

## The Vanda Lifecycle

In this article we will discuss the basic lifecycle of the Vanda Genus of Orchids, and while being primarily about these beautiful plants the lifecycle of most orchids would be similar, however the time frames may differ significantly. Many orchids within the various genus grow quick or slower than the Vanda Orchids.

It is noted that we will only be referring to orchids grown from seed in this article and exclude the process known as mericloneing.

So let's begin. When a hybridizer views their plants they are looking for certain characteristics from each parent that they believe may supply an improved overall result. The common aspects looked for may include the size of the blooms, the colour, the display or even the flower count. Whatever the decision is for selecting the two parents they must be cross pollinated to commence the process. This is done by taking the pollen from one flower known as the pollen parent and placing it onto the reproductive stigma of the other parent. This parent will carry the seed pod and is thus known as the pod parent.

Once this process has been completed it a few days, in most cases, to see the starting to collapse and the ovary commence to swell. This process can take longer in some plants and the difference be noticeable for a week or so. Over the period the ovary will continue to swell seed pod (Figure 1). The size of this seed dependant on the size of the parent



Figure 1

only takes  
flower  
  
a little  
may not  
coming  
forming a  
pod is  
flowers.

Once formed on the plant they will continue to grow as the seed matures. This process will take between six and twelve months on Vanda plants dependant on the actual parents. Each seed pod holds up to approximately two million

individual seeds, which in nature are dispersed by the winds. Only a very small percent ever germinate.

In controlled laboratory conditions however, the germination and success rates are much higher. At this point, it is important to note that many seed pods may contain none or few fertile seeds and it can be very frustrating when no germination occurs after such effort.



Figure 2

Successful harvesting of the seed pod and the careful placement of the seed on to a high nutrient mix inside bottles, known as flasks, follows (Figure 2).

If all goes well the seeds will start to germinate in a period of between one month and twelve months from when they are placed on the growing media.

As they commence their lives as orchids they appear as a green carpet as seen in figure 3.

Figure 4 is actually showing many baby orchids inside the flask; the small plants will stay in

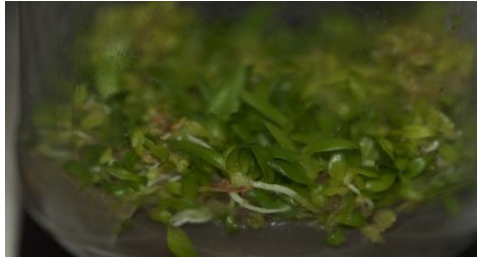


Figure 3

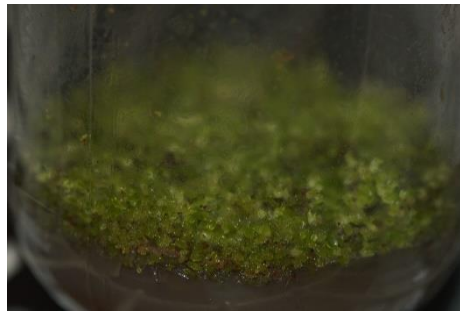


Figure 4

they need to be spread out and supplied with a new high nutrient mix.

appear as a  
orchids  
this flask  
for a  
further six  
to twelve  
months  
before

By taking a small section of the baby plants and spreading them into a new flask they can grow larger and commence forming leaves and roots (Figure 5). This process all takes time and it is usually eighteen months or so from the initial seed gathering until you reach this stage.

Growth continues and the plants begin more like what we commonly see in stock. By the time the plants are approximately two to two and a half years old they will be ready to be removed from the flask and commence life in pots.

Thank you to Rick Emerson for the text.

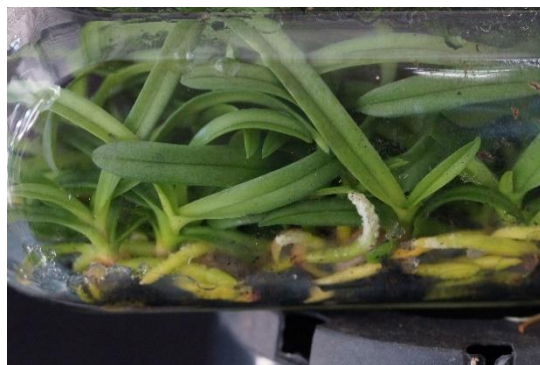


Figure 5

to look  
small tube  
years old  
the flask  
photos and