

AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY  
At Fairchild Botanic Garden  
10901 Old Cutler Rd, Coral Gables, FL 33156  
E-mail: [TheAOS@aos.org](mailto:TheAOS@aos.org) – Web site: [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org)

**Pacific South Judging Region Chair: George Hatfield**  
E-mail: [George@AOS.ORG](mailto:George@AOS.ORG)

**READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY - IT MAY AFFECT YOUR SHOW/EVENT!**

AOS wishes every orchid society success with its orchid show/event. The large number of orchid shows which are held each year, as well as the administrative and clerical tasks which each show/event entails for AOS staff, dictates that show/event sponsors adhere strictly to the regulations listed below.

1. Secure approval for the proposed dates and the proposed chair of judging for the show from the Center Chair with either a written or an email request. The Judging Center Chair will notify the AOS once all paperwork is completed and returned to the Center Chair, along with appropriate fee(s).
2. Secure the services of an accredited, senior or emeritus judge to be the **Judging Chair** of the show, as described in the *Handbook on Judging and Exhibition*, section 5.6.1(1).
3. Secure commitment from at least four (4) other judges, of which at least three (3) are accredited, see section 4.2.3.
4. The **Application for AOS-Sanctioned Show/Event should be downloaded from the AOS website. Log in, click on Judging, and the applicable forms are listed to the left of the first page.** Print **Request AOS Judging for a Show**. This form must be completely filled out and **returned to George Hatfield, Pacific South Judging Center Chair**, within 60 calendar days; otherwise, the reserved show date may be forfeited. For show/event dates and information to appear in the "Dates for Your Orchid Calendar" column of *Orchids*, the magazine of the American Orchid Society, for three consecutive months, the show data sheets must be returned **at least four months in advance** of the show/event date.
5. Submit payment of show fees with above materials. Every show/event must pay a fee of \$50.00. If the AOS Show Trophy is desired, an additional fee of \$60.00 (for a total fee of \$110.00) must be paid. These fees are necessary in order to partially offset the cost of services provided by AOS to the show/event, including publicity in *Orchids*, on Orchid Web, the judging kit, the show trophy and their transport.
6. Obtain and consult the ***AOS Handbook on Judging and Exhibition***, a copy of which is on the AOS Website. It is a requirement that a copy of the latest edition of this handbook be in the possession of every Affiliated Society wishing AOS judging at its show/event.
7. Provide reference materials for judging. Minimally, these should include a computer with the latest version of AQ Plus,  
Encyclopedia of Cultivated Orchids by Hawkes, and the Manual or Cultivated Orchid Species by Bechtel, Cribb and Launert.
8. The Sponsoring Society and their AOS Representative must each have a current AOS membership for AOS approval of this event/show.

Note: Until the conditions set forth above have been fulfilled, show/event approval will be withheld; the judging kit will not be sent out; and AOS awards granted at a show/event can not be processed



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Dear Show/event Chair,

Digital images of awarded plants are an integral part of the American Orchid Society's permanent award records, as well as those of your show/event. Because the digital images are also the primary source for illustrations in AOS publications, it is imperative that they be of the highest quality. Unfortunately, there are numerous occasions when we must reject illustrations because of poor quality. Some of the common problems are over-/under-exposure, poor focus, or the plant/flower is too far from the camera's eye.

Since so many awards are given at show/events, it is vital that the show/event digital images be given a high priority. The photographer should be chosen with care and be made aware -- well ahead of the show/event -- of the importance of his or her role in producing award digital images of good quality. Since the photographer may not arrive at the show/event until after judging has begun, there is little, if any, time for the photographer to receive instructions or read the guidelines as they are trying to set up.

With this in mind, we suggest that you contact your photographer(s) now, provide them with the enclosed information along with a copy of this letter, and request that they familiarize themselves with the digital image guidelines of the latest edition of the *AOS Handbook on Judging and Exhibition*.

