

## Celebrating Success: A Spring 2026 Orchid Show Recap

---

*Article by Karen Ho, UOS Board Member*

On Easter weekend, April 4 and 5, 2026, the Utah Orchid Society produced an orchid show designed to delight the senses. Over 170 blooming orchids were on display, greeting visitors with the diversity of form, fragrance, and color for which orchids are famous. This year's show welcomed nearly 3,500 people to the bright and sunny Orangerie of Red Butte Garden, in addition to the eight Utah Orchid Society Board Members present as hosts, and five American Orchid Society (AOS) judges.



*Figure 1: A glimpse of the show! Photo credit: Bruce Hugo*

The theme of the show was, “Celebrate Spring,” and indeed the show was a vibrant celebration, spanning the gamut from bold and beautiful blooms of big cattleyas down to the tiny orange sprays of *Ascocentrum miniatum*. A *Vanda* by the name of *Motes Interstellar* boasted the deepest, dark blue color, while a mounted *Jumellea densifolia* sparkled with tiny white flowers with long, elegant spurs.

A special orchid guest made it to this year's show: a dainty, white and pink orchid mantis climbed the leaves of an *Oncidium Twinkle* in a glass cloche terrarium while hunting for its next fruit fly meal. We thank Chelsea for bringing in her orchid mantis to be appreciated by everyone who came.

In addition to taking in the variety of orchids filling the Orangerie, there were many activities that took place as part of the show: visitors were asked to vote for the “**best fragrance**” of scented orchids, which was won by the *Cattleya Rlc. Angel Lace 'Perfection'*; visitors could watch an orchid repotting demonstration conducted by UOS Board Members, and visitors could purchase a new orchid to add to their collection from Orchid Dynasty or take home a beautiful handmade ceramic pot from Adriana Vazquez.

## Ribbon & AOS Orchid Judging

A highlight of the show is the ribbon and AOS orchid judging. Blue (first), red (second) and white (third place) ribbons were awarded by AOS judges to orchids that were the best-grown and had the best flower color, form, and presentation in their respective divisions. In addition, prestigious AOS national awards were awarded to spectacular plants for either exceptional culture (**Certificate of Cultural Excellence, CCE** and **Certificate of Cultural Merit, CCM**) or for the exceptional color, form, and presentation of the flower (**First Class Certificate, FCC, Award of Merit, AM, and Highly Commended, HCC**). A special, rarer AOS award is called a **Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM)**, which is awarded to a well-grown and well-flowered species or natural hybrid that demonstrates outstanding aesthetic appeal, educational value, or unique characteristics. AOS judges spend 5–6 years in training in order to score plants for AOS national awards, and in fact, **ten orchids** in this year's UOS Spring Show were granted AOS awards by our visiting judges.



Figure 2: An AOS Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM) was awarded to *Oeonia rosea* 'Orchid Dynasty' CHM/AOS. Photo credit: Bruce Hugo.

**Clint Lewis**, owner of Utah's premier floral design and orchid shop **Orchid Dynasty**, orchid breeder, and orchid enthusiast, swept the AOS awards this year, with ten winning specimen plants: the unique and rare **Certificate of Horticultural Merit** was awarded to *Oeonia rosea* 'Orchid Dynasty' CHM/AOS (Figure 2), two coveted cultural awards were awarded to *Lc. Marcene Burns* 'Year of The Ox' CCM/AOS and *Cynorkis guttata* 'Mem. Barry Cole' CCM/AOS (Figure 3), and seven (7!) Awards of Merit or Highly Commended Certificates were each awarded to a remarkable and breathtaking set of *Paphiopedilums* (Names and awards of each *Paphiopedilum* are listed in Figure 4).

# Utah Orchid Society

Spring 2026 Show Recap • Red Butte Garden, Salt Lake City



Figure 3: AOS Awards of Cultural Merit were given to Lc. *Marcene Burns* 'Year of The Ox' CCM/AOS (top row), and *Cynorkis guttata* 'Mem. Barry Cole' CCM/AOS (bottom row). Photo credit: Bruce Hugo

Awarded plants and their photos are kept on record by the American Orchid Society and set the standard for plants of the same genus, species, grex and cultivar for future awards. **Ten AOS awards from one show is a remarkable accomplishment.**

The UOS, in partnership with Red Butte Garden, hosts two shows a year: the Spring Show occurs on the first weekend in April, and the Fall Show occurs the first weekend in November. As attendees of this most recent Show can attest, there is something for everyone at these shows. The UOS Board looks forward to welcoming you to our next show in November!

# Utah Orchid Society

Spring 2026 Show Recap • Red Butte Garden, Salt Lake City



Figure 4: AOS Awarded plants for flower quality, Awards of Merit and Highly Commended Certificates: Top row, left to right: *Paphiopedilum Lemforde Superkuli* 'Boxer Rebellion' HCC/AOS; *Paphiopedilum Lemforde Superkuli* 'Eyes of Oden' AM/AOS; *Paphiopedilum QF Alani* 'Golden Viper' HCC/AOS (greyi x Topaz Charm); *Paphiopedilum Rick Owens* 'Dark Shadow' AM/AOS (*Petulas Valentine* x *Shadow Boxer*); *Paph. Parisienne Mystic* 'Thunder Clap' AM/AOS (*Parisienne Venus* 'Rainbow Warrior' x *Mystically Contrasting* 'Mothera'); *Paph. All Black Everything* 'Dark Arts' AM/AOS. (*Paphiopedilum QF A'kamai* 'Jin's Dragon' AM/AOS (*Ka'ehukai* x *sukhakulii*) – not pictured). Photo credit: Bruce Hugo

## Acknowledgements

The UOS would like to extend sincere thanks to **Red Butte Garden** for providing the ideal space for the Orchid Show, AOS orchid judges **Shawn Quealy**, **Jose Rodriguez**, **JoJo de Beaubien**, **Mark van der Woerd**, and **Charles Sims**, and retired AOS judge **Bruce Embury** for volunteering their time and effort, Orchid Show Chair **Charla Silverman**, and our President and orchid photographer **Bruce Hugo** for their leadership. Finally, we'd like to thank **everyone** for coming out to the show and making it a huge success!

■ Utah Orchid Society • Spring 2026 ■