

Finding Orchid Hybrid Information on the RHS Web Site

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Atlanta Orchid Society (www.atlantaorchidsociety.org)

The Orchid Registrar (currently Julian Shaw) at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) maintains the database of registered orchid hybrids. Their web site includes pages with lists of the latest orchid hybrids, and a search engine that allows you to look up orchid hybrids.

The main page for the Orchid Register is:

http://www.rhs.org.uk/seedlist/registration_orchids.asp

From here you can get information on registering hybrids, access the latest lists of hybrids, and access the search pages for hybrids.

List of New Orchid Hybrids

Six times a year the RHS publishes lists of newly registered orchid hybrids in their magazine "The Orchid Review". The lists also have notes regarding name changes, newly created genera, which species have been hybridized for the first time, tips on using the web site, etc. The lists are available as .pdf documents on this web page:

http://www.rhs.org.uk/publications/pubs_journals_orchid_hybrid.asp

If you look through these lists periodically you may find newly registered names for some of the hybrids in your collection. The most recent list has Bardendrum Bamboo Dance (cyclotella x Terusan) which I purchased at the AtOS auction a couple of years ago. The lists may also give you some new ideas for making crosses, and let you know who is working in a particular area of hybridizing.

Searching For Orchid Hybrids

You can get some useful information on orchid hybrids from the RHS site, such as the parents of a particular cross (grex), who registered it, and the registration date. If you want to find information such as the parents of a particular cross, then you would use the "GreX Name Search". If you want to find out whether a cross between two plants has been registered, you would use "GreX Parentage Search".

GreX Name Search

To find the parents of a cross, use this page:

http://www.rhs.org.uk/research/registerpages/orchid_search.asp

You cannot use the abbreviation for a genus except

in a few lucky cases such as Phal where the abbreviation is part of the name. For example, if you want to look up Blc. Fortune, you cannot use Blc for the genus. You will need to use Brassolaeliocattleya, or a part of it as explained below. You may often run into cases where you don't know what the abbreviation on your plant tag stands for. I certainly didn't know that Drlla. stood for Doriella when I ran across this one a couple of months ago. If you need help finding out what an abbreviation stands for, some sources are given later in this article.

You can do a partial match. For example, if you put "Phalaenopsis" for the genus and "Gold" for the Grex, you will get all 600+ Phalaenopsis crosses that have "Gold" in the name. You can also just type the first part of the genus name, like "Phal" instead of Phalaenopsis. This can save some typing if you just put in "Brasso" instead of Brassolaeliocattleya, but you may get a much longer list of search results when you don't put in the exact name because you will also get matches for other genera such as Brassocattleya.

The search page no longer requires you to enter a genus. You can just enter the grex name. This feature is extremely handy with all of the name changes that are taking place. For example, if you search for Colmanara Wildcat you won't find it anymore because one of the parents was recently moved to a different genus. If you leave the genus blank and just type in Wildcat for the grex name, you can figure out it was moved to Odontocidium.

If you don't find a match on your first attempt, try just putting part of the name in the search field. Names are often spelled incorrectly on tags, especially the endings. If you buy Brassidium (formerly Odontobrassia) Kenneth Bivin from three different sources, the grex name will probably be spelled three different ways. Since the ending of this name is almost always misspelled and the genus was recently changed, the best way to find it would be to leave the genus blank and put something like "Kenneth Biv" for the grex name.

You can often have problems when the registered name contains an apostrophe or accented character.

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A note on the web page currently says that “Accents or apostrophes should not be included when searching for grex names”. This note is incorrect. If you don’t include the correct accented characters or apostrophes in your search, you will not find the name. You can use the partial matching method above, or you can include the proper characters in your search.

It took me a bit of searching to figure out that Drlla. Nina was registered as Doriella Niña. I found it by dropping off letters so that I ended up searching with Doriella for the genus and just “Ni” for the grex name.

