

Odontoglossum Alliance Newsletter

An Odyssey

The story of Odontoglossum edwardii and its various complications, as told by Carl L. Withner, PhD

In the GARDNERS' CHRONICLE for 20 July 1878, Heinrich Reichenbach named a new orchid species *Odontoglossum edwardii* after Edouard Klaboch, the original collector of the plant. The herbarium specimen came from Azuay Province in Ecuador and was found at 7,590 feet (2300 meters). Klaboch was working in and around Cuenca, the provincial capital of Azuay, and collected in the Andes for several years. Reichenbach said the plant had a "very great inflorescence with hundreds of flowers ... to make a very good and novel impression, which many may easily be believed."

We know nothing about how plants then came to England, but the first one flowered was in the collection of H. J. Buchan at Wilton House, Southampton. On 16 December 1879, it was awarded a First Class Certificate (FCC) by the Royal Horticultural Society. Arthur Veitch then sent part of the inflorescence with 16 flowers to Reichenbach in Vienna. This again prompted Reichenbach to write about the species, in the *Gardners' Chronicle* of 17 January 1880, this time spelling the name *edwardii*. He noted that the original specimens collected by Klaboch in Ecuador made the awarded plant appear as a "poor dwarf." The wild pseudobulbs were apparently two to three times larger than those of the newly established nursery plant, and their panicles, he said, were "giant" by comparison.

Taxonomy and Nomenclature

The species name was changed and transferred from *Odontoglossum* to *Cyrtochilum edwardii* by Kranzlin when he published his monograph on the *Oncidiinae* in 1922. (The genus *Cyrtochilum* was established by Knuth in 1816.) However, rules in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature dictate retaining the original spelling of the species' name, as first published by Reichenbach, and keeping *edwardii*. Kranzlin believed that the *cyrtochilums* were a distinct and separate group from the *oncidiums* (or the *odontoglossums*) by virtue of their growth habits. They characteristically have long, often-twining flower panicles, their sepals and petals are clawed and their triangular-shaped lips are strongly reflexed. The callus protrudes from near the top of the lip where it begins to curve down and under.

The debate over the use of *Cyrtochilum* continues. Some taxonomists consider it a subgenus of the genus *Oncidium*; others view it as a valid separate genus; and still others would call everything in the alliance *Oncidium*. Current usage tends to favor the adoption of *Cyrtochilum* as a distinct group, separate from either *Oncidium* or *Odontoglossum*, but the arguments continue with certain complications.

The various species of what may be called *cyrtochilums* are in the Andean habitats, usually at higher elevations, from Peru to Venezuela. The plants often grow on or near the ground in the leaves, grass and other plant debris surrounding the bases of small trees or scrub, the flower stalks climbing up toward the light and where the flowers are accessible to pollinators.

I have also seen the plants growing in the cracks of rocks or in patches of lichen and moss on the banks of road cuts, with lax panicles hanging down the cliff or steep slope. The panicles may be 10 feet (3 meters) long. These growth habits are distinct and easily recognized. The prime example in various collections and shows to date has always been *Oncidium macranthum*.

Cyrtochilum, as interpreted by Kranzlin in his 1922 monograph, had three subgenera: *Cyrtochilum*, *Cimicifera* and *Myanthium*. *Cyrtochilum edwardi* was placed in the last subgenus. Since then, many *cyrtochilums* have been transferred to *Oncidium*, *Odontoglossum* or other genera from *Cyrtochilum*, but this species has not. The combination of *Oncidium edwardi* has never been specifically published.

In the long needed reappraisal of Kranzlin's monograph on the *Oncidiinae* by Leslie Garay in 1970, *cyrtochilum* was made a subgenus of *Oncidium*, but he included only two of the sections (*Cyrtochilum* and *Cimicifera*) from Kranzlin's classification in the transfers. In his reappraisal, Garay considered that the third subgenus from Kranzlin's system, *Myranthium*, belonged in *Odontoglossum* and not under *Oncidium*, nor *Cyrtochilum*. Most of the species in *Myranthium* had smaller, more numerous flowers, still with clawed sepals and petals and triangular reflexed lips, but without the robust, rhizomatous vegetative growths and such elongated, twining flower stalks.

In Bockemuhl's fine monograph on *Odontoglossum* in 1989, *Odm. edwardi* is considered a *Cyrtochilum*, not an *Odontoglossum*, and is therefore only mentioned in passing. Unfortunately for us, Bockemuhl does not detail in her book how she separates those two genera. We corresponded about this question, and she feels the two groups are botanically distinct genera, though closely related. Amplifying this idea in our correspondence, she wrote that the columns of *Odm. edwardi* flowers were not as narrow as those of true *odontoglossums* should be, but short and broad like those of other *cyrtochiliums*; that the squarish column wings were more typical of the *oncidiums* than *odontoglossums*; and that the

callus form also pointed in the *Oncidium* direction.

These latest opinions still leave us with the basionymic original name of *Odontoglossum edwardi* for this taxon, with the reservation that it is not considered an *Odontoglossum* by Bockemuhl. Until the distinctions among *Cyrtochilum*, *Cimicifera*, *Oncidium*, *Myanthium* and *Odontoglossum* can be resolved or some of these taxa can be described and published as separate genera (the most likely solution), we must continue calling this plant by its validly published epithet, *Odontoglossum edwardi*, given by Reichenbach in 1878.

Many segregate genera have already been given split off from the *Oncidium* and *Odontoglossum* complexes, and the ultimate taxonomic disposition of *Odontoglossum edwardi* is impossible to predict.

History in Cultivation

Odontoglossum edwardi received much notice by the end of the last century, and the plates of the flowers were published in *Reichenbachia*, *Lindenia*, *Orchidees* (*Dictionnaire Iconographique*), *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* and the *Orchid Album*. Then, despite its great popularity for 20 years after its discovery, it dropped from sight by 1910 and was lost to cultivation. The plants have apparently always been tricky to grow over long periods in collections, and duplicating their size and floral profusion in nature has been almost impossible.

