



EXPLORE

Orchid flowers are fascinating, but so are their roots, stems, and leaves. Notice the adaptations of these other plant parts. For example, large, waxy leaves hold in and store water. Long, aerial roots absorb nutrients from composted debris that washes into tree and rock crevices. Winding stems reach upward for sunlight.

ORCHID QUEST



CURIOSITIES AWAIT

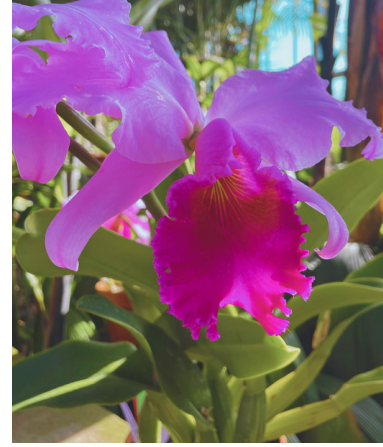
Come see the variety of orchids housed in the Conservatory. Although humans are fascinated by them, the curious shapes, colors, and scents of orchids are meant to attract pollinators, not us. With their adaptations, orchids are trying to attract specific types of birds, insects, or other animals. In the wild, pollinators and plants depend on each other to survive. This is one reason why preserving biodiverse native habitats, like the rainforests where many orchids live, is so important.

ORCHID QUEST



PHALAENOPSIS

The flowers of the Phalaenopsis orchid, also known as the moth orchid, resemble a moth in flight. This is especially true when the blooms are blown by the wind on graceful stems. This movement encourages moths, who are seeking a mate, to visit and pollinate the phalaenopsis orchid.



CATTLEYA

Some call cattleya orchids the queen of orchids. Their bright flowers are known for having sweet aromas that attract pollinators and people. Their showy blooms are used in corsages. The cattleya orchid is the national flower of many South American countries. Do you detect any scent?

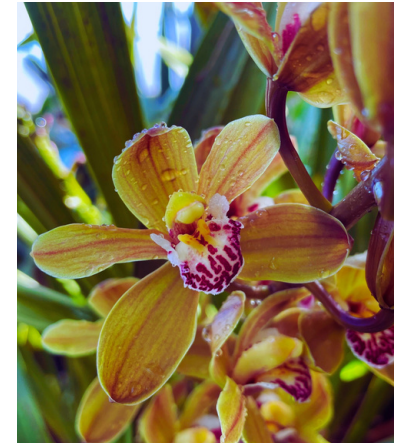
PAPHIODEDILUM

This orchid is often called the slipper orchid because it resembles a lady's slipper. Insects are lured by its scent. With the hope of finding nectar, they crawl into the pouch-like petal, where pollen gets stuck to them as they enter and exit. Little do they know that there is actually no nectar inside.



CYMBIDIUM

The name of this orchid comes from the Latin word "cymba" which means small boat. Sometimes these flowers are called boat orchids. Do you notice the boat-like labellum or central petal? Pollinators most likely see a brightly marked landing strip, not a boat.



DENDROBIUM

Dendrobium in Latin means "living in trees." It is a fitting name for this plant because dendrobium orchids are epiphytes. This means they rely on other plants for support but not for nutrients. Dendrobium orchids absorb nutrients through their tangled aerial roots when rain or wind carries organic matter to them.



EPIDENDRUM

This orchid is sometimes called a crucifix orchid because the center petals resemble a small cross. Epidendrums are terrestrial, which means they can live on the ground. They can grow on roadsides and grasslands, unlike many other orchid species that only thrive in dappled sunlight.