If there is an apostrophe in the name, use two apostrophes when you type it in. For example, you would type "Gemstone's Gold Fever".

The following note from Julian Shaw appears in the Sept.-Oct. 2004 New Orchid Hybrids list:

Web version searches of the Orchid Register using names with diacritical marks.

“One frequently asked question is ‘How can I search for a grex name that contains an accent or other diacritical mark?’ To produce the required character on your screen in the web grex search box do the following: select the character from the table below, then with the number lock for the number key pad on, hold down the Alt. key while tapping in the three digit code. If you want examples, you might like to try Blc. Caribeña del Paraíso, Paph. Raïta, Phal. Baptême.”

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|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 128 | ç | 129 | ü | 130 | é | 131 | â | 132 | ä |
| 133 | à | 134 | å | 135 | ç | 136 | ê | 137 | ë |
| 138 | è | 139 | ï | 140 | î | 141 | ì | 142 | Ä |
| 143 | Å | 144 | É | 145 | æ | 146 | Æ | 147 | Ô |
| 148 | ö | 149 | ö | 150 | û | 151 | ù | 152 | ÿ |
| 153 | Ö | 154 | Û | 155 | ø | 157 | Ø | 158 | _ |
| 160 | ã | 161 | í | 162 | ó | 163 | ú | 164 | ñ |
| 165 | Ñ | | | | | | | | |

GreX Parentage Search

If you want to see if a cross has been registered, use this page:

http://www.rhs.org.uk/research/registerpages/orchid_parentage.asp

Before you do a GreX Parentage Search, it is important to look up each of the parents on the GreX Name Search. You want to make sure the names are spelled correctly, and that the RHS database is still using the same genus names. It can also help you

figure out whether the RHS orchid registrar recognizes the species names you are using.

The order of the parents matters. If you don't find a match, try switching the order of the plants and search again. Unfortunately the web site does not automate this process. If the cross is not found, you need to go back to the GreX Parentage Search page and manually switch the names of the seed parent and pollen parent.

For example, see if the cross between Phalaenopsis lindenii and Phalaenopsis violacea has been registered. If you put Phalaenopsis lindenii as the seed parent and Phalaenopsis violacea as the pollen parent, it will tell you that no match was found. If you put Phalaenopsis violacea as the seed parent and Phalaenopsis lindenii as the pollen parent, it will show you that the cross was registered as Phalaenopsis Vilind.

You can also use partial names for searching on this page. You can leave out a genus or grex name. You can even leave out one of the parents altogether if you want to see what hybrids have been registered for a particular parent. To get a complete list you would need to enter the plant first as a seed parent, and then as a pollen parent.

Genus Abbreviations

Where can you find out the genus abbreviations?

This information isn't available on the RHS site (at least not where I can find it), but it can be found other places on the web. Two sources are the London (Ontario) Orchid Society site and the Mid-America Orchid Congress site.

The London Orchid Society in London, Ontario, Canada provides a couple of very useful features on their web site, <http://los.lon.imag.net>.

One feature is a searchable database of references to pictures that have appeared in various orchid publications. If you're having trouble finding a picture of an orchid species, this may be a good place to check. The link on the page is currently called “Picture Ref”.

Another extremely useful feature is a list of orchid genera and their abbreviations. The data has been supplied by Julian Shaw, the RHS Orchid Registrar.

This data is currently available under the “Miscellaneous Files” section of their web site. I’m not sure whether this information gets updated.

The Mid-America Orchid Congress web site is at www.midamericanorchids.org. Under the “Show Documents” link you can find the MAOC Show Schedule (this is what we use to determine the competition classes in our November Show) and the “Intergeneric Cross Reference” list that you can use to look up the abbreviation for a genus.

Other Resources for Orchid Names

Another good place to search for species plant names is the International Plant Names Index, <http://www.ipni.org>. This site is not specific to orchids. It combines data from several other databases into one easy to use search engine.