These plants from high altitudes that come from near the paramo where tufted, grassy mountainsides and scrubby, mossy thickets in the ravines make up the habitat. Such areas are always cool, breezy and fresh, damp and uncomfortable for us, and subject daily to seasonal clouds, mists and rain. The plants grow more or less on the ground, sometimes in swampy spots, in moss and lichens and dead grass stalks, leaves and other debris that accumulate around shrubby vegetation.

They are not epiphytes in the ordinary sense of being perched on a tree branch, but are ruderal orchids - on the land but not in it. Many orchids, at high altitudes where trees hardly exist, seem to be of this growth habit, their only alternative being in the cracks and crevices of rock outcrops.

The coarse roots of *Odm. edwardi* penetrate the layer of vegetative debris that covers the ground or rocks, acting like a set of stilts in supporting the rhizome and pseudobulbs. The roots do not seem to enter the clay-like soil itself. Such plants require a rough and porous compost for proper cultivation, and each new pseudobulb is produced higher than the one before. It is difficult to keep the plants in a pot without repotting every year or angling the grow growing medium to take care of the rise. Early cultural directions suggested that plants be grown on ample sloping crocks in the bottom of the pot with only a thin layer of compost around the roots and pseudobulbs, working in new material as necessary.

Flower Development

The flower stalk emerges as an upright panicle of 3 feet (1 meter) or more that in nature places the flowers above surrounding herbs or shrubs. The bulky, ovoid pseudobulbs of *Odm. edwardi* may reach 3 1/4 to 4 inches (8 to 10 cm) in height each bearing 12-to 16-inch-(30 to 40 cm) long strap-like leaves. There are two leaves on a pseudobulb and a fan of leaf-like bracts below. They are not small plants, though the distance between pseudobulbs is short by comparison with other taxa considered to be *cryptochilums*.

It was recommended that the plants be grown with *masdevallias* and near a ventilator where there would always be moist, cool air. That is still good advice. In *Reichenbachia*, it states that the pseudobulbs require two seasons to mature, a habit leading to flowering in alternate years. This unusual feature requires further observations. Plants of *Odm. edwardi* were reported to bloom in February or March, or

variably, in May and June.

The "Hamilton Peak" for the most common dates of flowering in cultivation is March and April.

The numerous flowers are 1 1/4 inch (3 cm) in natural spread and are a dark mauve to a deep, rich violet-purple color, including the column and anther cap. The orange-yellow callus is somewhat bifid (divided into two segments) and stands out markedly against the dark concolor flowers. The sepals and petals are reflexed at the tips, and the sepals may have an unusual roughened outer surface. Both petals and sepals have a short, clawed base and are about 3/8 inches (1 cm) wide and 5/8 inches (1.6 to 1.7 cm) long. The pointed lip is smaller, 1/4 x 5/8 inches (.7 x 1.3 cm), and strongly reflexed with the callus clearly protruding at the peak of the curve. The flowers not only appear reminiscent of a cloud of violets, but also have their sweet fragrance. They must be adapted to a specific pollinator, but it has not been observed. The noteworthy fragrance of this species, as well as its rich violet color, were always mentioned as outstanding features in every article written about the species.

Search for the Species

I had searched for information on *Odm. edwardi* since the late 1950's, all because of a plant I had once seen in the greenhouses of John Lager in Summit, New Jersey. It had belonged to Don Richardson and came originally from England to the United States. I, too was enchanted by the vibrant fragrance, and the plant immediately became one of my favorite orchids of all time, whether I could ever grow it or not. We made several attempts to self-pollinate the flowers that year. Finally, some poor seed was obtained with a few embryos but it did not germinate, and in the meantime Edward, as we called our favorite plant, suddenly died, presumably due to the warm New Jersey summers.

Despite a series of plants I purchased here and there over the years, none, when flowered, turned out to be properly named, so the species became that much more of a mystery. I often and longingly looked at the *Reichenbachia* plate of *Odm. edwardi* that I bought in a secondhand bookstore in New York. It had come from an incomplete, broken copy of that famous book, split up to be sold as pictures. I happened along at just the right moment, and was lucky to find the print. Although a little faded, it shows everything but the smell.

The second genuine plant of the species that I saw was a barely alive small plant with three flowers in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, in about 1985. I tried to impress the orchid curator with the importance of that plant, probably the only example remaining in cultivation from the importations at the turn of the century, but I do not know of its fate.

Plants of *Odm. edwardi* are still rare and relatively unknown, and they have been sought so eagerly that some confusion with other species have resulted. The somewhat-similar species *Odontoglossum ioplocon*, has usually been the culprit in these mixups. In fact, when *Odm. edwardi* was published in *L'Orchidophile* in 1891, the confusion started. If I am not mistaken, the text of that account truly concerns *Odm. edwardi*, but the plate pictures a plant and flowers of *Odm. ioplocon*. This later species has a somewhat elongated flowers with sepals and petals that are long-clawed, thin and narrow, and have white tips. The lip is not so triangular as that of *Odm. edwardi*, but is more elongated and tapered. The flowers lack the deep, rich color of *Odm. edwardi*, and the plants come from Columbia, not Ecuador. One clone of *Odm. ioplocon*, 'Zahn Zange', was awarded a Certificate of Botanical Merit (CBM) by the American Orchid Society under the name *Odontoglossum edwardi* in 1977.

My first visit to Ecuador in 1962 when we stayed with Jose' and Bep Strobel in Cuenca, but there was no knowledge of *Odm. edwardi*. Although I had photographs of the old color plates to show various orchid enthusiasts, they had not heard of nor seen the species.

