



Greater Whorled Pogonia
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The Newsletter of the
AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

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December Meeting of the Amherst Orchid Society

Holiday Potluck- Bring a dish to share!

Free plants for members who have paid their dues will be distributed.

Location: Munson Memorial Library, 1046 S East St, Amherst

Date: Sunday, December 8, 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m.



Future meetings at Munson Library: January 12, February 9

Show Table November 2023**Lee Brockmann**

Pot. Barana Brady 'Barana'

C. Batemaniana

V. Bangsai 'Star Blue'

Betsy Higgins

Dendrochilum saccolabium

Restrepia schizopala

Maxillaria uncata

C. skinneri (Guari Morada ??)

Bulbo. ovalifolium

Zoe Loughman

Potinara Naomi's Delight

Den. Venus

Cycnoches warszewiczii

Aimee Hudon

Den. prenticii 'Gold Country'

Bev von Kries

Milt. Pluto x Milt. Darkness



Amherst Orchid Society display at the Massachusetts Orchid Society Show. Thank you to the set-up team- Stacy, Betsy, Ann, Joe and Marge M.



Milt. Pluto x Milt. Darkness
Bev von Kries



Den. prenticii 'Gold Country'
Aimee Hudon



C. Batemariana
Lee Brockmann



Cynoches warszwiczii
Zoe Loughman



V. Bangsai 'Star Blue'
Lee Brockmann



Bulbo. ovalifolium
Betsy Higgins



Dendrobium Venus
Zoe Loughman



Cattleya/Guarianthe skinneri
Betsy Higgins



Pleoine praecox
Liz Marinelli



Potinara Naomi's Delight
Zoe Loughman



Trichopilia occidentalis
Liz Marinelli

***Do you have a blooming plant
that won't make it to the
show table???***

Email the photo to
ewmarinelli@comcast.net, or text
to
413-575-4714 and we will try to
include it in the newsletter.

My orchid has a virus...now what?

Liz Marinelli

In recent conversations with two orchid friends, it transpired that all three of us had experienced the heartbreak of virused plants in the past few weeks. One friend had a beautifully blooming cattleya with no color break on the petals, but when she tested for virus the test came back positive. The other friend had been waiting expectantly for a favorite cattleya to bloom, and when the buds finally opened the petals were marred with unmistakable color break. The same plant had bloomed flawlessly two years ago. And I thought the leaves on one of my miniature cymbidiums looked a little funny so I tested it even though a test had come back negative a few years ago. It was positive...

After we dried our tears, it was time to face the decision: Keep or throw? It's a very individual decision, some people throw out any plant that shows clear symptoms or tests positive. But others keep the plants and isolate them from the rest of the collection. On a recent visit to Longwood Gardens, I learned that plants that test positive for virus are kept in their own growing area and are moved to the display room in their own car on the "orchid train". Of course, the Longwood collection contains some rare plants that would be irreplaceable, and they have the resources and space to separate infected plants. It's not so easy for the home grower. I also noticed that some of the plants that were offered at the New Hampshire Orchid Society auction had notations on the description that they had tested positive for virus. So presumably some amateur growers are willing to keep a virused plant in their collection.

If the plant shows color break in the flowers, the decision is easier. Most people would throw out such a plant, since it will not recover on subsequent bloom cycles. But what about the plants that have no outward signs of virus, except maybe sluggish growth or markings on the leaves? I remember reading something on the subject years ago by Wilford Neptune, the late grower who was well-known for his massive specimen plants. I couldn't find the article in *Orchids* magazine but found a similar comment by him on an orchid message board:

It is my firm belief that orchids, like people (and all living creatures, for that matter), harbor all kinds of pathogens - essentially anything and everything to which they have ever been exposed - but may not display any



A Cattleya with color break from virus

symptoms nor be affected by them. It is very likely that such plants, if well-grown, may never exhibit problems

On the rare occasion of seeing color break in flowers, and assuming this was virus, I have discarded the plant. On the rare occasion I have seen what I thought was most likely virus, but without any problem with growth, or flowering, I have merely continued to grow it as previously, and enjoy the flowers.

I have a fairly large collection, often in excess of 1000 plants, some of which I have been growing for more than 25 years. While I do not even suggest the collection is free of virus, I am not aware of a problem in growth or flower production. I personally doubt any collection of any size or age is free of virus, especially if it contains many Cattleyas, or Cymbidiums.

Wilford Neptune

(Excerpted from a post from Oct 27, 2000, on Google Groups
<https://groups.google.com/g/rec.gardens.orchids/c/Jj5s6TmKffs>)

The final decision might come down to several factors, like how special is the plant? Maybe it has sentimental value, or is an unusual species or hybrid. And do I like it enough to risk having it pass the virus to my other plants? Every grower must determine their own level of tolerance for virus in their collection.

All this begs another question- To test or not to test? As long as there's no color break, do I really want to know or is ignorance bliss? That's a topic for another day.

(Stacy will discuss virus in orchids at the January meeting, and she will demonstrate how to test a plant for virus.)

More about virus in orchids....

Virus in Cattleyas by Sue Bottom <https://staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/VirusinCattleyasbySueBottom.pdf>

Early Subtle Signs of Virus by Sue Bottom <https://staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/SubtleSignsOfVirusbySueBottom.pdf>

[AOS Webinars: Viruses in Orchids, Symptoms, Spread and Sanitation, April 17, 2024](#)

[Virus Testing and Identification, April 5, 2017](#)

Test strips for virus testing: <https://orders.agdia.com/immunostrip-for-cymmv-and-orsv-isk-13301>

How to Sterilize Tools- Amherst Orchid Society Newsletter, June 2024

A few pointers from Tom Mirenda's monthly checklist for December 2023 (*Orchids Magazine*):

- Growing orchids requires setting up a good environment and providing consistency in care. In winter it is necessary to be aware of plummeting humidity. Adhering to natural daylengths will help stimulate seasonal blooming. A nightly dip in temperature is also a trigger to flower initiation.
- Orchids genuinely have personalities and seek to interact with you. By far the best way to bond with them is to spend time with them each day. This not only satisfies their requirements but gives you understanding of them. Spend that time grooming and staking in preparation for the glories to come later this winter and into the spring.
- Spring orchid shows display outstanding diversity, attending them is highly recommended for the inspirational experience of seeing the plants in person. It's an opportunity to meet and compare notes with amazing growers. If you want to try exhibiting at a show, get tips on grooming and staking from other members of your society.



Show Season Has Begun!

Mark your calendars for the winter 2025 show season:

Cape and Islands Orchid Society- January 25-26

Amherst Orchid Society- February 22-23

Nutmeg State Orchid Society- March 22-23

New Hampshire Orchid Society- March 28-30