on bench tops, in pots where I've seen evidence of pests, and on the floor of the tiny greenhouse. While not completely free of these pests, it helps keep them in check.

Roger West: I have had a few problems and no solutions other than squishing them. I have tried slug pellets and after a few waterings they turn to mush and very gross looking. Major slug problems, in the past, were helped when I nailed on copper strips on the wooden legs supporting my outside benches. The slugs get an electrical shock when trying to cross. Now I don't worry about the snails but they will damage roots especially on a stressed orchid. Just watch your plants closely and you will keep ahead of the critters.

Lani Norman: In our greenhouses Harold does a go-through every night. I have also read sticky traps work. I have always used these for gnats and aphids. As far as I can see one always has to watch for white scale, aphids, slugs and snails. In our house there is also a cat that likes to chew on flowers.

Betsy Higgins: I have gone down in the middle of the night to see if I can catch them in the act, but not so far. I've done the coffee thing (pouring coffee through the pot), but I don't know if that is really effective, and if so how often that needs to be done.

Lots of good ideas- I think my next line of attack will be sticky traps, I had recently read about them in *Orchids* magazine as a remedy for snails. As for prevention, I like the idea of copper strips on the legs of tables. And as everyone mentioned, there is no substitute for vigilance in the battle against all sorts of pests.

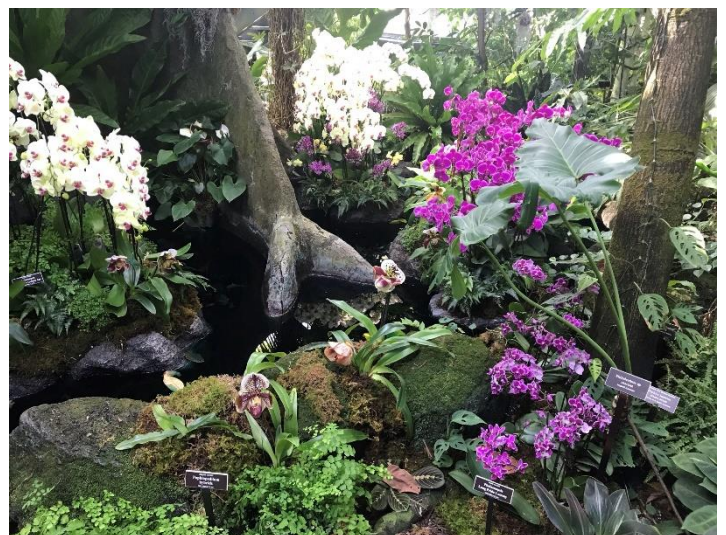


Zonitoides arboreus
Photo by Dave Marinelli

Orchids at the New York Botanical Garden

Steve Steiner

The New York Botanical Garden is not having their usual orchid show this year. However, they do have a nice display of orchids scattered throughout the main greenhouse. They appear to be mainly their own plants supplemented with large clumps of Phals. Timed tickets have to be obtained in advance. It was much less showy than the usual show, but also less crowded. Still, I would think twice about going if you are not vaccinated.





Cymbidium Oiso 'Reynella' a semi-miniature. Shown with *Dendrochilum tennellum* 'Bill Hutchinson' in the background (Maryanne Laukaitis)



Comparettia Higoshiyama
Betsy Higgins



Ascocenda Fuchs Sunglow 'Orange'
Betsy Higgins



Cymbidium No ID
Betsy Higgins



Lycaste Abou Rits 4N x Abou Rits 2N
Steve Steiner



Trichopilia suavis
Liz Marinelli



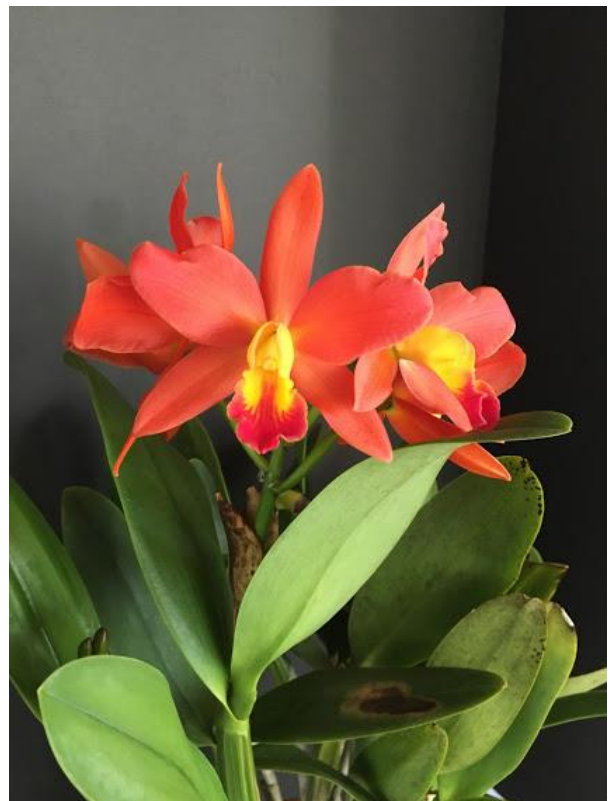
Lycaste Gamora Ablaze
Liz Marinelli



Laelia rupestris
Liz Marinelli



Dendrobium petiolatum
Liz Marinelli



Cattleya No ID
Liz Marinelli