

Kingwood Orchid Society



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Past Pres. Dan Pitzen

January 2008

January Meeting

Date January 12th

Time 10 AM

Place..... Kingwood Main House

Refreshments. .Vicky & Doug Sitterly

Program Dale Musilli
"Aussie Orchids"

attached to the plant they have parasitized. They secrete a waxy coating for defense; this coating causes them to resemble reptilian scales or fish scales, hence the name.

Scale insects feed on a wide variety of



plants, and many scale species are considered pests. Scale insects' waxy covering makes them quite resistant to pesticides, which are only effective against the juvenile crawler stage.

However, scales are often controlled with horticultural oils, which suffocates them, or through biological control. Soapy water is also reported to be effective against infestations.

Female scale insects, unusually for Hemiptera, retain the immature external morphology at sexual maturity (neoteny).

Adult males have wings but never feed, and die within a day or two. Male scale insects are unusual in they possess only one pair of wings, making them resemble true flies (Diptera), though they lack the rudimentary hind wings, seen in flies, and have tail filaments, which do not occur in flies. The specifics of their reproductive systems vary considerably within the group, including hermaphroditism and seven forms of parthenogenesis.

Mealybugs (*Pseudococcidae*)

Mealybugs are soft-bodied insects that are often covered with cottony white



filaments. They are about 1/8 inch long, with pinkish or yellowish bodies. These insects can move throughout their lives. They infest all plant parts: feeder roots, root crowns, stems, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Injured plants have discolored, wilted, and deformed leaves.

Sooty Mold

Soft scales and mealybugs excrete large amounts of honeydew which provides an excellent medium for the growth of a black fungus called sooty mold. Besides being unattractive, sooty mold interferes with photosynthesis and somewhat slows plant growth. Sooty mold usually weathers away following control of the insect infestation. Ants feed on the honeydew and when ants are observed, plants should be examined closely for these sucking pests.

Even after armored scales are treated and killed, their waxy outer coating may remain on the plant material for weeks. There are now no methods available to remove the waxy coverings, except by physically rubbing the scales off. When soft scales die, they often fall off the plants. Dead and living scales can be distinguished by a simple test.

Squeeze some scales, dead scales are

Scale insect

Scale insects are the most serious pests of many ornamental plants. The scale insects are small insects of the order Hemiptera, generally classified as the superfamily Coccoidea. There are about 8,000 species of scale insects.



Most scale are parasites of plants, feeding on sap drawn directly from the plant's vascular system. A few species feed on fungal mats and fungi.

Scale insects vary dramatically in their appearance from very small organisms (3/32") that occur under wax covers (some look like oyster shells), to shiny pearl-like objects (3/16"), to creatures covered with mealy wax. Adult female scales are almost always immobile (aside from mealybugs) and permanently

dry, but live scales exude body fluids.

Most **BULBOPHYLLUMS**, including the **CIRRHOPELALUMS**, are easier to



grow mounted and present a more natural



appearance. Most are rambling growers and resent being disturbed; however, they do not seem to mind an occasional clipping of unruly leads to keep them neat.

In growing most Bulbos, sphagnum moss mounted on the back side of cork slabs is an excellent growing method. The curved shape of the cork retains more moisture in the moss pad. The easiest method is to tie the plant with nylon fishing line.

After the plant has recovered and the new roots have gained a foothold, the nearly invisible fishing line can be removed.

Other mounting materials are wood slabs, driftwood, cactus wood, tree fern plaques, TF pots, TF totems, and TF balls. Wood baskets with moss are a

close second choice.

If potted is your choice, they will enjoy any loose well drained media.

The bulk of Bulbos have numerous short roots which do not penetrate the media deeply, so shallow media is a must to avoid root rot.

Most Bulbos are in continual growth, except for a brief rest period in the winter.

They usually bloom on new growth. Peak bloom period would probably be spring and early fall.

Bulbos are comfortable in a temperature range of 45 F to 95 F.

Some higher elevation Bulbos, such as those from the Himalayas and New Guinean mountains prefer cool temperatures for part of the year and can be a little difficult in warm areas. Preferred light is bright shade. If adjusted slowly, full morning sun up to noon.

Bulbos prefer to be evenly moist, with a slight drying in the winter. During growth period, Bulbos should be given heavy waterings, so they are never dry.

Because of wet conditions, fungus can be a problem. A monthly preventative spray of fungicide is desirable.

Good air movement is a must to keep leaf fungus down.

Fertilization is simple, 1/4 strength at each watering. Organic fertilizers, such as fish emulsion, cow manure teas as well as salt based fertilizers. If you use the salt based fertilizers ensure no salt residue is left in the roots.

Flush, with clear water, monthly to protect the roots from fertilizer burn.

December Meeting/Dinner

Kevin and Beth Straubhaar of 'Buckeye Perennials' gave a talk on "Native orchids and other wild flowers of Ohio."

The turn out was fair, not as well as in past years. The presentation was good, the food was good, the time spent with good friends was excellent.

The committee that put together the dinner, "Thank You" from all of us, a job well done.

Dan Pitzen did a wonderful job getting the program and the orchids for this event.

Time to review a process.

As a growing society, we have some that know and some that can use this.

Tips in selecting healthy orchids:

1. Check how firm the plant is in the pot, if it is shaky and not firm then chances are it has either been recently repotted or it has a bad root system. If it has been recently repotted check the mix, you may want to replace it for something more suitable, even though the plant is in bloom. Sphagnum moss is often used to pot the orchids for shipping and if it is packed to tightly in the pot it can cause problems.

Some times the mix can rot your roots very quickly since it does not dry out.

2. The pseudobulbs should be fat and plump. Beware of the shriveled pseudobulbs

3. The leaves should be firm. Leaves that are limp or crinkled like an accordion are indications that the plant may have been exposed to excessively cold temperatures or lack of water due to no root system or just not being watered correctly. Are the leaves brown or have spots? This is an indication of exposure to excessive sunlight or high temperatures.

On many of the orchids make sure the center leaf is still growing and there is no damage to the crown of the orchid. This damage can result in crown rot and the orchid will die.

4. Is the foliage damaged? Look under the paper wrapper if it is covering any part of the plant.

5. Are the plants water logged or swimming in water inside of the paper wrapper? The pretty paper does not have drainage holes. REMOVE this immediately after you get your orchid home.

6. Is there a sticky substance on the leaves? THE PLANT HAS BUGS! Avoid bug-infested plants.

7. Are the flowers limp or the buds turning yellow? Are there buds missing? The plant has been stressed too much and will most likely drop all its flowers and buds within a few days no matter what you do for the plant.

8. Does the plant have a correct label? The label should say more than just "ORCHID PLANT."

9. Ask how long the plants have been at the store?

10. Does the sales person know anything about the orchids and can they give you some information about caring for it?