

## Orchids With 20 or More Quality Awards

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Published in Fall 1986 Awards Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 4, page 209

Through the magic of computers, we have been able to develop some data in the American Orchid Society's Southwest Judging Region to facilitate our Continuing Education and Training Program. We have found this sort of information to be of great benefit in gaining an overall view. For example, we have looked at these types of data in considering "lateral awards" and other subjects discussed at Committee Awards-sponsored workshops. This not only helps to reinforce such timely topics but presents actual data so that the judges can make their own assessments.

In our studies of the distribution of A.O.S. quality awards\*, it was interesting to learn that the multi-awarded orchids are relatively few in number when compared to the large number of awards granted annually in the A.O.S. judging system. The orchids that have received 20 or more quality awards, from the beginning of the A.O.S. judging system through publication in Volume 16, Number 4 of the Awards Quarterly, are listed in Table 1 alphabetically by genus, type/number of quality awards, and the time span of the awards. Such awards total 2,785 given to 79 different orchids of which 61 are hybrids and 18 are species.

Additionally, the orchids receiving 40 or more quality awards are nearly identical with the 20 most-awarded orchids in the A.O.S. system for this time period. These are listed in Table 2 in order of the total number of quality awards received.

While we do not find a great deal of conclusive information from this statistical material, it has given valuable insight and promoted further studies in many areas of interest to judges. It should be understood that we do not judge by such statistics nor by the number of prior awards, although such information does help put things into perspective for us. The condensed consensus of the thinking of many Southwest Region judges is that this stimulates thinking and could lead to innumerable areas of inquiry. These would be good topics for orchid students. We consider that all of the members of the judging community are ongoing students of orchids.

In our view, people in the orchid judging community must reach their own conclusions about the interpretation or meaning of data or information. This is true regardless of the nature and source of the data or information. The critical thing is to be able to understand for yourself what it means to you — not what someone else indicates that it should mean. The ability to discern salient features and to form valid opinions independently is an essential ingredient of the successful orchid judge. For example, some people may find it incomprehensible that *Ascocenda* Yip Sum Wah is our most awarded orchid, with a total of 98 awards in 17 years — yet it has not received a First Class Certificate. Is it because this orchid is the quintessential high-quality and uniformly successful hybrid but with no one clone being sufficiently different or distinctive to get an FCC? Or was this grex just undeserving at the highest quality levels? What do you say? If that is curious and puzzling, what about *Maclellanara* Pagan Lovesong? Many judges have described this as being a rather consistent and uniform hybrid, yet four clones out of 49 awards have received FCCs, all in less than eight years. Further, our second most-awarded orchid is the species, *Vanda sanderiana*, which received much recognition over a period of years when a high-quality group was produced in Hawaii some time ago. More recently, the

albinistic forms were appreciated, giving a boost in the number of awards granted. The award records show that for 36 years *Vanda sanderiana* has been receiving A.O.S. quality awards, and it is doubtful that this trend is over. What does this say about the criterion of judging based on improvement or superiority as compared to prior awards? Thinking of color variations leads us to consider the primary hybrid *Paphiopedilum Maudiae*, which is still garnering awards 43 years after first being listed in the A.O.S. *Register of Awards*. When some of us started as orchid students, what was then called *Cypripedium Maudiae* or simply just “Maudiae Mag” (or, more properly, Maudiae ‘Magnificum’, FCC/RHS from England) was a worldwide favorite because of its pristine green and white coloration. More recently, some thoughtful people have introduced an extraordinary group of hybrids that are deeply colored, which understandably led to many further awards for *Paphiopedilum Maudiae*. In view of the apparent popularity with judges, it appears that this trend is well-established and growing.

Depending on your own areas of preference or viewpoints, you could explain, defend, challenge, or disparage the presence — or absence — of certain orchids on this “Hit Parade.” The facts speak for themselves in this case, posing some interesting questions for orchid students. What is the probable future of our most-awarded-orchids? Why do some of these orchids have limited awards lifespans while others continue on indefinitely? In addition to thoughts of certain orchids being in vogue from time to time, have some orchids become “favorites” of the judges? How about “favorite favorites?” If so, why?

The ability to analyze orchid data rapidly is just recently being realized to the great advantage of those who study orchids. For the first time, on a comprehensive basis, we readily can analyze the entire body of judging and award history in great detail. This enables us to provide a factual basis for our continuing study of the awards process and the system.

**Table 2.** Orchids that have received 40 or more flower quality awards from the American Orchid Society from beginning of judging system through Awards Quarterly Volume 16, Number 4.

<u>Grex</u>	<u>Number of Quality Awards</u>
<i>Ascocenda</i> Yip Sum Wah	98
<i>Vanda sanderiana</i>	94
<i>Vanda</i> Rothschildiana	84
<i>Cymbidium</i> Lillian Stewart	81
<i>Paphiopedilum</i> bellatulum	69
<i>Cattleya</i> Bob Betts	66
<i>Cymbidium</i> San Francisco	64
<i>Ascocenda</i> Meda Arnold	63
<i>Vanda</i> Nellie Morley	58
<i>Paphiopedilum</i> Vanda M. Pearman	53
<i>Brassolaeliocattleya</i> Memoria Crispin Rosales	52
<i>Laeliocattleya</i> Bonanza	50
<i>Cattleya</i> Bow Bells	49
<i>Macleanara</i> Pagan Lovesong	49

<i>Paphiopedilum</i> Iona	49
<i>Paphiopedilum sukhakulii</i>	42
<i>Paphiopedilum</i> Transvaal	42
<i>Vanda</i> Jennie Hashimoto	42
<i>Odontocidium</i> Tiger Butter	41
<i>Sophrrolaeliocattleya</i> Hazel Boyd	41
<i>Oncidium</i> Golden Sunset	40

\*The American Orchid Society awards data used in this report have been compiled and published by Dr. James R. Fisher. The form for reading on a personal computer was provided by David A. Bishop, Sr.

### **Further Reading**

Peterson, R. 1979. Overawarding? *Awards Quarterly* 10: 16-19.

Powers, M. E. 1982. Where did all the awards go? *Awards Quarterly* 13: 234-236.

Stevenson, F L. 1985 The role of research in judging orchids. *Awards Quarterly* 16: 19-22.