

Big Bloomin' Orchid Day at the Arboretum

GROW WITH EXTENSION

I was honored to serve as the landscape manager for The Breakers Palm Beach resort in Florida mid-career.

This premier oceanfront hotel, founded by one of America's great industrial-ists, Henry M. Flagler was modeled after the magnificent Villa Medici in Rome and opened in 1926, beckoning the glitterati to vacation in Palm Beach. The resort offers unapologetic luxury, seaside glamour and world-class service to this day. I'd suggest it as a bucket-list experience for those moneyed enough; it is truly extraordinary.

One of the extravagances provided at The Breakers was an orchid in every guest room.

The long-lasting Phalaenopsis amabilis and other orchid species were replaced quarterly, and our grounds were the lucky recipient of the discards.

Fastened in trees and on palm trunks throughout the 80-acre property, these epiphytic delights thrived to provide a re-blooming canopy in South Florida's sub-tropical climate.

This gesture of beauty for the resort's guests had served another purpose as a solarpowered indoor air filter in the guest room. Plants can absorb and catabolize almost any airborne pollutant, a process known as phytoremediation; house plants represent a sustainable but underexploited solution to enhance indoor air quality. As an epiphyte, orchids need very little care taking nutrients from the air and rain

water, and they do a good job in conducting the physiological processes and mechanisms involved in phytoremediation.

More research needs to be done, but meanwhile, an orchid on the nightstand seems like a fine idea to assist in removing common indoor pollutants including carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds such as formaldehyde and benzene, nitrogen oxides and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

If you desire a gentle introduction to this beautiful family of plants, we have a perfect opportunity for you. The Big Bloomin' Orchid Day, offered by the Cape Fear Orchid Society, will be held 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, March 7 at the Arboretum. Seating is limited so early registration is strongly suggested at \$25 until Wednesday, March 4, afterward the cost is \$30. Participants will receive an orchid plant to take home with each registration.

There will be workshops on growing orchids in your home, greenhouse basics, potting, mounting, plant care, and pest control. Experienced growers will be on hand to answer questions. A continental breakfast and refreshments will be served. There will be orchids and orchid supplies for sale as well as attendance prizes. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.capefearorchid.org/> or call Laura Overstreet at 910-395-2101.

Cape Fear Orchid Society started in 1987 with a handful of dedicated orchid growers and has grown to almost 70 members. The group

at the Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive. Reach him at lsingleton@nhcgov.com or 910-798-7660. The Arboretum is free and open every day for daylight hours.



Laeliocattleya is an orchid hybrid descended from the parental genera Laelia and Cattleya.
[CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]



Lloyd Singleton

meets the second Wednesday of
each month.

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