



Orchids



Cypripedium Acaule



Phalaenopsis hybrid

The story of the Orchid

A majority of orchids are perennial epiphytes, which grow anchored to trees or shrubs in the tropics and subtropics. Other species are lithophytes, growing on rocks or very rocky soil, or are terrestrial.

The number of orchid species equals to about four times the number of mammal species, or more than twice the number of bird species. About 800 new orchid species are added each year. The great majority are to be found in the tropics, mostly Asia, South America and Central America. Orchids are easily distinguished, as they share some very evident apomorphies.

Leaves

Like most monocots, orchids generally have simple leaves with parallel veins, although some Vanilloideae have a reticulate venation. Orchid leaves often have siliceous bodies called stegmata in the vascular bundle sheaths and are fibrous.

The structure of the leaves corresponds to the specific habitat of the plant. Species that typically bask in sunlight, or grow on sites which can be occasionally very dry, have thick, leathery leaves and the laminae are covered by a waxy cuticle to retain their necessary water supply. Shade species, on the other hand, have long, thin leaves.

The leaves of most orchids are perennial, that is they live for several years, while others, espe-

cially those with plicate leaves, shed them annually and develop new leaves together with new pseudobulbs, as in Catasetum.

There are some orchids that have single flowers but mostly with a racemose inflorescence, sometimes with a large number of flowers. As an apomorphy of the clade, orchid flowers are primitively zygomorphic that is bilaterally symmetrical.

The orchid flower, like most flowers of monocots has two whorls of sterile elements. The outer whorl has three sepals and the inner whorl has three petals. The sepals are usually very similar to the petals and therefore referred to as tepals, but

Orchid flowers with abnormal numbers of petals or lips are called peloric. Peloria is a genetic trait, but its expression is environmentally influenced and may appear random. Orchid flowers primitively had three stamens, but this situation is now limited to the genus *Neuwiedia*.

Pollinium

Pollen is released as single grains, like in most other plants, in the Apostasiaceae, Cyrtipedeoideae and Vanilloideae. A pollinium is a waxy mass of pollen grains held together by the glue-like alkaloid viscin, containing both cellulosic strands and mucopolysaccharides. At the upper edge of the stigma of single-anthered orchids, in front of the anther cap, there is the

rostellum, a slender extension involved in the complex pollination mechanism.

Orchids have developed highly specialized pollination systems and thus the chances of being pollinated are often scarce. This is why orchid flowers usually remain receptive for very long periods and why most orchids deliver pollen in a single mass; each time pollination succeeds, thousands of ovaules can be fertilized.

The shape and colours of the labellum often visually attract pollinators. The flowers may produce attractive odours. Although absent in most species, nectar may be produced in a spur of the labellum, on the point of the sepals or in the septa of the ovary, the most typical position amongst the Asparagales.

Some orchids mainly or totally rely on self-pollination, especially in colder regions where pollinators are particularly rare. The caudicles may dry up if any pollinator hasn't visited the flower the pollina then fall directly on the stigma.

One orchid genus, *Vanilla*, is commercially important, used as a foodstuff flavouring. The underground tubers of terrestrial orchids are ground to a powder and used for cooking, such as in the hot beverage salep or the so-called "fox-testicle" ice cream salep dondurma.

Varieties

Perfumists to identify potential fragrance chemi-

cals frequently analyze the scent of orchids. The other important use of orchids is their cultivation for the enjoyment of the flowers. Most cultivated orchids are tropical or subtropical, but quite a few which grow in colder climates can be found on the market.

Temperate species available at nurseries include *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid), *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid), *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid) and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted Orchid). Collectors of both species and hybrids have sought orchids of all types and as such many hundreds of societies and clubs worldwide have been established.

These can be small local clubs like Sutherland Shire Orchid Society or larger national organizations like American Orchid Society. Both serve to encourage cultivation and collection of orchids, but some go further by concentrating on conservation or research.

