St. Augustine Orchid Society
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Changes in Orchid Nomenclature – Cattleya Alliance

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

The Royal Horticultural Society is the administrator of the International Orchid Register for new orchid hybrids. The RHS has adopted changes to orchid nomenclature that affect the names we call our orchids. The orchid taxonomists who have proposed these changes are referred to somewhat derisively as the lumpers and the splitters, because they are busy lumping some species together into an existing genus or splitting species apart into separate sometimes new genera. I have happily continued to use the old Sander's names with which I am familiar and comfortable. There are many new hybrids being referred to by the new nomenclature so I decided it was time for this old dog to learn some new tricks.

Central American Cattleyas Split into Guarianthes. The splitters pulled the Central American bifoliate species out of the cattleya genus in 2003 and created the new genus Guarianthe (Gur.) to house them. Dressler and Higgins felt this group was out of place in the Cattleya genus, partly on the basis of DNA analysis, and proposed the new generic name based on Guaria, a Costa Rican word for orchid, and the Greek term for flower, anthe.

Cattleyas Moved Into the Genus Guarianthe

	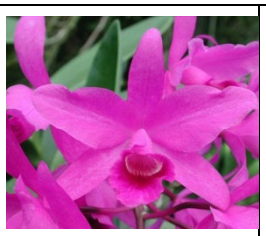			
Gur. aurantiaca	Gur. bowringiana	Gur. deckeri	Gur. patinii	Gur. skinneri

Photo Credits: Gur. aurantiaca by Gene Crocker of Carter and Holmes, Gur. bowringiana by Jean Wilson, Gur. deckeri by Michael Blietz of Exotic Orchids, Gur. patinii by Jean Wilson, Gur. skinneri by Jean Wilson

This has created the need for new intergeneric names to describe the hybrids with Guarianthes. The table below lists the more common intergenerics that have been registered. The combinations with various genera are listed, along with a note about what Sander would have called it. The Sander information assumes none of the reorganizations in the cattleya alliance occurred.

Guarianthe Combinations with Other Genera in the Cattleya Alliance

Combine Guarianthe with:		To Create This Intergeneric:		Sanders Would Have Called It:	
B.	Brassavola (B)	Bsn.	Brassanthe	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Bc.	Brassocattleya (B x C)	Bct.	Brassocatanthe	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Bro.	Broughtonia (Bro)	Grt.	Guaritonia	Ctna.	Cattleytonia

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Guarianthe Combinations with Other Genera in the Cattleya Alliance					
Combine Guarianthe with:		To Create This Intergeneric:		Sanders Would Have Called It:	
C.	Cattleya (C)	Ctt.	Cattlianthe	C.	Cattleya
Ctyh.	Cattleychea (C x Psh)	Pgy.	Proguarleya	Epc.	Epicattleya
Ctna.	Cattleytonia (Bro x C)	Gct.	Guaricattonia	Ctna.	Cattleytonia
Cty.	Catyclia (C x E)	Eny.	Enanthleya	Epc.	Epicattleya
Clty.	Caulocattleya (C x Cau)	Gty.	Guarthroleya	Clty.	Caulocattleya
E.	Encyclia (E)	Gcy.	Guaricyclia	Epc.	Epicattleya
Epc.	Epicattleya (C x Epi)	Ett.	Epicatanthe	Epc.	Epicattleya
Epi.	Epidendrum (Epi)	Gdd.	Guaridendrum	Epc.	Epicattleya
L.	Laelia (L)	Lnt.	Laelianthe	Lc.	Laeliocattleya
Lc.	Laeliocattleya (C x L)	Lcn.	Laeliocatanthe	Lc.	Laeliocattleya
Mel.	Meloara (C x Cau x L)	Jkf.	Jackfowlieara	Lcr.	Laeliocatarthron
Myc.	Myrmecattleya (C x Mcp)	Gcp.	Guaricatophila	Smbc.	Schombocattleya
Psh.	Prosthechea (Psh)	Grc.	Guarechea	Epc.	Epicattleya
Rcc.	Rhyncatclia (C x E)	Bul.	Bullara	Epc.	Epicattleya
Ryc.	Rhyncatlaelia (C x L x Rl)	Rchg.	Rechingerara	Blc.	Brassolaeliocattleya
Rby	Rhynchobrassoleya (B x C x Rl)	Chz.	Cahuzacara	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Rl.	Rhyncholaelia (Rl)	Ryn.	Rhyncanthe	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Rlc.	Rhyncholaeliocattleya (C x Rl)	Rth.	Rhyncattleanthe	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Rly	Rhyntonleya (Bro x C x Rl)	Vkt.	Volkertara	Stlma.	Stellamizutaara

Some Brassavolas Split into Rhyncholaelias. The splitters pulled two species out of the Brassavolas and created the new genus Rhyncholaelia to house them. Though this change was made prior to the turn of the century, many growers still refer to them as Brassavolas. The fimbriated lip of the digbyana is very popular with hybridizers and has been incorporated into many hybrids such that the B in the majority of the old Brassocattleyas and Brassolaeliocattleyas is from B. digbyana.

