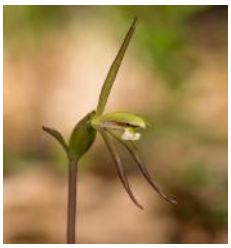

Greater Whorled Pogonia

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The Newsletter of the

AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY

An Affiliate of the American Orchid Society

Volume 33 Issue 5 May 2025

MAY MEETING OF THE

AMHERST ORCHID SOCIETY

Date: Sunday, May 18, 2025

Time: 2:00 p.m.

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

Members with last names starting with A, B, C and D please bring a snack to share

~Daryl Yerdon will be speaking about his travels to Ecuador~

The June 8 meeting will be at the Grays' home in Williamsville, VT. Further details will be in the June newsletter.

President's Message

Stacy Soldato

Hello All,

I hope everyone learned something at the last meeting regarding the often anxiety-inducing process of repotting orchids. Thanks to Liz we had a demo and discussion about how and when to repot.

As we are in the month of May I am organizing my grow space for summer and strategizing how to fertilize. I grow indoors under lights for most of the year and outside under shade cloth during warmer months.

For me the pros of putting plants outside for the summer greatly outweigh the cons. The plants seem to love being out and grow well. Another factor is my workload. During the summer months I work an average of 60-70 hours per week so I would like to be able to enjoy my plants. Often I can let Mother Nature take care of the watering. Not to mention my electric bill will be reduced with not having lights on 15 hours a day and fans running 24/7. As far as pest management the only things I use are Terro ant bait and slug pellets. The natural predators seem to take care of the rest although I do keep some Sevin available for spraying if I need it. Once fall comes and the plants come in I will drench them in Orthene (systemic) to ensure my house does not end up full of pests.

When the temps stay above the 50-degree range I will move the cymbidiums out. These and some of the cooler tolerant orchids (odontoglossoms, some laelia, and a few others) will be the first to go out in the next couple days. I have learned from previous summers how to acclimate the plants using layers of shade netting. I still end up burning them if I don't pay close attention to the movement of the sun throughout the season. I drench all the outdoor plants using a good fungicide (Thiomyl or Banrot) when they go out due to the rainfall I receive in my area. I will reapply about once a month depending on how wet the season is.

I will add Osmocote time-released fertilizer for the summer months and usually spray with Calmag a couple times of month although I am considering switching to putting dolomite lime in the pots so I wouldn't have to worry about that.

For me, the summer equals less work even though the orchids are all growing and need more care. I would suggest taking a look at your setup and options so you too can enjoy all the rewards of orchid growing. This hobby is definitely not for the faint of heart so don't be afraid to ask questions and do some research. Our club members are a wealth of knowledge and experience and are always willing to share what they have learned!

At our May meeting, Daryl Yerdon will be sharing his experience with the orchids of Ecuador and the details of his latest trip there. Daryl has 25+ years of orchid growing experience, is currently the president of New Hampshire Orchid Society, and has won numerous awards from the AOS. You don't want to miss out on this educational opportunity!

On June 8th we will be having our yearly picnic at the Grays', so be sure to mark your calendars. It will be potluck so get the recipe books ready!

Hope to see you all at the May meeting,

Stacy

Show Table April 2025

Bill Benner
Coelogyne Unchained Melody (mossiae?)
Dendrobium jenkinsii 'Rob'
Dendrobium kingianum

Kathleen Burek
Oncidium No ID

Ed deVarennes
Dendrobium Green Flash

Marc Gray
Momordes type
Sarcochilus Wally's White x Spotted Fox
Sarcochilus Parma 'Lemon Drop' x Sarcochilus Kulnura Kaleidoscope
Sarco. Kulnura Cinnamon 'Peach' x Sarco. Kulnura Maestro 'Peach'

Aimee Hudon
Phal. NoID 'Limoncello'
Oncidium NoID

Judy Hudon
Maxillaria tenuifolia

Betsy Higgins
Den. Oriental Smile 'Butterfly'
Vanda Amina Ash
Phal Harek Rainbow
Otaara Hwa Yuan Bay 'She Shu'

