

Suwada Orchid Nursery

- Producers of world class Cattleyas

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Photography by SUWADA ORCHID NURSERY

What started as a hobby to relax as ordered by a doctor in 1933 is now the longest standing orchid nursery in Japan.



Cattleya maxima 'Gorgeous' SM/JOGA.

Now in its third generation, Suwada Orchid Nursery keeps expanding and supplying orchid enthusiasts in Japan and the world over with quality plants. Currently managed by MuneKazu Ejiri, the quality of the hybrids produced at this nursery can be seen in the numerous Japan Orchid Growers Association (J.O.G.A.) awards as well as awards in other countries. Not to mention the successes at the Japanese Grand Prix show (3 times Grand Champion winners) and the various medals won at World Orchid Conferences. With the

high standards set by the Japan Orchid Growers Association, it is quite something to be able to say that Suwada Orchid Nursery has won "Best award" at the annual J.O.G.A. show more than 10 times. J.O.G.A. award judging started in 1973 and has granted 14782 awards to date. Of these 722 were awarded to plants belonging to Suwada Orchid Nursery, currently the entity with the most awards in the system. Specialising mainly in species and hybrids in the Laeliinae alliance, Suwada Orchid Nursery secures some of the best plants

from other growers to use in combination with their own range of quality hybrids to produce the best that money can buy. Suwada Orchid Nursery, like many of the Japanese orchid nurseries, is more hobbyist-driven in contrast to the mass production of mericlones as seen from so many of the Taiwanese nurseries.

The continual endeavour to procure some of the best forms of the various *Cattleya* species in order to produce superior cultivars of these species and to supply the growing demand by collectors for improved forms of the species can be seen in the extensive range of species on offer. The Suwada Orchid Nursery inventory include superior forms of species such as: *C. jenmannii*, *C. gaskelliana*, *C. percivaliana*, *C. mossiae*, *C. warszewiczii*, *C. trianae*, *C. walkeriana*, *C. nobilior*, *C. dorminiana*, *C. dowiana*, *C. rex*, *C. labiata*, *C. warneri* and the list goes on... The main focus in the species, however, falls on *Cattleya maxima* and Suwada Orchid Nursery has made available to the public both divisions and micro-propagated plants of *Cattleya maxima* (var. *coerulea* Hort.) 'Hector' AM/AOS SM/JOGA, *Cattleya maxima* (var. *semi-alba* Hort.) 'La Pedrena' SM/JOGA and, more recently, *Cattleya maxima* 'Gorgeous' SM/JOGA. Other awarded cultivars of *Cattleya maxima* from the Suwada Orchid Nursery stable include 'Fukue' BM/JOGA, 'Elegance' BM/JOGA, 'Deep Kiss' BM/JOGA and 'Suwada' AM/AOS to name a few.

Although one can buy a wide range of species and hybrids of other genera from Suwada Orchid Nursery, *Cattleya* hybrids are where their strength lies, having been in the hybridizing game since 1965. Each year Suwada Orchid Nursery offers a limited number of seedlings for sale in order to retain and flower the majority from which they can select some of the best cultivars. These are normally of sufficient quality to receive awards. First, Suwada Orchid Nursery will then offer divisions of these plants for sale to their clients and in a few years mericlones will be made available. Only 300 plants of a cultivar are produced in order to retain exclusivity. Some of their highly successful breeding lines are discussed below.

Using *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* (*Rlc.*) Hisako Akatsuka (bred by Miyamoto Orchids,



Rhyncholaeliocattleya California Queen 'Red Angel' SBM/JOGA.



Rhyncattleanthe Volcano Sound 'Rapture' BM/JOGA.



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Cutie Girl 'Yoshiko' SBM/JOGA.

Hawaii) Suwada Orchid Nursery created five outstanding grexes: *Rlc.* California Queen (using *Rlc.* California Apricot as the other parent), *Rhyncholaelocattleya* (*Rth.*) Volcano Sound (with the very popular *Rth.* Love Sound as the seed parent) and *Rlc.* Cutie Girl, the latter being a cross between *Rlc.* Hisako Akatsuka and *C.* Misty Girl. *Cattleya* Misty Girl is a Suwada Orchid Nursery hybrid which has had numerous awards both from the American Orchid Society and J.O.G.A.. Other progeny from this grex include *Rlc.* High Life and *Rlc.* Volcano Fire.