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Brassavolas Moved Into the Genus Rhyncholaelia	
Rl. digbyana	Rl. glauca

Photo Credits: Rl. digbyana by David Genovese and Rl. glauca by P. Nelson

The addition of the Rhyncholaelia genus created the need for new genus names to describe its hybrids.

Rhyncholaelia Combinations with Other Genera in the Cattleya Alliance					
Combine Rhyncholaelia with:		To Create This Intergeneric:		Sander Would Have Called It:	
B.	Brassavola (B)	Rcv.	Rhynchovola	B.	Brassavola
Bct.	Brassocatanthe (B x C x Gur)	Chz.	Cahuzacara	Bc	Brassocattleya
Bc.	Brassocattleya (B x C)	Rby.	Rhynchobrassoleya	Bc	Brassocattleya
Ctyl.	Catcylaelia (C x E x L)	Aea.	Appletonara	Yhra.	Yahiroara
C.	Cattleya (C)	Rlc.	Rhyncholaeliocattleya	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Ctyh.	Cattleychea (C x Psh)	Pry.	Prosrhyncholeya	Vnra.	Vaughnara
Ctna.	Cattleytonia (Bro x C)	Rly.	Rhyntonleya	Stlma.	Stellamizutaara
Ctt.	Cattlianthe (C x Gur)	Rth.	Rhyncattleanthe	Bc	Brassocattleya
Cty.	Catyclia (C x E)	Rcc.	Rhyncatclia	Vnra.	Vaughnara

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Rhyncholaelia Combinations with Other Genera in the Cattleya Alliance					
Combine Rhyncholaelia with:		To Create This Intergeneric:		Sander Would Have Called It:	
Clty.	Caulocattleya (C x Cau)	Rry.	Rhynarthrolyea	Hook.	Hookerara
Eny.	Enanthleya (C x E x Gur)	Bul.	Bullara	Vnra.	Vaughnara
Epc.	Epicattlya (C x Epi)	Rnd.	Rhycatdendrum	Vnra.	Vaughnara
Epi.	Epidendrum (Epi)	Rdd.	Rhynchodendrum	Bepi.	Brassoepidendrum
Gur.	Guarianthe (Gur)	Rhy.	Rhyncanthe	Bc.	Brassocattleya
Gct.	Guaricattonia (Bro x C x Gur)	Vkt.	Volkertara	Stlma.	Stellamizutaara
L.	Laelia (L)	Lrn.	Laelirhynchos	Bl.	Brassolaelia
Lcn.	Laeliocatanthe (C x Gur x L)	Rchg.	Rechingerara	Blc.	Brassolaeliocattleya
Lcr.	Laeliocatarthron (C x Cau x L)	Mel.	Meloara	Col.	Collierara
Lc.	Laeliocattleya (C x L)	Ryc.	Rhyncatlaelia	Blc.	Brassolaeliocattleya
Led.	Ledienara (C x Cau x Gur x L)	Jkf.	Jackfowlieara	Col.	Collierara
Myc.	Myrmecocattleya (C x Mcp)	Rmy.	Rhynchomyremeleya	Recc.	Recchara

Cattleyode Laelias Lumped into Cattleyas. The lumpers moved the large flowered Cattleyode Brazilian Laelias into the Cattleya genus. This did not result in any need for new intergeneric names, it just changed the name of many familiar orchids. L. purpurata has been in the parentage of perhaps 90% of the previously called laeliocattleya orchids that are now known as cattleyas.

Cattleyode Laelias Moved Into the Genus Cattleya

C. crispa

C. grandis

C. lobata

C. purpurata

C. tenebrosa

Photo Credits: C. crispa by Dalton Baptista, C. grandis by Mauro Rosin, C. lobata by Mauro Rosin, C. purpurata by Woolf Orchid Culture and C. tenebrosa by Mauro Rosin

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Other Brazilian Laelias Lumped into Cattleyas. The lumpers moved the rest of the Brazilian laelias into the Cattleya genus, including the colorful Brazilian Rupicolous Laelias. Only Laelias from Mexico and Central America are now still considered to be Laelias.