Becky Lockwood
Odcm Wildcat 'Golden Red Stars'

Maryanne Laukaitis
Lc Hsin Buu Lady 'YT'
Leptotes bicolor
Dendrobium linguiforme
Dendrobium kingianum

Zoe Loughman
Laelia lundii
Blc. Laughing Boy
Paph hainanense

Liz Marinelli
Cymbidium Devon Ranee
Blc Fritz Nickolaus 'Spring Dance'
Bulbophyllum flaviflorum
Maxillaria caespitifica
Rlc Maria Fedorova 'Nick Marinelli'

Dave Marinelli
Maxillaria praestans
Maxillaria arbuscula

Lynn Reynolds
Paph Supersuk 'Eureka' AM/AOS x Raisin Pie 'Hsinying'

Ben Seagrave
Phal NoID 'Miranda'

Stacy Soldato
Iwanagara Apple Blossom
Oncidium Wildcat 'Golden Red Star'
Prosthechea cochleate
Dendrobium Jiaho Candy

Deb Spearot
Paph NoID
Paph Magic Wood
Paph Hawaiian Flight
Lc Gold Digger
Cymbidium NoID

Steve Steiner
Dendrobium gonzalesii
Dendrobium victoria-reginae
Zygopetalum Debbie DeMello
Elleanthus amethystinus
Lycaste campbelli
Lycaste Abou Ritz
Paph Fluttering Grace
Paph Odette's Ruby
Pleurothallis viduata 'Selby'
Sobralia crocea

