REPOTTING WORKSHOP

By Tony Millet

[axxmillet@gmail.com](mailto:axxmillet@gmail.com)

RULE … DON’T REPOT UNLESS YOU HAVE A GOOD REASON TO REPOT. THE AVERAGE REPOT WILL COST AT LEAST 6 MONTHS TO ONE YEAR OF PLANT TIME AND PLANT GROWTH.

WHY REPOT???

* Plant over the edge
* Plant in the wrong media for your growing conditions
* Plant is bare rooted
* Plant root system is dying
* Plant is not happy
* Plant is too large and needs to be divided

CONSIDER SIZE OF PLANT’S ROOTS. LARGE, MED AND SMALL MEANS ROOTS’ CIRCUMFERENCE:

* Phalaenopsis have large, med and small roots.
* Paphiopedilum have medium and large roots.
* Cattleya, including Encyclia, have large, med and small roots.
* Vandas have medium to large roots
* Dendrobiums have small and medium roots

Vandas repotting—(If you don’t just hang them from an S-Hook…Vandas have large hanging roots; divide and tie the plant to either a wire hanger or a hanging basket or a large pot. Use large media.

All others orchids listed above can be accommodated in pots or mounted.

REPOTTING MEDIA. COST IS TO BE CONSIDERED:

What media do you use? There are so many and in so many combinations. Your repotting pantry should include various mida and options.

* Clay pebbles—various names, i.e., hydroton, expanded clay, hydrokorrels, etc. Buy medium size, smash for finer, does not breakdown
* Tree fern-lasts 3-4 yrs. Comes as plaques or baskets for mounting; hard fibers or cubes for mix
* Sponge Rok (adds air pockets to mix). Comes medium to large size unless crushed, last 3 4 yrs.
* Orchiata. Comes small, medium and large. LONG LASTING
* Sphagnum Lasts 2 to 3 years depending on quality. Hi grade AAAA long fibered with the least debris will last 2-5 yrs. (Uses for sphagnum …..Phalaenopsis, Bulbophylum, fine roots plants, cool growers in warm climates, has antiseptic properties, as top dressing for Paphiopedilums and Phalaenopsis and Phragmipediums, Cattleyas, improves potting mix with tree fern and sponge rok. GREEN tree moss or Shag moss.
* Other ingredients as needed- charcoal (long lasting), coconut husk (one year), bark (2 years)

Mix size of media grade to match plant root size! Small root diameter - size small size media; medium size medium root diameter - medium size media; large root diameter - large media.

TONY’S BASIC MIX:

* 1/3 tree fern
* 1/3 sponge rok
* 1/3 hydroton pebbles
* Enough sphagnum moss to hold moisture

Use a large plastic zipped bag. Add water to the mix so that the mix is coated consistently throughout with water but not sloppy wet. Use hot water or microwave the mix one minute.

SELECTING POT SIZE AND TYPE:

Pots can include plastic as well as clay terracotta, baskets -- wire as well as natural containers such as coconut, tree fern squares and balls, etc. and other innovative containers that have adequate drainage.

Next size up is the normal from the size of the pot the plant is in, but 1 inch from the edge is the better rule.

POTTING TECHNIQUE IS VERY IMPORTANT:

Keep tools 3 pairs of scissors and knives. Clean tools in a 10% solution of bleach or a solution of TSP (Trisodium phosphate - mix TSP in a jar of warm water and keep adding and stirring until no more TSP will dissolve in the bottom of the jar. Bleach of TSP solution should be changed monthly.

Positioning the plant high in the pot; back fill the media; stabilize the plant

IF bareroot (meaning NO ROOTS) then artificial roots can be given by tying wire around the pseudobulb and out through the bottom of the pot and secured. Position the plant and fill in media.

If plant has roots, then clips can be used if needed. Hold the plant by its leaves to check that it doesn’t pull out of the pot.

NON-AGGRESSIVE REPOTTING:

* POT IN POT- No cutting or dividing….IF plant is finicky and does not like to be uprooted then use the gradual addition of media to a next size up pot so basically pot in a pot.
* Attach a chunk of Tree Fern to the edge of the pot where the plant is climbing allowing the roots to attach to the outside tree fern and then 6 months later cut and then repot
* Attach another pot to the side of the pot where the plant is growing and fill with media and allow to new growth to grow into that pot. Once it does (at least 3 pseudobulbs ) then cut and separate the pots.
* Push or Move the plant back in the pot and fill forward section with media.