Your exhibitors have worked hard to provide quality plants for your show/event; they deserve quality digital images. By stressing these needs to your photographers, you can give your exhibitors a fitting record of their accomplishments while helping us improve the quality of the award digital images used in AOS publications.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

George Hatfield  
Chair, Pacific South Judging Center

### **Requirements for digital photography of AOS Awards**

- Digital images shall be captured with SLR or EVF cameras capable of at least 6 mega-pixel (2000 x 3000 pixels) resolution with 8 mega-pixel or greater resolution preferred.
- Image files should be submitted as highest quality (lowest compression), full size JPEG or TIFF and burned to CD to be sent to the AOS.
- Shoot digital images as highest quality JPEG's, TIFF or RAW. DO NOT send RAW files to AOS. Convert to JPEG or TIFF first.
- A 4:3 aspect ratio is preferred; if using another aspect ratio provide space for cropping from the longest dimension.
- Use a low ISO setting (64 or 100) to minimize noise.
- As with film photography, use the smallest f-stop possible for the lighting and ISO setting you are using in order to ensure sufficient depth of field for the subject.
- Image files should be named with the award number on the judging entry form at the time of judging.
- It may be helpful, especially with light-colored subjects, to shoot awards at -1 or -2 contrast to preserve highlight detail.
- If using a constant light source (as opposed to flash), be sure to set proper white balance by either using a camera preset, or a reading off of a white sheet of paper.
- Back up images before deleting them from media card.
- Try to achieve a properly framed and properly exposed, in focus, color-correct image in-camera. Do not rely on post processing to "make it right". Use preview and image review to insure of a good digital image.
- Images are not to be digitally manipulated using computer software. The digital image should be a faithful record of the orchid as it was awarded. Do not "touch up" photos to remove stakes, botrytis spots, mechanical damage, etc. Image processing should be limited to minor correction of color-contrast-exposure.
- Do not over-sharpen.
- Keep your computer monitor calibrated.
- If you consistently have trouble achieving accurate color, use a gray scale or gray card in the corner of a duplicate exposure. Use the gray (middle) eyedropper in Photoshop Curves or Levels to set color balance and exposure by sampling the gray scale and save that adjustment to apply to your duplicate file without the gray scale.
- You may also use the black or white eyedropper in Curves or Levels on any black or white area of an image to some degree to set exposure and color balance.
- See *Revised Guidelines for AOS Awards Photographers* for digital image requirements for various awards and general photography suggestions —

[http://www.aos.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About/Judging/PhotographyGuidelines/PhotographerGuidelines\\_000.pdf](http://www.aos.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About/Judging/PhotographyGuidelines/PhotographerGuidelines_000.pdf)

## PHOTOGRAPHER'S CHECKLIST

Have you received instructions or asked which flower or plant part the judging team wishes photographed?

Are the flowers in the frame the best -- not immature, damaged or lower quality -- flowers?

Are judging personnel checking each pose before the final shoot?

Does the arrangement of multi-florals show?

Does the digital image show the best angle of the primary flower in the frame?

Are enough flowers in focus from using the greatest depth of field?

Are there no shadows from the subject being too close to the backdrop?

Is the choice of backdrop the right color or darkness for the flower color?

Does the backdrop not show wrinkles, patterns or edges?

Are stakes, ties, labels, pots, etc. out of view?

Are digital images of CCM/CCE winners taken in their entirety?

Are small flowers adequately enlarged in close-up?

Is the frame filled properly with the subject -- not too much or too little?

Is horizontal or vertical framing used when appropriate?

Are subjects lit by adequate, but not harsh, lighting?

### Suggested references:



"Suggestions on Orchid Awards Photography" - AOS *Handbook on Judging and Exhibition*



AOS *Handbook on Orchid Photography*



"Notes to an AOS Awards Photographer" by Richard Fleig, *Awards Quarterly*, Summer 1993