



Woolf Orchid Culture

Equitant Oncidiums at Woolf Orchidculture

by John Woolf

Variegata Oncidiums & Culture at Woolf Orchidculture

These very colourful miniature Orchids are found growing on small shrubs and grasses throughout the Caribbean area with one occurring in Florida. The diversity of colours and shapes are superb as are the colourful hybrids within the Genus with only around 34 species plus colour variants. The following are the species most used in hybridising and some of their special qualities.

Onc. calochilum from Cuba, Cayman Islands & Hispaniola.

Green blooms with frimbriated golden yellow labellum. The frimbriate labellum is passed on and this species is useful in shortening raceme length.

Onc. guianense (desertorum intermedium) from Cuba.

This species has several colour varieties. The petals and labellum are almost identical excellent for creating wide and round petals.

Onc. haitense from Hispaniola.

Petals and sepals beige/green marked and spotted with brown labellum white or flushed pink short raceme.

Onc. henekenii from Hispaniola.

A superb flower mimics it's pollinator with it's intricate almost black labellum. In hybrids this black colour comes through in many shades of red.

Onc. prionochilum from the Virgin Islands.

Long racemes with only a few fairly large yellow blooms.

Onc. pulchellum from Jamaica.

Probably the most used of the species large blooms in many shades of soft pink. As with most of the Tolumnia species they can be difficult to maintain in cultivation so outcrosses siblings or selfings should be made on a regular basis.

Onc. triquetrum from Jamaica.

Very colourful has a triangular shape to the labellum and a short raceme that is most useful. Makes beautiful hybrids that are quite different with it's unique labellum shape however care must be taken to ensure it's percentage in a cross is not overdone causing short crowded racemes and reduced flower count.

Onc. urophyllum from the Lesser Antilles.

Somewhat like a miniature Onc. varicosum in bloom shape and colour large golden labellum. Blooms carried on long branching racemes.

Onc. varigatum from Cuba, Hispaniola and the Virgin Islands.

Although the flowers are a little on the small side the best clones of this species have excellent shape and round full labellums.



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Some of the early parents - alphabetically.

Onc. Alexandria (Lovely x pulchellum) - Moir 1967
Onc. Anna Rosa (sylvestre x pulchellum) - Moir 1957
Onc. Aurora (Haitian Red x pulchellum) – Anderson 1978
Onc. Autumn Glow (Golden Glow x Red Belt) - Ruben 1975
Onc. Barbie (Golden Sunset x Patrick) - Moir 1979
Onc. Breezy (Phyllis Hetfield x Colourful) - Richella 1977
Onc. Bubbly (Haitian Red x Rainbow) - Richella 1978
Onc. Buffy (Red Belt x San Jose) - Richella 1977
Onc. Calypso Queen (Golden Glow x pulchellum) - Moir 1965
Onc. Catherine Wilson (triquetrum x pulchellum) - Moir 1959
Onc. Classy (Castleton x Lucky Lady) - Richella 1979
Onc. Channe (Rainbow x Catherine Wilson) - Jon Oka 1978
Onc. Delight (pulchellum x henekenii) – Moir 1958
Onc. De Lovely (Fort Meyers x Candy Barrs) - Richella 1976
Onc. Envy (Phyllis Hetfield x Tiny Tim) - Richella 1977
Onc. Fort Meyers (pulchellum x Catherine Wilson) - Howell 1973
Onc. Golden Glow (triquetrum x urophyllum) - Moir 1957
Onc. Golden Sunset (Stanley Smith x Tiny Tim) – Aisaka 1975
Onc. Juanita (Lovely x Tiny Tim) - Moir 1968
Onc. Kayster (Kaytee x Easter) - Moir 1977
Onc. Lavender Lady (scandens x pulchellum) – Birk 1970
Onc. Lovely (Delight x triquetrum) - Moir 1960
Onc. Missy (Stanley Smith x William Thurston) – Mizuta 1974
Onc. Patrick (Thelma Beaumont x Royal Purple) - Moir 1976
Onc. Peach Glow (Royal Claret x Calypso Queen) - Moir 1978
Onc. Phyllis Hetfield (Stanley Smith x Alexandria) – Moir 1970
Onc. Puppy Love (Phyllis Hetfield x triquetrum) - Richella 1977
Onc. Purple Envy (Fort Meyers x Royal Purple) – Richella 1977
Onc. Rainbow (pulchellum x Tiny Tim) - Mizuta 1972
Onc. Red Belt (Golden Glow x triquetrum) – Moir 1963
Onc. Red Velvet (triquetrum x henekenii) - Moir 1962
Onc. Rosy Glow (Delight x Catherine Wilson) - Moir 1964
Onc. Savanna La Mar (Red Belt x Catherine Wilson) – Moir 1967
Onc. Spanish Beauty (Red Belt x Delight) - Moir 1970
Onc. Stanley Smith (Red Belt x pulchellum) – Moir 1967
Onc. Sunset Fort (Sunset Luau x Fort Meyers) - Ruben 1976
Onc. Sunset Luau (Waikiki Sunset x Catherine Wilson) - Ruben 1975
Onc. Susan Perreira (Discovery Bay x Rose Hall) – Moir 1977
Onc. Tiny Tim (triquetrum x guianense) - Moir 1957
Onc. Waikiki Sunset (pulchellum x guianense as intermedium) - Okubo 1957
Onc. William Thurston (Red Belt x Tiny Tim) - Moir 1969

Looking through the above you can clearly see that the species mentioned earlier feature regularly in the parentage and also that we have to thank W W Goodale & May Moir for today's popularity of these colourful and dainty gems. His work dedication and promotion of the Variegated Oncidiums paved the way for their success in today's world where they hold their own against the larger more spectacular Cattleyas, Cymbidiums, Phalaenopsis etc.