AGGRESSIVE DISTURBANCE AND DIVIDING:

If the plant is a vigorous grower, strip it down and clean all segments and divide it into 3-5 pseudobulbs bulbs and lay the divisions on a bed of LIVE sphagnum or shag moss until new roots are visible then repot .

SPECIALTY MOUNTING PLANTS WITH A BACKGROUND OF AND HYBRIDS OF THE FOLLOWING: (NOTE MOST OF US HAVE THESE PLANTS IN OUR COLLECTION. Use Google to look up the background and culture of your plant):

* Cattleya walkeriana - mount horizontally
* Cattleya mossiae and those Cattleyas in the labiate group - add extra ingredients to keep cooler and slight damper
* Cattleya warscewiczii (formerly called Cattleya gigas)- mount to accommodate new rising (above media) growth
* Rhyncholaelia digbyana (formerly called Brassovola digbyana and Psychopsis papilio mount to accommodate fine root structure
* Broughtonias - mount to accommodate the plant at an angled growth
* Sophronitis – (cool growing Cattleyas…i.e., former Slc’s) mount to accommodate quick drainage and yet added a pocket root crotch/shelf - mounting for coolness
* Cattleya dowiana- mount to accommodate tall structure pseudobulbs

WATERING:

Newly divided repotted plants should be watered once a week (in a plastic pot), twice a week if the pot is quick draining or porous such as clay, for the next 4 to 8 weeks. Start fertilizing after 8 weeks with a weak weekly 20-20-20.

OTHER NEED TO KNOW INFO:

Don’t forget to add the date of repotting on the nametag of the plant. If a new division, make another tag. If possible take a picture of the newly repotted plant so you can judge its progress at the time of year you repotted it.

MOUNTING TO LIVING TREES OR OTHER ITEMS:

All newly mounted plant roots should be covered with some moss or coconut fiber to give added protection to the roots and prevent animals from biting at the new emerging roots. Mount along the natural water run off line along the trunk or limb. (Examine the tree and look for the darker side of the trunk…that’s where the water flows when it rains and you want to mount on that side!)

MOUNTING VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL, ON TREE FERN, OR HARD WOOD LIKE CYPRESS:

Select the mount to be used. Hardwood is the best choice. Place a thin pad of sphagnum moss and wire wrap to the mount,

RUBBERBAND OR BUNGEE CORD TECHINIQUE:

Place the root zone of the plant on the moss pad, the growth eye to the left or right of the mount but not up against the mount, (reason…. if water accumulates at the growth eye, it will cause rotting of the new growth). Then secure the new plant to the mount using wire or string.

Note if mounting Phalaenopsis: Securing the plant is very important and leaning it to its side so that water does not stay in the crown of the plant contributing to crown rot.

TIPS AND GOOD INFO:

* Cheap tools at Dollar Store.
* Inscribe on the outside of the pot either the initials of plant or full name
* When you water or mist, point down not across the plant
* Use a transparent pot to see the condensation at the root level.
* Check to see if pieces of the sphagnum are turning green (or a green tint). This indicates the ph is good with adequate moisture
* If you have a piece of live moss (SHAG) then add to the top of the mix near the base of the plant. You might find live green moss growing around a gutter downspout or along the edge of a concrete patio or the house if it gets dampness
* Use bungee cords to fasten plants to a wire shelf
* Use garden paver edging to lean Phalaenopsis in a pot on so the water does not remain in the crown of the plant causing crown rot.

LOCAL ORCHID SUPPLIERS:

* Broward Orchid Supply (call first! Usually open Wed & Thurs noon-5pm; Fri & Sat 10am-5pm)
  + Sandi Jones, owner
  + 2411 Garfield Street
  + Hollywood, FL.
  + 954-925-2021
  + browardorchidsupply.com
  + [browardorchidsupply@comcast.net](mailto:browardorchidsupply@comcast.net)
* Green Barn Orchid Supply (Tues-Sat 10am- 5pm; Sunday 1-5pm; Closed Monday)
  + Hyla Levine, owner
  + 5185 Conklin Dr.
  + Delray Beach, FL 33484
  + greenbarnorchid.com
* Ofe (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm; Sat 9am-5pm; Sun 10am-3pm
  + 17899 SW 280th St
  + Homestead, FL 33031
  + (305) 253-7080
  + ofeintl.com