A Glance at our Orchids

Broughtonia sanguinea var. *alba*

Oncidium luridum

Encyclia fragrans

Bletia florida

Brassia caudata

National Environment and Planning Agency

Vision

That Jamaica's natural resources are used in a sustainable way and that there is broad understanding of environment, planning and developmental issues, with extensive participation amongst citizens and a high level of compliance with relevant legislation.

Mission

To promote sustainable development by ensuring protection of the environment and orderly development in Jamaica through highly motivated staff performing at the highest standard.

For additional information on Orchids and other protected species, contact:

The Biodiversity Branch, National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)

10 & 11 Caledonia Avenue

Kingston 5

Telephone: 754-7540

Fax: 754-7595/6

Hotline: 1-888-991-9005

Website: http//www.nepa.gov.jm

Create an Environment for Clean Living.

Produced by the Public Education & Corporate Communication Branch in collaboration with the Biodiversity Branch

Updated May 2005

National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)

Orchids

nepa

Managing & protecting Jamaica's land, wood & water

What are Orchids?

Orchids form part of Jamaica's wild flora population and belong to one of the major flowering plant families- **Orchidaceae**. Jamaica, with its diverse habitats, is home to more than 60 genera and 220 species, of which 30% are endemic to the island.

Orchids are found everywhere in the world except the polar circles and the snow line of high mountains. They may be epiphytic (growing on trees), terrestrial (on ground), lithophytic (on rocks), saprophytic (on dead materials and having no green parts) or subterranean (underground).

Growth forms of Orchids

Orchids exhibit two growth forms, sympodial and monopodial. Sympodial plants grow from a number of vegetative apices (*see note on terms*) at intervals on the rhizome (a modified stem which may also be absent). The rhizomes may swell into storage organs called pseudobulbs. Monopodial plants, however, do not have a rhizome nor pseudobulb and continually grow taller.


Sympodial


Monopodial

Terms

Vegetative - A structure concerned with feeding and growth rather than sexual reproduction.

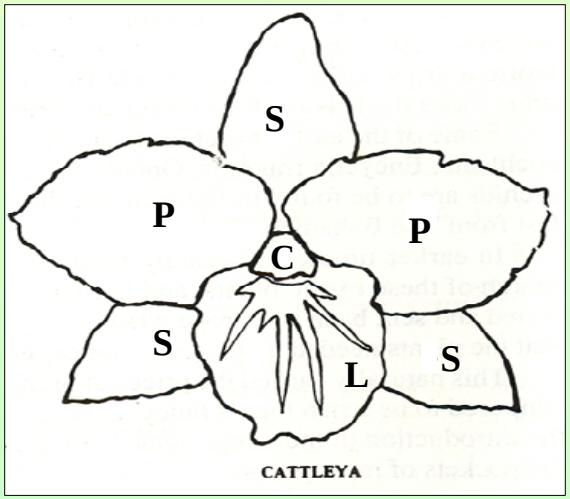
Apices – Plural of apex; the region of a leaf, shoot or root that is furthest from the point by which it is attached to the plant.

Orchid Structure

The leaves of orchids exhibit diverse shape and thickness, although in some cases leaves are absent. However, the main difference between an orchid and other plants is the flower. They have a variety of shapes and colours, last from a day to a few weeks and may be heavily scented, pleasantly fragranced or 'smell like carrion'.

Despite their diversity, all orchids

are all distinguished by having six segments, that is, 3 petals (P) and 3 sepals (S). The third petal differs in shape and size and is called the *lip* or *labellum* (L). The male and female parts are fused to form a *column* (C).



CATTLEYA

Most orchids are hermaphroditic (have both male and female organs), but some species have the male and female part borne separately or on the same inflorescence.

Why are orchids important?

Orchids represent one family of many plant families in Jamaica, which have endemic species. They represent an important natural heritage, as they have been used in the horticultural industry for years and contribute to the nation's economy.

What is the status of orchids in Jamaica?

Orchids in the wild are threatened by deforestation through housing developments, bauxite mining, charcoal burners, agriculture, sales on the local market and avid orchid collectors.

In order to protect and conserve our native species:

• International Trade of orchids is regulated under *The Endangered Species (Protection, Conservation and Regulation of Trade) Act, 2000* and *The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*. Export of artificially propagated orchids and orchids collected from the wild require a **CITES** certificate or **CITES** permit respectively.

However, the following parts and derivatives of an orchid do not require an export permit:

❑ Seeds and pollen or cut flowers of artificially propagated plants and

❑ Seedling or tissue culture obtained *in vitro*, in solid or liquid media, transported in sterile containers.

•Nursery growers in Jamaica have been practicing ex-*situ* conservation, in which hybrids have been produced from our native orchids.