

Brassavola Orchids



Brassavola nodosa

The genus *Brassavola* comprises approximately 15 species, most of which are epiphytic. They can be recognized from their habit; the thin, cylindrical stem-like pseudobulbs carry one or two fleshy, rush like leaves with a nearly circular cross section. The flowers are either single or in short clusters and issue from the joints between pseudobulb and leaf. Special characteristics of the flower are its five narrow sepals and petals and the unusually large lip which broadens out towards the front and envelops the column at the rear. *B. digbyana* is of particular value to the orchid grower, because crossing with *Cattleya* and *Laella* species (*Brassocattleya* and *Brassolaellocattleya* hybrids) has produced its strikingly beautiful lip in its progeny.

CULTIVATION

Brassavola species like an intermediate to warm position with plenty of light. Some heavy leaves can even withstand full sunlight. During the growing period they require plenty of water. After the pseudobulbs have finished growing, watering should be restricted for a few weeks during the rather indefinite rest period. The cultivation is thus largely the same as for *Cattleyas* and the same compost can be used as for *Cattleyas*. *Brassavola* species are best planted in pots or baskets, where special attention must be paid to good drainage. Some has pendulous habit and can be cultivated on bark or tree fern. Propagation is by division of strong plants at the beginning of the growing season.

These notes have been used at our New Grower's Meetings. They are from various sources and we thank the authors. All articles are supplied in good faith and the Bribie Island Orchid Society and its members will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.