Despite another visit and the same photos at show time in 1983, no one had yet heard of the plant. However, there was renewed interest by then in Ecuadorian species because of other odontoglossums and also masdevallias and draculas that were becoming collectors' items. Finally, at the Guayaquil in 1988, when an unidentified plant belonging to Padre Andreama and Mario Portillo was displayed, the species was at last refound and made its modern debut.

I will never forget climbing the stairs to the display area. The first plant I saw, flower stalk leaning over the back of their exhibit into the stairwell to greet me, was my old friend from Lager's greenhouse, *Odm. edwardi*. This clone, 'Miribilis', was awarded an 84 point CHM/AOS. It bore a 38-inch- (95 cm) long panicle with 12 branches, 24 flowers and 20 buds in compact array at the top of the stalk. In the Guayaquil show of November 1991, there were two more plants, and the one with flattish, rounded flowers was given a Highly Commended Certificate (HCC) by the AOS. The oldest and only other record of an awarded *Odm. edwardi* to be found in the AOS judging records received a CBM in 1958 and was the plant belonging to Don Richardson, the one that had instigated this quest. Odysseus' journey only lasted for 10 years, but this one seems to have progressed indefinitely.

Looking up possible hybrids in Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids, I was amazed to find in the first volume that there were 30 combinations of *Odm. edwardi* with other odontoglossums, one with *Ada*, two with *Cochlioda*, four with *Miltonia*, five with *Odontioda* and three with *Oncidium*. It must really have been an exciting species with pollen much in demand, a veritable hybridizing frenzy. Surviving hybrid clones that we know about from that era are rare or nonexistent, but *Wilsonara Intermezzo*, currently available on occasion, is descended from *Odm. edwardi* (*Cochlioda noezliana* x *Odm. edwardi*), registered by Graire of Amiens, France in 1907. *Wilsonara Intermezzo* was registered by Wyld Court in 1976. In turn, *Wils. Intermezzo* has been used as a parent to produce a few more modern hybrids.

The qualities that seem dominant in the hybrids are the sweet violet-like fragrance, the upright panicle with many smallish flowers and above all, the intense reddish-violet color the species can transmit to its progeny. Because these warm tones are also enhanced through the genes from the *Cochliodas*, Wils. *Intermezzo* makes an ideal parent for those interested in breeding for color and large panicles of small flowers. Now that *Odm. edwardi* has been rediscovered in Ecuador, we can look forward to additional offspring with these desirable traits. Several California growers are working to restore and extend the potentials of this species. The challenge of growing the species to perfection in cultivation can finally be met.

Carl L. Withner, PhD, received the American Orchid Society's Gold Medal in 1990. He is the editor of several books, including a six-volume set from Timber Press titled *The Cattleyas and Their Relatives*. The most recent, volume three printed early in 1994, discussed *Schomburgkia*, *Sophranitis* and other South American genera. Earlier in his career, Carl edited *The Orchids: A Scientific Survey* (1959) and *The Orchids: Scientific Studies* (1974). Today he continues to write and share his knowledge of the orchid family. 2015 Alabama Street, Bellingham, Washington 98226.

editors note:

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In 1992 a small supply of *Odm. edwardi* was received from Ecuador in the United States. A number of these have flowered. I have received word that Jim Rose and Bob Hamilton have both flowered their plants. Also both have attempted to use the pollen with small success.

I understand Bob Hamilton has a *Miltonopsis* cross with *Odm. edwardi*, this after several attempts. I understand that Jim Rose also has one or more seed pods. My own plant, received about the same time, flowered in March of 1994. This was on time with the observations in the Withner article. The flower spike appeared in August 1993 and continues to grow reaching a height of about 48 inches. I had first thought it would bloom in time to have a picture of the plant and flowers for this article. It took its time to bloom and missed the deadline. I attempted 14 crosses with the plant using it as both as the pod bearing and pollen supplier. I tried selfing it both with its own pollen and with pollen from the Rose and Hamilton plants. I also tried to cross it onto *Oda. Arlington*, *Oda. Amethyst Gem* (this has *edwardi* in the background). Fourteen attempts in all and they all failed. I would urge anyone who has a plant to attempt to self it. I would think that if that could be done then through the use of colchicine it might be possible to obtain a tetraploid plant or two that would be a good pollen supplier. Then perhaps we could more easily obtain those desirable flower and plant qualities that Carl Withner has described so well..

*Early
Odontoglossum edwardi
material*

The following material is from the Orchid Digest and concerns various material on *Odontoglossum edwardi*. It is in chronological order from 1912-1916. The material was collected and assembled by Robert Hamilton and John Leathers.

AWARDS OF MERIT.

Odontioda Devossiana "Fowler's variety" (*O. Edwardii* × *C. Noezliana*), from J. Gurney Fowler, Esq., Glebelands, South Woodford.—An attractive hybrid with a branching spike of numerous dark red flowers, with yellow discs to the labellum.

ODONTOGLOSSUM ETHELREDA.

(*Edwardii* × triumphans.)

This, like all *Edwardii* primary hybrids, has the usual characteristics of deep purple segments tipped by a lighter shade of almost lilac; the sepals and petals being almost equal. The lip is somewhat different to others in its class, showing a certain amount of recurving at the sides and a somewhat "varnished" appearance in the brownish purple of its base.

I first showed it at the Royal Horticultural Society, July 30th, 1912, this being the first appearance of the hybrid at a Show, and duly recorded before the Orchid Committee.

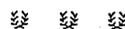
In the *Orchid Review*, p. 238, of this month, August, which did not appear till after *Od. Ethelreda* had "made her bow to the public," Mr. Harrison speaks of *Od. Harrisonii* of this parentage, and in correspondence states he bloomed the plant last winter but never published it.

His name being only in private personal knowledge to himself, therefore, does not rank as the prior one, and perforce is subsequent owing to an inadvertence on his part to publish it at once.

de B. Crawshay, August 19th, 1912.

