



Orange County Orchid Society

Glossary of Orchid Terms

Aerial root

Any root produced above the growing medium.

Anther

The part of the stamen containing the pollen; the end of the column.

Backbulb

An old pseudobulb behind the part of a sympodial orchid that is actively growing. Although there may be no leaves the presence of undamaged "eyes" is a sign that growth is possible.

Bifoliate

Having two leaves.

Cane

An elongated pseudobulb, usually used when describing Dendrobiums.

Crock

Small pieces of broken earthenware or flower pots, placed in the bottom of a pot when repotting to aid in drainage.

Cultivar

An individual plant and its vegetative propagations in cultivation; a horticultural variety.

Epiphyte, Epiphytic

A plant which naturally grows upon another plant but does not derive any nourishment from it. Many of the orchids in cultivation are epiphytic.

Eye

The bud of a sympodial orchid that will eventually develop into a new lead.

Foliar spray

Many minor nutrients and trace elements beneficial to growth are best absorbed through the stomata of an orchid's leaves when mixed with water and sprayed on the plant.

genus

(pl. genera) A natural grouping of closely related species.

Habitat

The type of place in which a plant normally grows.

Hybrid

The offspring of a cross between species or hybrids.

Inflorescence

The flowering portion of a plant.

Intergeneric hybrid

A hybrid between members of two or more genera.

Keiki

A Hawaiian word referring to a baby plant produced asexually by an orchid plant, usually used when referring to Dendrobiums or Vandaceous orchids.

Lead

An immature vegetative growth on a sympodial orchid that will develop into flower-producing structure.

Lip

A modified petal of the orchid flower specialized to aid in pollination and different than the other petals.

Lithophyte

An orchid that grows on rocks

Medium

The material in which an orchid is container-grown, it may be organic such as fir bark or inorganic such as lava rock.

Mericlone

A plant derived from tissue culture that is identical to its parent.

Monopodial

Orchids which grow upward from a single stem producing leaves and flowers along that stem.

Node

A joint on a stem or pseudo bulb from which a leaf or growth originates.

Panicle

An inflorescence with a main stem and branches, the flowers on the lower branches open earlier than the upper ones.

Photosynthesis

The process a plant uses to produce carbohydrates and sugar from water and carbon dioxide in the air using chlorophyll-containing cells exposed to light.

Pseudobulb

A thickened portion of the stem of many orchids functioning as a water and food storage device.

Raceme

An unbranched inflorescence of stalked flowers.

Rhizome

A root-bearing stem of sympodial orchids that progressively sends up leafy shoots.

Scape

An unbranched inflorescence with one flower.

Sheath

A modified leaf that encloses an emerging inflorescence or leaf.

Species

A kind of plant that is distinct from other plants.

Spike

An unbranched inflorescence of unstalked flowers.

Stolon

A branch that grows horizontally above the medium and produces roots and shoots at the nodes.

Stomata

The breathing pores on the surface of a plant's leaves

Sympodial

Orchids which grow laterally and produce leafy growths along a rhizome

Terrestrial

Growing on the ground and supported by soil.

Unifoliate

Having one leaf.

Velamen

The thick sponge-like covering of the roots of epiphytic orchids which helps prevent water loss and aids in absorption.

Virus

A type of infectious agent, much smaller than common microorganisms, several forms of which affect certain kinds of orchids.