



Newsletter of the

# The Garden Island Orchid Society

Affiliated with the American Orchid Society

May - June 2009

The GIOS newsletter is published by the Garden Island Orchid Society on a bi-monthly basis. Contact them at P. O. Box 1056, Hanapepe, HI 96716.

[www.gardenislandorchidsociety.org](http://www.gardenislandorchidsociety.org)

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## General Meetings 2008/2009:

June 12  
August 14  
October 9  
December 5 (Saturday)

Show Dates:

Farm Bureau Fair - August 27, 28, 29 & 30

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## Coming Events

**June 12, 2009, General Meeting and Pot Luck** - The Garden Island Orchid Society General Meeting will be held on June 12th. The Guest speaker will be Neill Sams of Orchid Alley. This will be a hands on program as we will be learning to mount orchids on driftwood.

Since this also a **potluck meeting** there will be no Orchids 101 this month. Dinner will be promptly at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m.

**Big Island Orchid Tour.** A tour of the Orchid Growers on the Big Island is tentatively set for August 18-20. A firm date will be announced later.

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## President's Message

Thank you very much for all your hard work in making the Spring Show a great success.

The Westside tour was very nice and we all had a wonderful time. We ordered lunch for all those who had signed up but there were 15 no shows, and since only two people called and cancelled, there were 13 lunches that went to waste. Thus we will have to cancel lunches for future tours for with the \$75.00, we could have put it to better use for the benefit of the members such as Makana, plants, supplies and etc. Please, let us all work together for our goal of growing better orchids. .

Don't forget its potluck for our June meeting and I hope to see you all. We will also be mounting orchids on driftwood so you can learn how to mount your orchids on your trees.

Gwen Teragawa

## My New Approach

Based on a presentation made by **Al Sugano** at the Garden Island Orchid Society on April 3, 2009

*Edited for this newsletter by Linda Gerwick*

Over time as you grow orchids you always seem to be trying something. Sometimes it works sometime it doesn't. This is about MY new approach to growing orchids. I call it MY new approach because over the years I've grown orchids I have never heard or seen this topic anywhere else.



We started growing *Phalaenopsis* when we were in Oregon. It was a very good plant for the windowsill. Over time, we recognized that if we grow healthy roots, the flowers will flower. To improve these roots, we tried various medium mixes, watering schedules, peanuts at the base, all to no avail. Eventually, I decided to evaluate the pot.

All plastic pots are nursery pots, even though they vary in sizes, design and even color. Nursery pots are designed to grow nursery plants that you plant in the ground, and they do a great job of that, but from an orchid's standpoint, it's a very bad pot.

It's been said about growing orchids, "Always water thoroughly so it flushes through the pot bottom, never allow the plant to sit in accumulated water". There are two important parts to that, first you want water to flush AND you don't want water to accumulate in the pot.

When you look at a nursery pot, it has holes on the bottom and looks very adequate to grow orchids. If you pour water into the pot, most of it drains out. If you look closer, you will

see a tiny amount left in the pot. This is due to the holes not being large enough to allow for complete drainage. In time, when you use these pots, you can wind up with very soggy media.

The only way that I know to get around this

problem is to alter the pot. Using a soldering iron, I can enlarge the holes in the bottom of the pot to be large cracks from the middle of the pot extending up the side.

I can also create air exchange by adding more holes higher up on the side of the pot. This allows for excellent air exchange that *Phalaenopsis* need.

The nice thing about this kind of pot is that I'm able to flush, water through the pot taking out salts without making the orchid roots soggy. We talk about overwatering but the next, if not worse, thing is the salt content. It is a silent killer like cholesterol—you initially don't see it, you don't feel it. The only time you do see it is when the base of your pot is white.

Now, I really feel guilty if I took one of these unaltered pots and stuck a plant in there. Our goal has always been to get roots to the depths of the pots so now when I see the roots, the roots look back at me and say, "I love you Al." If you are growing *Phalaenopsis* or many other orchids it's only 5-6

inches to the base and you want roots longer than that. Using pots altered using my method will help you have long, large, healthy roots for your orchids.

I don't do this for all my orchids. It is just that *Phalaenopsis* want a lot of air. Once in these altered pots, your *Phalaenopsis* can pretty much follow the same watering schedule because they have the same pattern of drying.

So that's MY take on these pots, or MY new approach.



*Salt and other mineral deposits on the pot.*



*Altered pot on left. Nursery pot on right.*

**By Al Sugano**

## GIOS Spring Tour in Pictures

Garden Island Orchid Society Members and their friends turned out for another successful orchid tour on April 25<sup>th</sup>. It was a gorgeous morning as we walked through the Moir Gardens in Poipu, where the man responsible for all that beauty, Ben Melchor, was on hand to greet us. Ben spoke lovingly about his “babies” and told of future plans for expanding the orchid beds.

Next we visited Al and Amy Sugano in their Koloa home. While Al had just spoken to the club on how he altered his orchid pots so that the root system of his Phals could get plenty of air and not too much water, we could see his project first hand.

We then made a surprise visit to the home of GIOS member Mildred Konishi in Omao. It was such a surprise that Mildred was on the golf course at the time and her startled husband wondered who we were. What was so special about Mildred’s garden? There were the hundreds of blooming Nobile Dendrobiums suspended in her palm trees.

We were all curious about Gwen Teragawa’s new nursery and we weren’t disappointed. Congratulations Gwen and Richard for a job well done. Most important is the fact that Gwen has lots of space to grow. Most of the tables were already full.

Last but not least was a drive to Waimea to visit the home of Nancy Nakama with her wonderful Dendrobium collection. Hers are prize winning plants and it was a joy to see them in all their glory.

We lunched together on the lanai of the United Church of Christ and many of us left us came home with a trunk full of beautiful plants. A hearty mahalo to Gwen and Allen Yamada for arranging the tour and to Suzie Kaohi and Evelyn Tsubakihara for helping with the refreshments and food.



*Moir Gardens*



*Moir Gardens.*



*Al Sugano talks about Phalaenopsis.*



*Gwen, Ben, Allen and Evelyn at Moir Gardens.*



*Mildred's Nobilies*



*Gwen's new nursery.*



*Nancy's Dendrobiums.*



*The organizers, left: Gwen, Allen and Evelyn enjoying Subway Sandwiches.*



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