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Here are some of the next generation parents - 1980 into the 90's.

Onc. Angelique (Rainbow x Purple Envy) - Richella 1980
Onc. Big Bang (Golden Sunset x Gypsy Beauty) - Moir 1987
Onc. Bob Dugger (Gypsy Beauty x Susan Perreira) – Moir 1982
Onc. Dandy (Golden Sunset x triquetrum) – Richella 1987
Onc. Galveston Bay (pulchellum x Classy) – Aldrich 1983
Onc. Golden Aurora (Golden Sunset x Lovely Aurora) – Florafest 1989
Onc. Irene Gleason (Golden Sunset x Linda) - Jon Oka 1981
Onc. Lovely Aurora (Aurora x De Lovely) - Florafest 1989
Onc. Mem. Ralph Yagi (Sniffen x Irene Gleason) - K. Oka 1989
Onc. Orglade's Rose Claret (Ritzy x Purple Envy) – Jones & Scully 1981
Onc. Passionata Red (Florence Little x Breezy) – Perreira (Moir) 1985
Onc. Robsan (Golden Sunset x Susan Perreira) – Perreira 1980
Onc. Seka (Bauble x Golden Sunset) - Jon Oka 1984
Onc. Sniffen (Golden Sunset x Irene Gleason) - Jon Oka 1985
Onc. Tom Wilson (Pink Panther x Passionata Red) – Perreira 1985
Onc. Wave Dancer (Robsan x Classy) - Aldrich 1984

You can see from the above registrations that what Moir began has now blossomed with many breeders doing their share to help keep these colourful gems in vogue. The above species and grex's are but a few of the many currently available throughout the world as mericlones divisions or as parents in seedlings. Try a few they aren't hard to grow and you won't be disappointed especially when your plants reach specimen size.

CULTURE of the VARIEGATA (Tolumnia) ONCIDIUMS

These cultural hints are based on conditions at Florafest and the climate of Toowoomba situated on a mountain range at 2000feet elevation with an outside minimum temperature of up to minus 5 degrees Celsius and a maximum of up to 38 degrees Celsius. The Variegata Oncidiums are grown in a heated glasshouse with a minimum of 5 degrees Celsius and a maximum of up to 38 degrees Celsius.

A lot of attention must be paid to the conditions occurring in their natural habitat on Islands where they are mostly found growing on Coral outcrops grasses and small shrubs. These Islands surrounded as Islands are with water have high humidity and the continuous cooling breezes added to the small or porous mounts the plants grow on control the amount of moisture retained around the plants root system keeping the plants from staying too wet. As their natural habitat is near the Equator and at low elevations the temperatures needed can be classed as warm for best results try to maintain a minimum of 10 to 12 degrees Celsius however they will still grow reasonably at temperatures as low as 5 degrees Celsius with careful attention to watering and light.

SUGGESTED CULTURE IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

LIGHT : 70% light (30% shade) these plants require strong light - too much shade fertiliser and water will result in disaster. Strong light assists in disease prevention stronger colours and plants appear to cope with the cold better when grown in good light.

HUMIDITY : A minimum of 60% should be maintained in the warmer months and less during the colder months if grown unheated.

AIR MOVEMENT : Good air movement is essential at all times especially during extremes of temperatures and if plants are grown in a house 'closed up' for the winter.



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POTTING / MOUNTING : Plants should be potted regularly attention should be paid to any excess old plant material rhizomes, roots etc as these tend to harbour pests and are a breeding ground for disease. Wooden slat baskets net pots clay pots strips of hardwood (well weathered) callistemon virgin cork etc all make good hosts.

WATERING : When you water you should always water well, a good drenching. On very hot days a misting after the heat has dissipated will give the plants all night to rebuild their energy. If the plants are wet in the heat we find they will 'boil' keep good humidity around the plants without having the plants themselves too wet. Use only good quality water on all your orchids, town & bore supplies often contain detrimental chemical. Send a sample to a laboratory in your area to see what you are putting on your plants as these chemicals and the ph of the water can have a bearing on the intake of fertiliser by the plant.

FERTILISER : This is best give at reduced strength and often. 1/4 to 1/2 strength twice per week in the warm months and once a fortnight in cooler conditions. We prefer a totally chelated type of low nitrogen fertiliser.

PESTS : Keep an eye out for Aphids, Mealybug and Scale and treat accordingly. If unsure contact a nursery in your area.

DISEASE : If your growing conditions are good then you should not have any problems. If problems occur look at your growing area and adjust where necessary. Have the problem diagnosed and treat with the recommended Fungicide / Bactericide as most of these are now Specific - controlling only one species of fungi. If the problem is bad use a broad spectrum fungicide until the results come back. Keep the plants, benches, floor and surrounding area clean or dead leaves flowers compost heap / bin etc to reduce the possibility of infection.

OTHER TIPS :

Flower racemes - don't cut the off until they have actually turned brown at the base as they can flower for some months from auxiliary nodes and may occasionally send forth a keiki or these can be induced with keiki paste. With these keiki's always wait for the second growth to start before removing and potting-up.

In some plants the colour of the blooms can be enhanced greatly by the correct mixture of fertiliser and / or strong light. Once the raceme is two thirds open place under a little more shade.