

## **Newbie Group Visit to Scott Peplin's 'Orchid Bar and Grill'**

By Diane Rogers

As a part of FGOS Newbie Group's mission of offering ongoing education to newer members, a visit to Scott Peplin's home in Dania took place on Saturday, April 20, 2024, for a short session on orchid care. Scott's home is located on a canal, which means it enjoys a constant breeze, as well as increased humidity; his extensive orchid collection thrives.

A professional orchid gardener, Scott tends to his clients' plant collections throughout the South Florida area and tracks local weather trends that influence orchid growth. For example, he noted that this year's growing season seems to be about a month behind normal progress due to a longer and cooler winter than normal, and due to the unprecedented windstorm, that hit the region in mid-December 2023.

His tips for success include using 70% alcohol as a systemic remedy, for those who prefer a less toxic formulation. While effective, it may take several applications over several weeks to eradicate the infestation.

Scott recommends cleaning orchid tools with green label TSP. They should be soaked for several minutes before using them on each subsequent plant. TSP also keeps cutters sharp.

Another tip for success is to water and fertilize first thing in the morning, and never when the temperature exceeds 90 degrees. He highly recommends fertilizing 'weekly and weakly,' for orchids to see their best growth.

His method of growing involves using no medium. He secures his plants into clay pots or cork 'coozies' and gives them access to the sunlight, fresh breezes, and water that they need, along with targeted fertilizers, to produce prolific blooms.

The feedback from Newbies in attendance was positive, noting that they picked up a lot of helpful tips on successful orchid growing. Scott offers Saturday classes to orchid growers and encourages attendees to bring a plant for analysis and treatment.