

BOOK REVIEW

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Society

ORCHIDS

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Fragrant Orchids: A Guide to Selecting, Growing and Enjoying

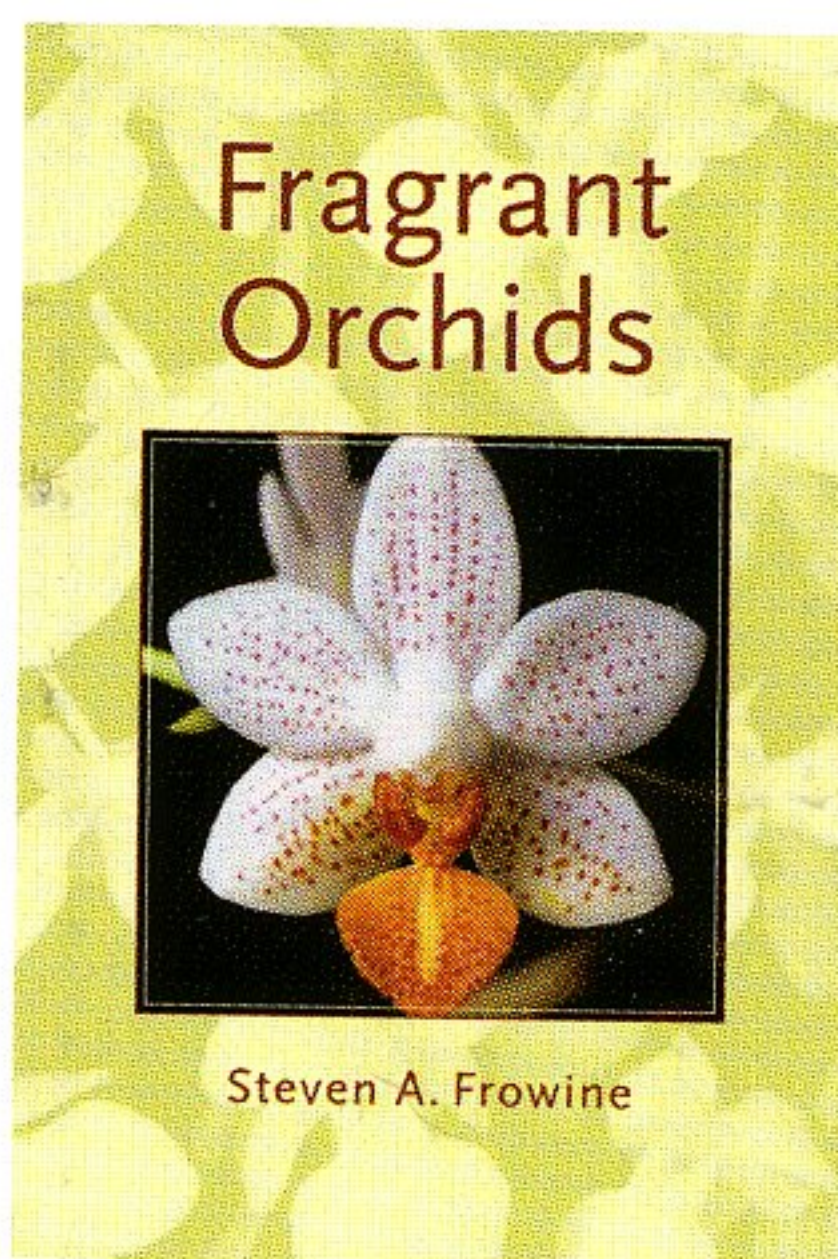
By Steven A. Frowine. 2005. Timber Press Inc., Portland. 125 color photographs. Hardcover. 200 pages. Publisher's price: \$29.95; AOS member price: \$26.96 BK816

IT IS GOOD TO BE REMINDED THAT orchids were first cultivated for their fragrance. Two centuries ago or earlier, in both China and Japan, pots of oriental cymbidiums were treasured for their scent. Their flowers are not large or bright, but their fresh, light perfume fills the air in a room and delights the nose. Confucius especially praised the elegance and fragrance of the flowers of *Cymbidium ensifolium*, which he called *Elan* (*Eran* in Japanese).

Orchids have been judged for their fragrance since 1989, when, at the suggestion of Yoshiharu Fukuhara, then president of the All Japan Orchid Society, fragrance judging was introduced at the Japan Grand Prix International Orchid Festival staged in the Tokyo Dome. It has been continued there annually since then, and organized also at the New York International Orchid Society Show on

several occasions, as well as at several World Orchid Conferences, notably in Dijon last year.

Nowadays, the oriental cymbidiums, the *To-Yo-Ran*, and all the other cultivated orchids, the *Yo-Ran* in Japan, are also assessed and enjoyed for their scent. A wide range of orchid genera have fragrant species and hybrids, some limited in their fragrance production to a certain time of day. Judging is sometimes carried out in the morning and evening to accommodate this variability.



Here is the first popular book on fragrant orchids. It profiles a selection of 110 orchids that can be grown for their fragrance as well as various other attractions. At first glance, it is the

exquisite images that make this an outstanding little book. It is a pity that the image of *Phalaenopsis* Mini Mark (*Micro Nova* × *philippinensis*) on the front jacket has been cropped, but there is a complete picture of this pretty flower on page 114. Each photograph in the main part of the book is accompanied by a concise description of the orchid, and there are notes on cultivation and on the kind of fragrance produced. I have not come across the letters AKA used instead of "synonym" before, but the meaning of this popular term in this context is clear.

The introductory part of the book includes chapters about selecting and buying orchids and the basic details of cultivation. In the last part, six extensive lists mention a further 350 orchids that are worth growing for their fragrance, grouping them by ease of culture, season of bloom, intensity of fragrance or other characteristics. There is a final list devoted to sources of fragrant orchids, but this is limited to nurseries in the United States.

This book is attractively designed, well produced and a pleasure to handle. It is short and small and, as an introduction to its subject of fragrant orchids, is useful and attractive. It conjures up a delicious cocktail of scents, an aperitif that can be enjoyed before the banquet on offer at an orchid show. — Joyce Stewart, *The Croft, Burt's Lane, Mannington, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7JX United Kingdom* (e-mail joycestewart@onetel.com).