ODONTOCIDIUM EDWARDATUM. — An interesting hybrid between *Odontoglossum Edwardii* and *Oncidium serratum* has been raised by Messrs. McBean, of Cooksbridge. The colour is reddish-brown, with bright golden-yellow tips to all the segments. The lip is narrow, with a prominent golden-yellow crest, the erect column tinged with blue. All the segments are undulated at their margins, thus giving the flower a pretty appearance. The ventral sepals are only half the width of the dorsal.

ODONTONIA BRUGENSIS.—A choice variety of this new hybrid has recently been exhibited by Mr. J. Gurney Fowler, and awarded a First-class Certificate. It is the result of crossing *O. Edwardii* and *M. vexillaria*, and shows how the various genera are being connected by the hybridist. Although many flowers are produced on an *Edwardii* spike, the individual blooms are small, and we cannot therefore expect much more than this with its hybrids. The crosses between *O. Edwardii* and other *Odontoglossums* are numerous, and the flowers very similar in shape and colour. It is only when secondary hybrids are produced that we obtain an increased size of bloom, without losing too much of the rich purple pigment of *Edwardii*. But however satisfactory these *Odontoglossum* crosses may be they will never produce flowers larger than the type. Hybridists bearing this fact in mind, have now succeeded in crossing *O. Edwardii* with *M. vexillaria*, and have thus combined the rich purple colour of the one with the large size of the other. The result may be considered quite equal to expectations, the flowers of the hybrid being about two inches across, of a rose-purple colour, and the spike having the graceful bending habit of *vexillaria*, although slightly longer.



is *O. Edwardii* × *M. Bleuana*, and the habit intermediate, although when the plant becomes stronger there will be an increase in the height of the spike. The colour is violet-purple, the lip having a dusky yellow crest around which is a zone of dark purple markings.

ODONTOGLOSSUM ELISSA. — Another addition to the *Edwardii* hybrids has been raised by Messrs. Armstrong and Brown, this one being by the use of *illustrissimum*. The long spikes carry numerous purple blooms, the bright yellow crest showing to advantage.

ODONTOGLOSSUM EDWARDII AND ITS HYBRIDS.

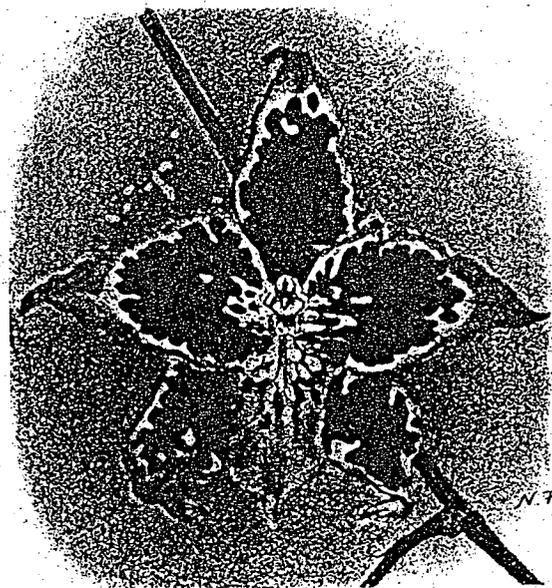
ODONTOGLOSSUM EDWARDII was discovered by Edward Klaboch, in whose honour it was named by Reichenbach during the year 1878. It is a native of the high Andes of Ecuador, where it grows at an elevation of about 7,000 feet in a damp and cool atmosphere. One of the most easily recognised of all the *Odontoglossums*, it at once becomes a favourite with every lover of the cool-house section of plants. The erect, tall spikes carry numerous, one might almost say hundreds, of small violet-purple flowers having a yellow crest in the centre. Taken individually the flowers are insignificant, but when viewed in hundreds, as they are often seen on well-cultivated plants, the effect is excellent.

Very few plants are so easily cultivated and flowered as this species, and when the hybridist commenced the raising of hybrid *Odontoglossums* he was more than satisfied with the rapid and vigorous manner in which the seed germinated. This remarkable specific strength is beneficial so far as its power of imparting rapid growth is concerned, but the hybrids have produced flowers of a smaller nature than was originally anticipated, although when one really considers the smallness of an *Edwardii* bloom the result is not so surprising.

The ambition of the hybridist is to carry forward the rich *Edwardii* colour into future generations, and to do this as well as produce a large flower is no easy accomplishment. This ideal flower will require many years of patient waiting and skilful work before it is satisfactorily created. The first generation of hybrids shows but little variation, owing to the overpowering influence of the *Edwardii*, and it will not be until subsequent ones have been produced that we shall see the real value and effect of their component species.

The following is a chronological list of all the *Edwardii* hybrids. The majority of them have been created by using *Edwardii* as the seed-bearing parent; as a pollen parent it has been practically useless. It does not therefore follow that the parents mentioned below are in any particular order, for although the *Edwardii* is placed first, as the mother parent generally is, there may be a few instances in which it has acted as the pollen parent. However, the list gives both parents, and the names of the various raisers or

exhibitors, together with the earliest date when the hybrid flowered.



Odontoglossum Thompsonianum.

- O. Lairessei* (*Edwardii* × *Cervantesii*), Lairesse, March, 1905.
- O. Thompsonianum* (*Edwardii* × *crispum*), Thompson, April, 1905.
- O. Fletcherianum* (*Edwardii* × *cirrhosum*), Sander, July, 1906.
- O. Aliceæ* (*Edwardii* × *crispo-Harryanum*), Fowler, January, 1907.
- O. Clytie* (*Edwardii* × *nobile*), Charlesworth, March, 1908.
- O. Zenobia* (*Edwardii* × *Hallii*), Crawshay, August, 1908.
- O. Groganiæ* (*Edwardii* × *Uro-Skinneri*), Grogan, November, 1908.
- O. atropurpureum* (*Edwardii* × *sceptrum*), Colman, February, 1910.
- O. Dixoniæ* (*Edwardii* × *luteopurpureum* var. *hystrix*), Dixon, October, 1910.
- O. Godmanii* (*Edwardii* × *Rolfææ*), Godman, January, 1911. This and the following hybrid are figured in the *ORCHID WORLD*, Vol. I., p. 110.
- O. Ashworthianum* (*Edwardii* × *Ossulstonii*), Charlesworth, February, 1911.
- O. Valeria* (*Edwardii* × *Vuykstekei*), Crawshay, February, 1911.
- O. Sabini* (*Edwardii* × *luteopurpureum*), Charlesworth, February, 1911. Most botanists now regard *luteopurpureum* and *hystrix* as being identical, and on that account *O. Sabini*

must be considered synonymous with *O. Dixoniae*, previously recorded.