Blc Laughing Boy
Zoe Loughman

Coelogyne Unchained Melody
Bill Benner

Dendrobium linguiforme
Maryanne Laukaitis

Paph Supersuk 'Eureka' AM/AOS x Raisin Pie 'Hsinying'
Lynn Reynolds

Sarcochilus Parma 'Lemon Drop' x Sarcochilus Kulnura Kaleidoscope
Marc Gray

Lycaste Abou Rits
Steve Steiner

Maxillaria arbuscula
Dave Marinelli

Lc Gold Digger
Deb Spearot

Odcm Wildcat 'Golden Red Stars'
Becky Lockwood

Vanda Amina Ash
Betsy Higgins

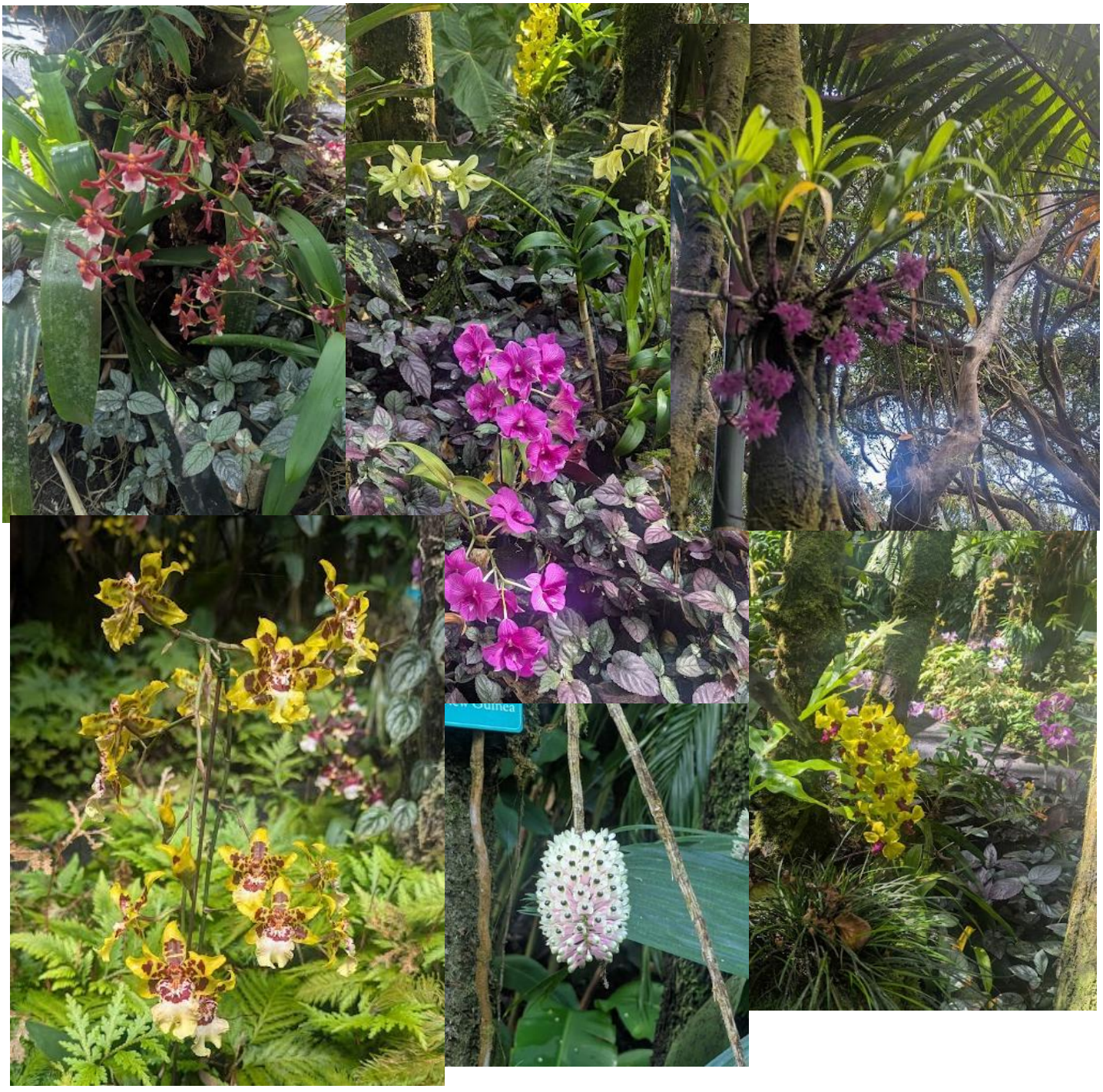
Dendrobium Green Flash
Ed DeVarennes

Lycaste aromatica
Steve Steiner

Bulbophyllum flaviflorum
Liz Marinelli

Some Shots from the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden

Photos by Stacy Soldato



Bring Your Water to the May Meeting for Testing

Dave Marinelli

I recently bought some orchids that are said to be fussy about water quality, so I have been testing various water sources for Total Dissolved Solids and pH, with and without fertilizer. I will be bringing my meters to the May 18 meeting and will test your water samples for free. All I need is about two tablespoons in a clean container. Please write your name and water description in the first two columns of this form or on a plain piece of paper. I will test your sample and give you back the form with your TDS and pH test results.

Name	Souce (municipal, well, RO, Distilled, etc)	TDS (ppm)	pH
Ex: Dave and Liz	*Longmeadow tap*		

According to an article in Orchids 93(5):354-355 reprinted from Orchids 83(1):22-23 by Ray Barkalow, rain passing through a forest canopy picks up very small concentrations of minerals and other solids, on the order of 10-25 parts per million. We are fortunate in the Northeast in that our municipal water is “softer” with fewer dissolved solids than most of the rest of the country. Northeastern well water varies in hardness both over time and from place to place.

These are some of my recent test results:

Date	What	TDS (ppm)	pH
4/20/2025	E. Longmeadow well water	85	6.2
5/5/2025	Rainwater (RW)	10	6.0
5/5/2025	Kelley's Korner MSU 13-3-15, 1 tsp./gal RW	700	4.8
5/5/2025	Same at 0.5 tsp/gal RW	380	5.0
5/5/2025	Rainwater (RW)	11	5.8
5/5/2025	BetterGro Bloom Booster 11-35-15, 1 tsp./gal RW	690	5.0
5/5/2025	Same at 0.5 tsp/gal RW	375	5.6
5/5/2025	Rainwater (RW)	6	5.3
5/5/2025	BetterGro Orchid Plus 20-14-13, 1 tsp./gal RW	407	5.1
5/5/2025	Same at 0.5 tsp/gal RW	208	5.4
5/5/2025	Longmeadow tap (Cobble Mountain)	47	7.1
5/5/2025	Distilled water	1	6.3

From this table you can see that distilled water has the least TDS (1 ppm), followed by rainwater at 6-11 ppm, then Longmeadow tap water at 47 ppm, then the well on my property in East Longmeadow at 85 ppm.

