



# Southern Tier Orchid Society

## Executive Board

### President

Ben Cabot  
607-348-6239  
[bcabot@gmail.com](mailto:bcabot@gmail.com)

### Vice President

Carol Bayles  
607-275-9090  
[cjb4@cornell.edu](mailto:cjb4@cornell.edu)

### Treasurer

Jane Trey  
607-724-5358  
[jtrey@stny.rr.com](mailto:jtrey@stny.rr.com)

### Secretary

Linda Mandeville  
607-227-1563  
[lrmandeville@stny.rr.com](mailto:lrmandeville@stny.rr.com)

### AOS Representative

Bernice Magee  
607-844-9711  
[magee.bernice@gmail.com](mailto:magee.bernice@gmail.com)

### Members-at-large

Anne (Tinker) Quain  
607-797-1383  
[anneetinker@yahoo.com](mailto:anneetinker@yahoo.com)

Sharon Voorhees  
607-739-7898  
[sassvoor@gmail.com](mailto:sassvoor@gmail.com)

Luis Matienzo  
607-754-5702  
[lmastienzo@stny.rr.com](mailto:lmastienzo@stny.rr.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Newsletter & Membership

Linda Mandeville  
607-227-1563  
[lrmandeville@stny.rr.com](mailto:lrmandeville@stny.rr.com)

### Show Chair

Carol Bayles

### Web Page

<http://www.storchidsociety.com/>

## April 2019

### NEXT MEETINGS:

April 7, 1:00 First United Methodist Church  
**\*\*SPRING AUCTION!\*\***  
Downstairs in the church

April 27-28: Orchid Show: Roberson Center  
May 19, 2:00 First United Methodist Church

### IN THIS ISSUE

Don't miss our April 7th meeting!

**\*\* ORCHID AUCTION! \*\***

We'll be meeting \*downstairs\* in the church,  
so please use the rear parking lot.

### Meeting NOTES

**\*\*Note:** In the event of a weather emergency, please check your email the morning of the party! If nothing is received from STOS, the party is on. Likewise, those who receive the newsletter by regular mail will receive a call from one of us. If any questions, members may also call one of the Board Members.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Contributions, including pictures, to the STOS newsletter from members are welcomed. Contributions must be submitted by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month to the editor.

If you have difficulties with the electronic format of this newsletter, please contact the webmaster at:  
[southerntierorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:southerntierorchidsociety@gmail.com)







- ◆ Balanced fertilizers have been traditionally recommended for use with orchids potted in inorganic potting media such as lava rock and Aliflor, and tree fern (which has fallen out of favor due to conservation concerns). Plants mounted on cork bark or other substrates also benefit from using a balanced fertilizer. An example of a balanced fertilizer would be represented by the numbers 20-20-20.
- ◆ High-nitrogen fertilizers have long been recommended for use with orchids potted in fir bark or fir bark mixes. The reason for extra nitrogen is that the bacteria that cause the bark to decay use up much of the available nitrogen, thus depleting the orchid. This practice has recently come into question. Nonetheless, using a high-nitrogen fertilizer, especially in the spring at the beginning of the growing season, can promote strong vegetative growth under ideal conditions. An example of high-nitrogen fertilizer would be 30-10-10.
- ◆ Bloom or blossom-booster formulas are high in phosphorus. Typically, high-phosphorus fertilizers are applied every other week for four to six applications the season before expected bloom. For winter-spring blooming orchids, bloom booster is usually applied in the autumn. Vandaceous hybrids and other orchids that bloom throughout the year can be given bloom booster every third or fourth fertilizing. An example of a bloom booster would be 10-30-20. Fertilizers used on orchids should contain little or no urea. This is because soil organisms must first convert the nitrogen in urea to a form useable by plants, and because orchids do not grow in soil, this conversion does not occur efficiently.

**APPLICATION:** How fertilizer is applied varies as much as orchids themselves. Typically, plants are fertilized once a week during spring and summer and every two weeks in the autumn and winter. Regardless of the fertilizer that you choose, most experienced growers use 1/2 the label-recommended strength. Remember, in nature epiphytic orchids' roots are exposed and the only nutrients they receive are from bird and animal droppings, decaying insects and detritus. The old saying about fertilizing orchids is: Feed them weekly weakly. Fertilizer is best applied in the morning on sunny days. For mounted orchids, or orchids with exposed roots, such as vandas in empty baskets, many growers routinely first water the plants and then follow with fertilizer a half hour later. The watering before fertilizing prepares the spongy velamen of the orchid roots to better utilize the fertilizer. Orchids in pots are usually not watered first but some growers have their own techniques.

There are requirements specific to certain orchids. For instance, do not fertilize nobile-type dendrobiums after early autumn. This rule actually applies to all orchids that have decided rest periods and all deciduous orchids. Fertilizing them while in their rest period keeps them in continual growth instead of resting before producing flowers. In other words, you may get a lot of growth and no flowers.

There are also many secret recipes growers use that supposedly produce stronger plants or more flowers. Certainly, vitamins and micronutrients are as essential as the building blocks of plant growth mentioned above. Elements such as magnesium, boron, calcium, carbon and others are required for strong plant growth. All in all, although there are certain practices that are documented as being helpful, it has not been proven that supplements actually contribute to improved growth in orchids — but it probably doesn't hurt to use them.

---Article Prepared by the AOS Education Committee/Photographs by Greg Allikas; Originally published in ORCHIDS magazine April 2013

~ \* ~ \*

### Upcoming Meetings

**April 7 ~ Spring Auction!**

**May 19 ~ Repotting Clinic**

**April 27-28 ~ Orchid Show @ Roberson!**

**June-July ~ Summer hiatus**

Please remember that these are tentative and subject to last minute change.



American Orchid Society  
Member - Professional - Educator

*Let's Grow Together!*

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