O. ramos-Edwardii (*Edwardii* × *ramosissimum*), Lawrence, April, 1911.

O. Ganymede (*Edwardii* × *elegans*), Crawshay, May, 1911.

O. Sappho (*Fletcherianum* × *crispum*), Graire, May, 1911.

O. Braynum (*Groganiae* × *Harryanum*), Hartland, March, 1912.

O. Epicasta (*Clytie* × *crispum*), Charlesworth, May, 1912.

O. Antiope (*Edwardii* × *Rossii*), Charlesworth, May, 1912.

O. Ethelreda (*Edwardii* × *triumphans*), Crawshay, July, 1912.

O. nigrescens (*Edwardii* × *cirrhosum*), McBean, August, 1912. This must be regarded as synonymous with *O. Fletcherianum*, the parentage being identical.

O. Dema (*Thompsonianum* × *cirrhosum*), Goodson, June, 1913.

O. Atalanta (*Edwardii* × *armainvillierense*), Sander, August, 1913. This was originally recorded as *O. Hermione*, but, on account of the name having been previously used, it was altered to *O. Atalanta*.

O. Hyperion (*Fletcherianum* × *nobile*), Sander, August, 1913.

O. Elissa (*Edwardii* × *illustrissimum*), Armstrong, December, 1913.

O. Junora (*Edwardii* × *pulchellum*), Dixon, December, 1913.

O. Gundreda (*Edwardii* × *Hunnewellianum*), Dixon, December, 1913.

ODONTIODAS.

O. Devossiana (*Edwardii* × *Noezliana*), Graire, October, 1907.

O. Daphne (*Edwardii* × *heatonensis*), Charlesworth, September, 1910.

O. Vulpecula (*Edwardii* × *vulcanica*), Charlesworth, August, 1912.

O. Eric (*Clytie* × *Bradshawiae*), Davidson, November, 1912.

O. Constance (*Clytie* × *Bradshawiae*), Charlesworth, December, 1912. The parentage of this is similar to *O. Eric*, of which it must be considered a variety.

O. Minerva (*Edwardii* × *Bohnhofiae*), McBean, October, 1913.

ODONTONIAS.

O. Boadicea (*Clytie* × *Warscewiczii*), Charlesworth, August, 1912.

O. brugensis (*Edwardii* × *vexillaria*), Sander, June, 1913.

O. McNabiana (*Edwardii* × *Bleuana*), Sander, September, 1913.

ODONTOCIDIUM.

O. Edwardatum (*Edwardii* × *serratum*), McBean, April, 1913.

ODONTOGLOSSUMS FROM SEED.

WHILE some kind of *Odontoglossum* seed germinates very freely, and subsequently makes rapid growth, others give the raisers considerable difficulty, and even when germination is effected the seedlings frequently fail to grow. No satisfactory solution of the problem has as yet been found.

Odontoglossum crispum has been imported by hundreds of thousands, and in its native country must evidently reproduce itself with great freedom, but when attempts are made to raise plants from seed under the most careful supervision more failures than successes have been the result. To raise crispums from seed is one of the most unsatisfactory duties of the seed-raiser.

The few plants that have grown-up to the flowering stage represent but the minutest fraction of the seed sown, and only a small percentage of the tiny seedlings that once showed life. Considering the multitude of crispums that inhabit the district surrounding Bogota, Colombia, one would certainly expect them to be very easily raised from seed under the careful attention and apparently suitable conditions existing in this country, but such expectations, as we sadly find, are seldom, if ever, realised.

In the case of *Odontoglossum Harryanum* exactly the reverse takes place. In its native country this species grows over a comparatively small area, and can never be classed amongst the plentiful Orchids. Yet, when its seed, or that of its hybrids, is sown under artificial conditions in this part of the world, the raiser is startled by his own success; the seedlings germinate and grow almost as rapidly as the proverbial mustard and cress. Probably *Odontoglossum Edwardii*

is the only species that gives better results. Edwardii seedlings have a vitality which can only be termed marvellous; the seed grows on almost everything it is placed, even on the outside of pots and on the rough bricks forming the walls of the house.

While, on the one hand, we reap many harvests from the species which possess this strong vitality, and certainly obtain some excellent results, there is, on the other hand, the inevitable result of producing a large number of similar hybrids. Raisers are too fond of using these species as parents in order to produce a good crop of seedlings. It would, indeed, be far better if they attempted the raising of some of the more difficult subjects, either those that have previously yielded only a small quantity of seed, or those which produce seed of poor germinative power. By this means the colour variation could be increased by the inclusion in the parentage of species which have hitherto proved difficult subjects, yet possess distinctive and attractive colours.

ODONTOGLOSSUM EDWARDIUM.

Another addition to the already long series of Edwardii crosses has been made by Messrs. Armstrong and Brown, whose success at present is astonishing and most pleasing.

It is described accurately by calling it a glorified Edwardii, of intense deep purple, with lighter margins to the sepals and petals, the colour being the same both back and front.

The lip, column and ovary are all exactly the same colour, the anther cap being white. The only things wanting are size and a good lip.

de B. Crawshay, Rosefield, Feb. 8th, 1915.

