

CATTLEYA (Kat-lee-ah)

The Cattleya genus is one of the most popular orchids and is grown by nearly all hobbyists and nurseries. There are more registered cattleyas crosses than any other genera. There are about 70 species and many varieties, which are found widespread in the American tropics, where there are two main areas where they grow, coastal Brazil, the largest area and the Andes. Other places where they are found are Mexico and some of the Central American countries. Cattleyas come in many colour, shapes, forms and sizes.

Like many other orchids, cattleyas are epiphytes, or air plants. They can store water in their pseudobulbs and have large fleshy roots, covered with a spongy, water retentive velamen.

Cattleyas are among the easiest of all orchids to grow. They will grow in almost any compost as long as it drains well. Some of the most common potting materials are pine bark, charcoal, perlite, sphagnum moss. They like medium shade (70%) and a lot of water and continuous fertilising in the growing season.