Koichi Ejiri, father of current owner Munekazu Ejiri, crossed *Rlc.* Vallespin with *Cattleya* Commander and registered it in 1989 as *Rlc.* Tokyo Bay, a grex which has two cultivars which received bronze medals from J.O.G.A. and one with a silver medal. This is perhaps one of their best parents to date as it went on to create such excellent hybrids such as *Rlc.* Tokyo Beauty, *Rlc.* Rainbow Night, *Rlc.* Tokyo Girl and *Rlc.* Long Run to name just a few. *Rhyncholaelocattleya* Tokyo Beauty is *Rlc.* Tokyo Bay x *Rlc.* Rose Whisper. *Rhyncholaelocattleya* Rainbow Night was made by crossing *Rlc.* Tokyo Bay with *C.* Tropical Rainbow (also a Suwada Orchid Nursery hybrid) and this grex has received 4 bronze medals from J.O.G.A.. The other parent of *Rlc.* Tokyo Girl is *C.* Pink Costume, registered by K. Ejiri in 1989. No less than five awards were given to this grex with one being a silver medal. *Rhyncholaelocattleya* Long Run has *Rlc.* Chatoyant as the other parent and has received two J.O.G.A. awards to the grex.

Some other interesting hybrids bred at Suwada Orchid Nursery include:

Rlc. Wing Costume 'Elegant Beauty' and *Rlc.* First Class 'Strawberry Milk' SM/JOGA (another *Rlc.* Tokyo Bay offspring), both striking semi-alba cattleyas. Three great standard lavender cattleyas are *Rlc.* Comet Pink 'Show Dancer' BM/JOGA, *Rlc.* Casitas Giant 'Big Event' BM/JGP and *Rlc.* Next Century 'Elizabeth' SBM/JOGA.

Apart from all the standard *Cattleya* hybrids Suwada Orchid Nursery has also experimented with crossing species with some of the standard-type cattleyas. *Cattleya purpurata* was used with great success as can be seen in *Cattleya* Supersonic 'Striking Lip' and *Rlc.* Striking Beauty 'Big Apple'. Also on offer



***Cattleya* Misty Girl 'Autumn Symphony' BM/JOGA.**



***Rhyncholaelocattleya* Tokyo Girl 'Azusa' SBM/JOGA.**



***Rhyncholaelocattleya* Tokyo Girl 'Fuyuko'.**



***Rhyncholaelocattleya* Long Run 'Desire'.**



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Wing Costume
'Elegant Beauty'.



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Casitas Giant
'Big Event' BM/JGP.



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Comet Pink
'Show Dancer' BM/JOGA.



Rhyncholaeliocattleya Next Century
'Elizabeth' SBM/JOGA.



Rhyncholaelia Express Passion 'Ruby Lettuce' BM/JOGA.

from Suwada Orchid Nursery, although not bred by them, is *Lc. Jeanine Spacone* 'Memoria Anne Gripp' with *Laelia speciosa* as a parent. *Cattleya violacea* was crossed with *C. Mini Collins* (A Suwada Orchid Nursery hybrid) to produce a lovely hybrid with astoundingly good shape for a plant with a species as one parent, namely *Cattleya Amazing Match*. Many hybridizers have seen the value of using *Laelia anceps* in hybrids to get progeny which are more adaptable and cold tolerant. *Rhyncatlaelia* Intelligent is the result of a cross of *Laelia anceps* with the very popular *Rlc. Goldenzelle*. Four cultivars of this grex have each received a bronze medal from J.O.G.A. and in three of these the shape of the flowers is still quite reminiscent of *L. anceps* as can be seen in the cultivars 'Mariko' BM/JOGA and 'Cinco Flor' BM/JOGA. *Rhyncatlaelia* Express Passion shows excellent full shape for a *Laelia anceps* cross; this could perhaps be ascribed to the exceptional parent *Rlc. Satomi* which was made and registered by Koichi Ejiri. *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Express Passion 'Ruby Lettuce' BM/JOGA is a perfect example of how a *L. anceps* hybrid (which will be easier to grow for those without controlled growing conditions) can still have the same shape and size as some of the large standard cattleya hybrids and is just one of four cultivars which received a bronze medal from the Japan Orchid Growers Association.

In this age of mass production where *Phalaenopsis* are commonplace pot plants in chain stores, it is reassuring to know that with devoted hybridizers such as these there will always be great forms of species and beautiful hybrids for sale for the hobbyist to enjoy. *



***Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Striking Beauty 'Big Apple' BM/JOGA.**



***Laeliocattleya* Jeanine Spacone 'Memoria Anne Gripp'.**



***Cattleya* Amazing Match 'Cutie Beauty' SBM/JOGA.**



***Rhyncatlaelia* Intelligent 'Cinco Flor' BM/JOGA.**



***Rhyncatlaelia* Intelligent 'Mariko' BM/JOGA.**