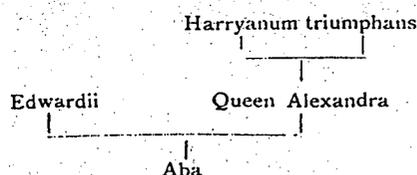
AWARDS OF MERIT.

Odontoglossum sandhurstiense (coronarium \times Edwardii), from C. J. Phillips, Esq., The Glebe, Sevenoaks.—A very interesting hybrid, with a horizontal spike of 11 dark crimson-red flowers, in form closely resembling the coronarium parent.

R. G. Thwaites, Esq., Chessington, Streatham, showed his new *Odontoglossum Chloë* (*Groganiæ* \times *crispum*), with flowers of dark crimson-red, the lip rose-crimson, and the crest yellow.

ODONTIODA VULCAN.—This is a pretty hybrid which carried a spike of 9 crimson coloured flowers, and resulting from the crossing of *Od. Clytie* (*Edwardii* \times *Pescatorei*) and *C. Nœtzliana*. Raised by Mr. E. J. Hannington in the Chessington collection, Streatham Hill, S.W.

ODONTOGLOSSUM ABA.



Nature has laid down certain laws that we hybridists can hardly crack, to say nothing of breaking. One has proved itself in the immense power of a pure species to preserve itself from the attack of all comers to taint that purity.

I refer to the prepotency of Edwardii, coming as it does from a habitat where it seems never to have been able to cross with anything, for the good reason that there was nothing near it to disturb its solitude.

The present hybrid is the result of a selected fine Edwardii crossed by one of the immense lipped Queen Alexandras, in the hopes of a large lip on a pure purple flower; hopes only very partially realised.

The sepals and petals are, as usual, solid deep purplish-brown, without a trace of marbling of any sort. The lip does certainly deviate from the usual one in this race of hybrids by being truncate and wedge-shaped, having a very narrow margin of cream-yellow, being covered by bright velvety brown having a shimmer of purple in the sunlight; it is nearly flat and stands well, as does that of *Harryanum*.

It is quite evident that it requires two more crosses (a lifetime at the age that some of us have attained) to secure the fine blooms of a "Harryanum hybrid" and keep the deep purple of Edwardii, and to do this only the very deepest ground coloured forms must be used, or the break-up of the solid colour may ensue.

This result I shall attempt at once in the hope that someone else may see it if I do not. It can be attained if properly approached.—*de B. Crawshay, Rosefield, Sevenoaks.*

ODONTOGLOSSUMS.—From Mr. C. J. Lucas, Warnham Court, Sussex, has arrived an interesting series of *Odontoglossum* hybrids, the best being *exultans* (*crispum* × *excellens*), the new *Crispotherell* and *Excelator*, both promising flowers, *Fairlawn* (*Edwardii* × *Wilckeanum*) of varying shades of red-purple, and *Doris* (*crispum* × *Ossulstonii*).



ODONTOGLOSSUM TIGRIS.—The result of crossing *Thompsonianum* (*Edwardii* × *crispum*) and *eximium*. The flower, larger than the primary crosses of *Edwardii*, has a rose-white ground with crimson-purple blotches. Raised by Messrs. Armstrong and Brown.

Odontoglossum Clytie albens (*Edwardii* × *Pescatorei*), a large flower, differing from the usual type in having the ground work of French grey, the large lip spotted with purple. From R. Ashworth, Esq.



ODONTOGLOSSUM GODMANII.—Flowers of this pretty hybrid between *Edwardii* and *Rolfeæ* come from the collection of Mr. George Hodgson, The Grange, Hemsworth, Wakefield. The petals are much broader than usually seen in the majority of *Edwardii* crosses, while the blotching is uncommonly dark.

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Editor Mr D. Brooks phone (02) 773-9197

SALES RECORDS:

Miltonia Vexillaria 'Mem. G. D. Owen'

In connection with other sales room records I obtained first-hand information of the appearance of the record-breaking *Odontoglossum crispum* var. 'Pitteanum' from my old acquaintance Tommy Walters, the commission agent who, though small of stature, dominated the sale room of Messrs Prothero & Morris from the end of the long table. This plant, he told me, first appeared amongst an importation at Messrs Rochford's nurseries in the north of London. On seeing it there as a half-opened flower he recognised its great merits, and obtained the offer of it on behalf of Mr Pitt of Stamford Hill for three hundred guineas. The purchase by him proved a profitable one as, besides portions sold, one small divided plant realised a record price of £1,150 at Messrs Prothero's — the highest obtained for an orchid at public auction, amidst a scene of such great tense excitement that one who was present told me 'You could hear a pin drop'.

Some time subsequently, Mr Pitt showed me portions of the original plant that he possessed. On another occasion he told me that when attending the great Ghent Quinquennial Show he was wearing in his button-hole the single flower of a small plant of *Odontoglossum crispum* var. 'F. K. Sander', for which he paid a very large sum. On meeting the well-known amateur grower, M Jules Hye de Crom the latter bid him £80 for the cut flower, only to meet with a refusal. Whereupon M Peeters, a leading trade grower, offered £100 for it, doubtless intending to use the pollen, as at that time the Belgians were the pioneers in raising *odontoglossums*. This last offer was also refused and constitutes probably a record for a cut flower.

Next
Odontoglossum Alliance
Meeting
28 April 1995

The Odontoglossum Alliance meeting will be held in conjunction with the 1995 Western Orchid Congress. The Congress is 26- 30 April 1995. The Odontoglossum Alliance meeting will be held on Friday, 28 April 1995 and will not conflict with other lectures. The meeting is planned to commence at 8:00 am as follows:

8:00 am - 8:30 am Coffee and conversation

8:30 am - 11:30 am Lectures by four distinguished and well known odontoglossum growers.

11:30 am - 1:30 pm Wine, luncheon, business meeting and auction of fine odontoglossum alliance material.

