

Judging Bifoliate Cattleyas: A Proposal

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Published in Awards Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 3, Autumn 1995, page 168-169

It is imperative to be familiar with the type of an individual species in order to recognize superior quality as well as being well-acquainted with the species in the background of a particular hybrid and the traits each one is known to impart. This is especially significant in this section since the traits imparted to their hybrids by the species in this group can vary dramatically in all aspects and characteristics relevant to orchid judging. The judging criteria for quality remains as expressed in article 6.1 of chapter VI, Judging Criteria and Point Scales. The following recommendations are offered for consideration and discussion.

Flower Form

General Form

Keeping in mind that there is no such thing as perfect symmetry in nature, an isthmus-lip flower of a species or hybrid in the *Cattleya* alliance should be as close to it as can be expected of its type or line of breeding. The general aim remains toward flatness and fullness of segments as stated in section 6.1.1, *Cattleya and Allied Genera*, but the degree of roundness is to be determined by its genetic background, e.g., it would be unreasonable to expect a primary hybrid of *C. aelandiae* such as *C. Landate* (*C. aelandiae* x *C. guttata*) to approach the roundness of shape expected of a primary hybrid of *C. walkeriana* such as *Lc. Mini Purple* (*L. pumila* x *C. walkeriana*).

The sepals should be arranged in a nearly equilateral triangle, being as full as genetic background allows (keeping in mind that species such as *C. amethystoglossa*, *C. granulose*, *C. guttata*, *C. schilleriana* and *C. velutina* all have lateral sepals with a more or less pronounced and symmetrical curving inward behind the lip and that such a trait can be expected of its hybrids), generally flat and without pronounced undulations or ruffles but usually with some degree of reflexing or curving forward to be expected according to line of breeding. This, however, should be pleasing and graceful, not distracting from the overall symmetry of the flower.

The petals and lip should be arranged in an inverted, nearly equilateral triangle. Petals should be as flat and full as genetic background allows, keeping in mind that the petals of all of the species mentioned above also display some degree of curving forward and/or downward, this often being transmitted to their progeny, and generally speaking, they should be broader than the sepals with some degree of undulation and/or ruffling along the edges, occasionally curving forward to various degrees according to line of breeding.

Judging Isthmus Lips

By definition, an isthmus lip has midlobe that is distinct from the side lobes and separated by an intermediary segment which is a morphological extension of the midlobe and is

known as the isthmus. The lip should present itself in a symmetrical arrangement, its axis forming a straight line with that of the dorsal sepal. The side lobes should be positioned opposite each other around the column, either draping it or exposing it (depending on genetic proclivities) in a symmetrically flattering fashion. The midlobe should descend gracefully from the column creating a pleasing downward curve without excessively recurving or projecting forward nearly parallel to the column (keeping in mind that species such as *C. aurantiaca* are known to impart the latter trait to their progeny). It should be generally flat and, according to its genetic background, possess varying degrees of ruffling along the edges, this should be pleasantly in concordance with the petals, either emphasizing or contrasting the presence or absence of ruffles in the petals, respectively, and complementary to the rest of the flower.

Flower Color

The color of the flower should be clear, pleasant and uniform throughout, with its degree of intensity to be determined by genetic composition in concordance with parentage. If color is of a new and/or unexpected hue or intensity, it should be attractive and distinctive enough to be considered an improvement over the expected progeny. If any patterns are present, they should complement and enhance the general color of the flower and be pleasantly and symmetrically arranged. Generally speaking, the lip should be darker and more intensely colored, blending or pleasantly contrasting with that of the sepals and petals. Any markings present on the midlobe and/or side lobes should be symmetrical, complementing or harmoniously contrasting with that of the rest of the flower.

Other Characteristics

Regarding flower size, the judging criteria remain the same as written in the handbook, to wit: “The size of the flower should be equal to or greater than the average of the parents. The potential of the species in size may already have been established by fine forms discovered in their natural habitats (or artificially raised from selfing or sibling populations). In bifoliate crosses the size of the flower and the width of the petals (and sepals) will be less than in pure *C. labiata* crosses because of the difference in the species involved.”

Substance and texture can vary considerably in bifoliate cattleyas according to the species involved but generally speaking, substance should be heavier than in *labiata*-type cattleyas. Texture can vary from glossy (in hybrids involving *C. aelandiae*, *C. amethystoglossa*, *C. aurantiaca*, *C. guttata*, *C. schilleriana* and *C. velutina*) to leathery (in hybrids involving *C. bicolor* and *C. granulosa*) to satiny (in hybrids involving *C. loddigesii* and *C. walkeriana*) and every gamut in between in intersectional crosses, including sparkling, crystalline and velvety.

Floriferousness is closely related to parental background and size of flowers. It is imperative to keep in mind the parentage of a hybrid when evaluating floriferousness since hybrids involving species such as *C. amethystoglossa*, *C. aurantiaca*, *C. granulosa* and *C. guttata* are expected to have a greater number of flowers on a stem than hybrids

involving *C. aclandiae* or *C. walkeriana*, this fact also affecting the arrangement on the stem, the former species having a more crowded presentation than the latter ones. It is important to remember that “Floriferousness” should not be confused with “Habit and Arrangement of Inflorescence,” a characteristics for which there is no consideration in the *Cattleya* and *Allied Genera* under section 6.1.1 of the handbook. The stem should be upright and strong, carrying the flowers well above the foliage and displaying them to their best advantage.

Bifoliate Cattleya Species

The following species form what is known as the *guttata* section of the genus:

C. aclandiae
C. amethystoglossa
C. bicolor
C. elongate
C. granulose
C. guttata
C. intermedia
C. schilleriana
C. velutina
C. violacea (syn: *C. superba*)

The following species are considered intermediary forms between the *labiata* section and the *guttata* section of the genus, having distinctive midlobes and side lobes but with a less prominent isthmus:

C. dormaniana (syn: *Lc. Dormaniana*)
C. forbesii
C. loddigesii
C. walkeriana

The following species are taxonomically considered intermediary forms between the genera *Cattleya* and *Encyclia*. They are included in this list because their progeny tends to exhibit isthmus-shaped lips to various degrees:

C. aurantiaca
Enc. Citrina (syn. *C. citrina*)
Enc. mariae

