

Cymbidium Canaliculatum Orchids

Common names are: black orchid, channel leaf orchid.



Habitat: *Cymbidium canaliculatum* is found in the warmer areas of Australia from the Kimberleys in W.A. across the north then down to the Hunter River in N.S.W., but not in south-west Queensland. On a trip to Longreach at the beginning of October 2000 we saw some *Cymbidium canaliculatum* in flower growing on trees beside the railway line.

Description: This orchid is classed as an epiphyte but differs from *Dendrobiums* etc. in that its root system invades the heart of trees where there is rotting wood. This rotting wood retains moisture in prolonged dry periods. *Cymbidium canaliculatum* is recognised by its ovoid pseudobulbs which grow to about 3cms across and up to 15cms long.

Cultivation: Although it is possible to grow this orchid in pots, care must be taken with watering, particularly in the cooler months. Potting media including sand, hardwood chips, peanut shells, and pine bark have been used with success. Bright light is essential to achieve good growth and successful flowering. Fertilisers include Dynamic Lifter, cow manure and other general orchid fertilisers. This orchid grows best when placed high, 2 metres or more from the ground. Good air movement is needed for successful cultivation. This is an orchid which resents its roots being disturbed.

Flowering: *Cymbidium canaliculatum* inflorescences are erect to arching with some pendulous. The racemes grow to 40cms long and carry up to 60 flowers per raceme. The flowers can be up to 5cms across. Colours vary from the rare albino apple-green segments with a white labellum, to green with red-brown spots, yellow-green, reddish brown, bright magenta to the red-brown variety of *sparkesii*.

Hybridizing: Hybrids registered using *Cymbidium canaliculatum* include *Cymbidium Little Black Sambo* using *Cymbidium madidum* and *Cymbidium James Webeck* using *Cymbidium suave*. A number of other hybrids have been made with exotic cymbidiums including the almost black *Cymbidium Australian Midnight* and the attractive *Cymbidium Burma Star*.



Cymbidium Burma Star

By Vic Horton.

These notes have been used at our Cultural and 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.