The auction material is contributed from members and growers. It has been an excellent time to obtain material not normally available. This year the proceeds will go towards the establishment of the AOS Robert Dugger award for the finest AOS odontoglossum awarded each year. The West Coast has many of the producers of odontoglossums and they will be in attendance both in displays and sales booths. This meeting will be an excellent time for the odontoglossum alliance interested orchid grower to see and hear the latest about this beautiful orchid. Already committed to speak are Helmut Rohl, noted intergeneric hybridizer from California, Mr. Sandra Cusi and Juan Felipe Posada, Medellin, Columbia SA. Mr. Posada is the proprietor of Colomborquideas which specializes in Columbian and South American odontoglossum species. He plans to discuss the state of wild

odontoglossums in Columbia among other things. Mr Cusi is the proprietor of RIO VERDE Orchids of Mexico. He will discuss Lemboglossums: Habitat and Culture. The meeting will be held at the Red Lion Hotel and Lloyd Center in Portland. The meeting room and the hotel are co-located for easy access. Registration for the Odontoglossum Alliance meeting and lectures will be through the Western Orchid Congress. Material on the Congress is expected to be mailed after 1 January 1995. The November newsletter will have more details on the meeting and the Congress. Mark your calendar now for attendance at this informative and fun meeting.

AOS Odontoglossum
Alliance Trophy Report

The Odontoglossum Alliance voted at it's meeting in Santa Barbara to have the goal of establishing an AOS Trophy for the best AOS awarded Odontoglossum shown each year. The Alliance agreed to contribute \$2000.00 raised from previous auctions. The auction proceeds in Santa Barbara were added to this. The membership dues form for 1994-95 contained an ability for members to make contributions to the fund. Generous contributions have been received. As of the date of this newsletter we have \$4500.00 towards the minimum goal of \$5000.00 needed to establish the award. The Alliance plans to approach the AOS Committee on Awards with a specific proposal for them to act upon when we reach our minimum goal of \$5000.00. It is anticipated that this will be reached during the time of our meeting in Portland, Oregon on 28 April through the proceeds of the auction. If it is reached earlier then your Alliance will promptly proceed to submit our request to the Committee on Awards.

*The following have generously contributed
to the establishment of the award:*

Steven K. Beckendorf
Bob Hoffman
Daniel D. Piotti
Robert Florsheim
Barron's Greenhouse
Ms. Barbara Tisherman
John Leathers & Bob Hamilton
Juan Felipe Posada
John E. Miller
Sue Golan
Mary Wahl
Dugger's Hybrids
Dr. Genevieve F. Wood
Dr. Hermine Makman
Wim B. Velsink
Robert A. Culver
Richard N. Odders, MD
Roger & Terry Williams
Wally Thomas
Sequoia Orchids
Robert W. Winkley
Forrest A. Robinson DDS
Everglade Orchids
Elwood J. Carlson
Carl Withner

Odontoglossum Alliance Species Description

by LEONORE BOCKEMUHL

Rossioglossum (Schltr.) Garay & Kennedy 1976

This new established genus is basing on a group of 6 species which were primarily described as *Odontoglossum*, though their flowers do not possess any characteristic features upon which that genus was founded. Schlechter

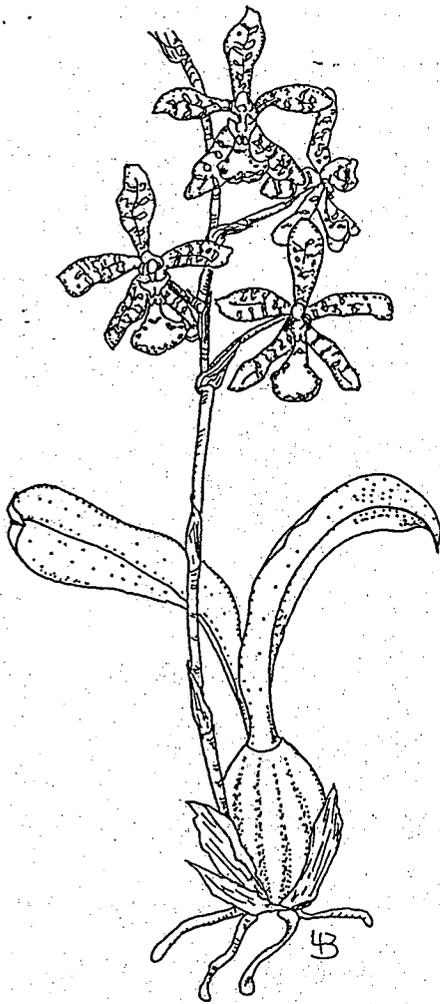
in "Orchis" 1916 noticed, that this group should be separated and proposed a new sectional name, *Rossioglossum*, with the intention to elevate it some day to a generic state.

In 1976 Garay & Kennedy could point out the distinct features of these species and established the new genus *Rossioglossum* (*Orchid Digest*) consisting of 6 species, all native to Central America. All the species show pretty similar plants, medium sized, bulbs bifoliate. Inflorescence arising from base of bulb with four to eight large flowers up to 14 cm across. Main color is yellow to brown, partly decorated with red spots and bars. The angle between base of lip and column runs up to 100 degrees. Lip three lobed, side lobes insignificant, the prominent midlobe roundish. The callosity on the isthmus with segments subquadrate to trapezoid in outline, adorned with several fleshy horns. The column wings are falcate except in one of the species, the *Rossgl. grande*, which shows rounded auricles.