The National Orchid Garden in the Singapore Botanic Gardens is considered to be among the finest collections of orchids in cultivation, open to the public. Orchids, like tulips, have become a major market throughout the world.

Buyers now bid hundreds of dollars on new hybrids or improved varieties. Because of their apparent ease in hybridization, they are now becoming one of the most popular cut-flowers on the market. Source: Wikipedia



Phalaenopsis lindleyi



Cambria orchid



Rossioglossum grand

The world's oldest living dog



Chanel with her owner

They say every dog has its day, but this one has had more than most. Chanel, a dachshund mix, is going to be celebrating her 21st birthday (that's 120 in human years, according to Chanel's veterinarian).

And though she wears "doggies" for cataracts and gets cold easily, there's life in the old dog yet. "She's doing fine," her owner, Denise Shaughnessy said about Chanel. The vet says he's never seen a dog her age do so much.

At almost 21, she's in fine fettle, still likes to play, and has just a few physical issues that can be expected at an age that translates to 120 for a human.

Chanel is a finicky eater who loves chicken and multigrain pasta, regular pasta just won't do, mixed in with her dog food. Courtesy: New York CBS



Ceylon Kennel Club launches website

The Ceylon Kennel Club (CKC) recently launched its website "www.ceylonkennelclub.com", which gives stories on the Club's past activities, on going activities, picture galleries and historical information about dogs.

The 110 CKC Championship Dog Show will be held in August this year. Attorney General of Sri Lanka Mohan Pieries PC launched the website along with Lucille Dahanayake, Sunil de Livera-Tennekon. President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is a patron

of the CKC and is also an animal lover highlighted the needs and CKCs effort to help in the rehabilitation of street dogs.

This project is a community service project called the Sponsor a Dog program.

A great historical wealth was brought to the country as a molar of a domestic

that was unearthed by the Department of Archaeology in the year 2004 dating back to 12,755 years and was discovered in Bellan Bendi Pelessa, in the Uda Walawe National Park.

The CKC was established in 1899 by the British at Temple Trees and has come up to be known by all dog lovers in the country.



Attorney General of Sri Lanka Mohan Pieries PC launching the website with the representatives of the CKC. Picture by Vipula Amarasinghe

ANIMALS

Animals are cute and sweet. Sadly some are a delicacy to eat. Because of this, some animals are almost extinct. But that is not what people think.

People devour chicken, But rear kitten. People kill animals for precious items like ivory. Extinction or endangerment is why we should worry.

We must save animals What do you say? You may rear them, You may play, With some poor animals, Maybe only today!

Whatever you do, Whenever you do, We must save animals. Including insects, fish, birds and mammals We must save all and all!

Madosha Perera Fern (Grade 7 B) Stafford International School Colombo 7.

They too have feelings

This is an actual story of one bird who loved his partner more than anything in this world. A female swallow was hit by a car as she swooped down below. Her husband who was with her was besides her bringing food to her everytime, to try and bring her back to her feet.

But alas, she could not live for long and she died, not knowing that, the male bird tried again to feed her, but was shocked to see she was not responding to him.

Knowing the fact she will never get up again, he waited by her side crying his heart out, trying to come with terms that she is no more.

There are certain people in this world who think that animals have NO feelings, well wrong, they DO have feelings! Parents, you let



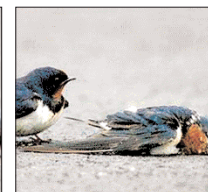
Feeding her

your children do anything they like with their pet or someone else's pet, thinking what they do is cute but it's not cute! It's torture for those animals, they know when they are playing and when they are being harassed. Would you like it if your kid was the one who

was been poked at with a stick or thrown stones at or been fed unnecessarily? I'm sure you would not like that. Well then, train your children not to harass animals and to let them be when they are sleeping or minding their own business.



Trying to move her



Been by her side