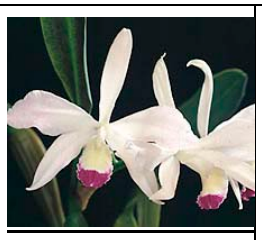
Other Brazilian Laelias Moved Into the Genus Cattleya				
				
C. alaorii	C. jongheana	C. perrinii	C. pumila	C. sincorana
C. bradei	C. briegeri	C. cinnabarina	C. harpophylla	C. longipes

Photo Credits: C. alaorii , C.jongheana, C. perrinii, C. pumila, C.sincorana, C. bradei by Francisco Miranda, C. briegeri by Fred Clarke, C. cinnabarina by Mauro Rosin, C. harpophylla by Maureen Puligano, C. longipes by Francisco Miranda

Schomburgkias Eliminated, Plants Split into Myrmecophilas and Laelias. The hollow pseudobulb Schomburgkias were moved into the Myrmecophila genus. The genus name Schomburgkia, which meant ant lover and referred to the symbiotic relationship these plants had with ants living within the hollow pseudobulbs, is no more. This also eliminated the intergeneric Schombocattleyas (Smbc.), etc. A partial listing includes the following:

Some of the Schomburgkias That Were Moved Into the Genus Myrmecophila				
Mcp. albopurpurea	Mcp. brysiana	Mcp. exaltata	Mcp. thomsoniana	Mcp. tibicinis

Photo Credits: Mcp. albopurpurea by Judy Cook, Mcp. brysiana by Jean Wilson, Mcp. exaltata by James Jeansonne, Mcp. thomsoniana by Fred Clarke and Mcp. tibicinis by Stephen William Swan of Burbank O. Nursery

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The solid pseudobulb Schomburgkias are supposedly more closely related to the Mexican laelias such as L. anceps based on DNA sequencing. Some of the Schomburgkias including the South American Schomburgkias moved into the Laelia genus include:

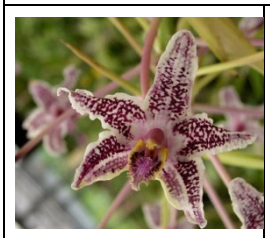
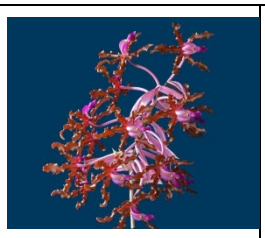
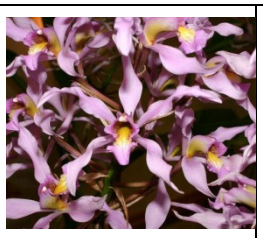
Some of the Schomburgkias That Were Moved Into the Genus Laelia				
				
L. lyonsii	L. rosea	L. splendida	L. superbiens	L. undulata

Photo Credits: L. lyonsii by Jean Wilson, L. rosea by Weyman Bussey, L. splendid by Jose Portilla of Ecuagenera, L. superbiens by Patricia Harding, and L. undulata by Mauro Rosin

Sophronitis Eliminated, Plants Lumped into Cattleyas. The lumpers moved all the Sophronitis species into the Cattleya genus. These mostly cool growing orchids have been used to impart their intense red coloration to their progeny. Lumping the Sophronitis in with the Cattleyas did not result in any new intergeneric names, rather it eliminated the need for many intergeneric names like Sophrocattleya (Sc.), Sophrolaelia (Sl.), Sophrolaeliocattleya (Slc.) and Potinara (Pot.). Some notable renamed Sophronitis include:

Some of the Sophronitis Moved Into the Genus Cattleya			
C. brevipedunculata	C. cernua	C. coccinea	C. wittigiana

Photo Credits: C. brevipedunculata, C. cernua and C. coccinea by John Varigos, C. wittigiana by Mauro Rosin

The reclassifications of the various genera align the orchid groups more geographically. Laelias are found from Mexico through central America into Northern South America. Cattleyas are primarily a Brazilian genus with some unifoliate species extending into the northern Andes and Central America. The Guarianthe are found in Central America. The negative consequence of this new nomenclature is the renaming of so many of the hybrids in the Cattleya alliance.

Having said all this, I haven't changed any of the labels on my plants.

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