Rossioglossum insleayi was the first discovered species of the group, collected by Ross 1839 in the Sierra Madre of Mexico. Lindley named it *Oncidium insleayi* in *Bot. Reg.* 1849 (he transferred it to *Odontoglossum* in 1852). At the same time Skinner collected a species near Guatemala City, named by Lindley *Odontoglossum grande* in *Bot. Reg.* 1840. In 1856 the third species appeared in english gardens, sent from Costa Rica and named *Odontoglossum schlieperianum* by Reichenbach in *Gard. Chron.* 1865. In 1881 *Odontoglossum splendens* was found in Mexico, Reichenbach described it merely on the state of a variety. In 1976 the plants have been rediscovered by Kennedy and elevated in specific status. In 1881 Reichenbach in *Gard. Chron.* added the description of *Odontoglossum williamsianum* which is said to grow in Guatemala. The last species of the group was found in Panama by Powell and named by Schlechter 1922 in *Faddist. Rep.* *Odontoglossum powellii*. The genus is distributed over Central America from northern Mexico to Panama in altitudes from 1000 m to 2300 m. All species grow epiphytic on mossy branches of old oaks.

Rossioglossum insealyi

(Barker ex Lindley) Garay & Kennedy 1976



The plants are medium-sized, bifoliate surrounded by nonfoliaceous sheaths. Leaves elliptic-lanceolate-acute, 25 cm long. Inflorescence from the base of bulb up to 30 cm high, 5-10 flowered; flowers waxy, 8 cm across, greenish with brown bars. Sepals and petals lanceolate, undulate, retuse, yellowish, thickly blotched with transverse reddish-brown marks. Lip three lobed, the small side lobes arising, the midlobe narrowly obovate, retuse, bright yellow with a row of crimson spots along the margin. Callosity fleshy, square in outline with a pair of prominent horns. Column with falcate wings.

The species, discovered by Lord Ross in

Mexico, was sent to Barker in Birmingham. His gardener flowered the plants in 1840 and Lindley described the species in Bot. Reg. and named it *Oncidium insealyi*, in honor of the nursery gardener Mr. Insealy. In 1852 Lindley transferred the species to the genus *Odontoglossum* (Fol. Orch.) and Garay & Kennedy settled it in their new established genus *Rossioglossum* 1976.

Habitat: Epiphytic on large, old trees like oaks and pines in foggy areas of the cloud forest.

Distribution: Endemic in Mexico in the Sierra Madre at altitudes 2000 meters-2700 meters.

Rossioglossum grande

(Lindl.) Garay & Kennedy 1976

Type-species of the genus, the one with the largest flowers, well known in culture under the name *Odontoglossum grande*. It was described by Lindley in Bot. Reg. 1840. The collector, U. Skinner, found the plant in Guatemala near Guatemala City in 1839 and sent it to England. It flowered in the collection of the Duke of Bedford.

The plant shows the same habit like all the species in the genus. The inflorescence bears 6-8 waxy flowers up to 15 cm across; Sepals elliptic-lanceolate acuminate, undulate, brown with greenish bars; the petals more wide, marginally undulate, the lower half reddish-brown, the upper half bright yellow. Lip broadly fiddle-shaped, unequally three lobed, the mid lobe roundish, waxy-margined, cream white with brown bars. Callosity on the isthmus, square in outline with two prominent horns. Column wings roundish-auriculate.

Habitat: Epiphytic growing on oak trees.

Distribution: Guatemala in altitude about 2700 meters.

Artificially produced hybrids with *Rossgl. grande*
Odna Wonder (with *Milt. regnellii*)
Odna Tiger Cub (with *Odna Wonder*)

Rossioglossum grande



Rossioglossum splendens

(Rchb.f.) Garay & Kennedy 1976

Bulbs roundish-ovid, furrowed with age, 12 cm, bifoliate, leaves leathery broad-lanceolate, 30 cm long. Inflorescence arising from base of bulb with 4 - 8 large flowers. Flower 11 cm across. Sepals and petals pretty similar elliptic, waxy, bronze-colored. The lip-blade large roundish, bright yellow with scarlet spots along the margin; callosity on the isthmus of the lip with three upper horns and a pair of prominent, fleshy horns in front, all yellow with red spots and bars. The column with

an infrastigmatic plate and falcate wings beneath the stigma.

Rossioglossum splendens was described by Reichenbach in Gard. Chron. 1868 and named *odontoglossum insleayi* var. *splendens*. The place of origin was unknown. So it happened that the plant has not been collected anymore until 1973 when Kennedy and Para Hake re-discovered it in Northern Mexico. Kennedy pointed out the distinct features of the flower and elevated it to specific status in Orch. Dig. 1976. The same year it was transferred with 5 more corresponding species to the newly created genus *Rossioglossum*.

Habitat: Epiphytic on old oaks with moss-covered branches in humid canyons.

Distribution: Endemic in Northern Mexico near Pacific coast-side in very small area; altitude 1000 meters.

Artificially produced hybrids:

Odm. Madge (with Odm. triumphans)

Odm. Hampsoniae (with Odm. Ardentissimum)





Rossioglossum insleayi



Rossioglossum grande



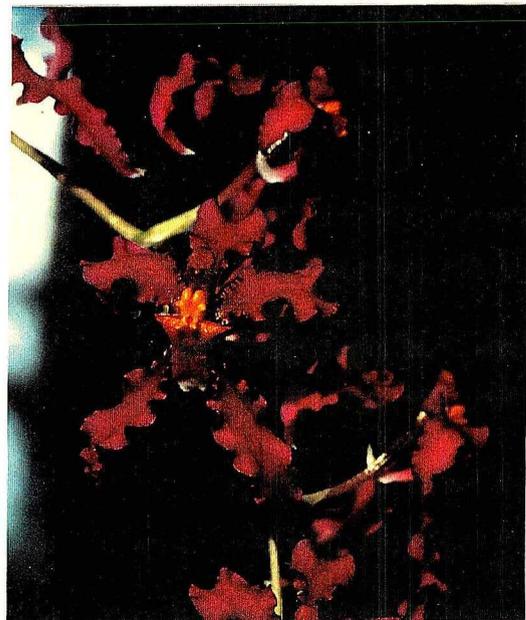
Rossioglossum splendens



Odontoglossum edwardii



Odontoglossum edwardii



Odontoglossum ioplocon