Adding fertilizer to the above waters according to the instructions increases the TDS rather dramatically, by between 400 and 700 ppm. In addition, the pH decreases significantly with the addition of Kelley's Korner MSU-Pure Water Special and BetterGro Bloom Booster. BetterGro Orchid Plus did not significantly alter the pH.

Mixing the fertilizer at half strength reduced the TDS proportionally, and had less effect on pH. This makes sense, because TDS is a linear scale and pH is logarithmic.

pH is important for plant nutrition, because every mineral nutrient has an ideal pH at which it is soluble and can be absorbed by the plant's roots.

There are factors other than pH and TDS which can affect water quality such as dissolved chlorine or copper, which I am not able to test for. Your water department may have a water quality report that may report copper, chloride and TDS. Longmeadow's water report includes copper, chlorine and fluoride levels, but not TDS.

Regulated Substances				Longmeadow Water		Springfield Water			
Contaminant (units)	Year Sampled	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	Amount Detected	Range Low-High	Amount Detected	Range Low-High	Violation Y/N	Typical Source
Barium (ppm)	2023	2	2	N/A	N/A	0.0068	N/A	N	Erosion of natural deposits, discharge from drilling waste or metal refineries
Chlorine (ppm)	2023	[4]	[4]	0.64	0.38-1.20	N/A	N/A	N	Water additive used to control microbes
Fluoride (ppm)	2023	4	4	0.70	0.30-0.80	N/A	N/A	N	Water additive to promote strong teeth

However, an email to the Longmeadow Water Superintendent produced the desired result: "Springfield tests TDS weekly. So far in 2025, they are testing 89-115 ppm. The average for 2024 was 88 ppm." I am not sure why my measurement was about half of Springfield's results, since our water comes from the same source. Perhaps there is a difference in how they are measuring.

Bring your water sample to the May meeting and if there is interest, maybe we can devote some time at a future meeting to discussing what we learn.

American Orchid Society Awards

At the April meeting, someone asked a question about the American Orchid Society award initials that are sometimes seen following an orchid's name. From the AOS website: "*The American Orchid Society grants the following awards to orchids and exhibitors. AOS awards are a recognized measure of quality the world over and coveted by hobbyists and commercial growers alike. An AOS flower quality award adds value to an orchid in its own right, and as a parent for creating hybrids.*" To receive an award, a plant must be evaluated by a panel of AOS accredited judges at a judging center. Most of the awards that we commonly encounter are given for flower quality or cultural merit:

- **HCC (Highly Commended Certificate)**
  Awarded to orchid species or hybrids scoring 75 to 79 points inclusive on a 100-point scale for flower quality.
- **AM (Award of Merit)**
  Awarded to orchid species or hybrids scoring 80 to 89 points inclusive on a 100-point scale for flower quality.
- **FCC (First Class Certificate)**
  The highest flower-quality award, awarded to orchid species or hybrids scoring 90 points or more on a 100-point scale for flower quality.
- **CCM (Certificate of Cultural Merit)**
  Awarded to the exhibitor of a well-flowered specimen plant of robust health. The plant must have been in the care of the exhibitor at least 12 months immediately prior to the award and must score between 80 and 89 points inclusive on a 100-point scale for culture.
- **CCE (Certificate of Cultural Excellence)**
  Awarded to the exhibitor of a well-flowered specimen plant of robust health. The plant must have been in the care of the exhibitor at least 12 months immediately prior to the award and must score at least 90 points on a 100-point scale for culture. Growers receiving this award represent the highest level of orchid culture.

The Northeast Judging Center has two locations and meets once a month at each location:

- **Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, 443 Van Nostrand Ave, Englewood, NJ 07631**
  Meets the third Saturday of the month at 9 am
- **First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist of Northborough, 40 Church St, Northborough, MA**
  Meets the first Saturday of the month at 10am

https://www.nejcaos.org/home