



Part 2 The Orchids



Gardens and flowers are places where most people find beauty, tranquility, peace, and an appreciation of nature. This acuri.net photo program takes you to Vizcaya in Miami, Florida, and their orchids both in a garden and in the mansion.

Orchids come in dramatic shapes and colors that are enchanting and vibrant. They have been on record for nearly 200 million years and have spread worldwide. "Researchers dated orchids from the Jurassic period to the Mesozoic era (195-136 million years ago) and the Cenozoic period (64 million years ago)." <degarden.com>

The orchid is from one of the largest families in the plant kingdom with over 25,000 species and over 100,000 varieties worldwide. In 300 BC, Theophrastus, a student of Aristotle, provided the first mention of orchids regarding plants. They were clearly identified as "orchids" in the 1st century by Dioscorides, a Greek medical botanist. Even Confucius kept orchids, praising their fragrance." <degarden.com>



"Orchis refers to the *Orchis Morio*, which is still in that region. The name means "testicle" for rather obvious reasons when you look at the root. During the Roman period (A.D. 476), the orchid roots were eaten or steeped as an aphrodisiac." <degarden.com>

Interesting characteristic of orchids

"Orchids have no taste, though many are edible. (Orchid petals taste, I can report, like water.) What they have by the boatload are *looks*. I think of orchids like little dandies, dressed in different outfits for different occasions. There are sturdy orchids that grow from swamps and would seem to enjoy long meandering walks through the countryside in tweed and green wellies. There are delicate orchids that do not like to be moved and restrict themselves to flashing their colors at passersby from their perch in the trees, like a glam wedding guest toasting the bride from a corner. There are orchids that look like ballerinas, dressed in tutus for their next performance, and orchids that look like businessmen, stiff and upright and ready to work." <longreads.com>

Orchids, a sign of wealth

"In the nineteenth-century, 'Orchidelirium' or the act of collecting orchids was considered to be a sign of wealth – a movement started by William Spencer Cavendish, the Duke of Devonshire, in 1833 when he first laid his eyes on an Oncidium orchid in London and decided to start his personal collection. And so, the Duke's gardener spent years travelling Asia and the Amazon in search of rare species of the flower to bring back to Europe for the first time, in turn the orchid became an emblem of wealth in the upper echelons of European society." <floom.com>



Colors of Orchids and what they mean

"Orchids are available in every colour of the rainbow, excluding true blue. There is, however, a blue toned orchid – they are extremely rare, so they represent rarity, as well as spirituality and meditation.

Pink: The pink Orchid has the honour of representing innocence, femininity, grace, joy, and happiness. It also represents the celebration of the 14th and 28th wedding anniversary.

Purple: Purple orchids represent royalty, respect, admiration, and dignity. These stunning blooms are ideal to show someone that you admire them and have respect for them.

Red: Red is the universal colour of passion and desire, and this is no different when it comes to orchid symbolism. Perfect for Valentine's Day to give to someone who makes you hot under the collar! Red orchids are also symbolic of courage and strength.

White: White orchids signify innocence, elegance, and beauty – ideal for a christening or the birth of a baby. White also signifies reverence and humility.



Yellow: The sunny, bright colour of yellow orchids is synonymous with joy and new beginnings. This orchid colour is also the traditional symbol for friendship. Perfect for giving to a friend who has just succeeded with a joyous achievement.

Orange: The orange orchid represents pride, enthusiasm, and boldness. Perfect for giving to someone who is just about to do something nerve-racking.

Green: Represents health, nature, life, and longevity. This gorgeous coloured orchid is also thought to represent good fortune and happy blessings.” <plainviewpure.com>

Ten interesting facts about orchids

1. Orchids are one of the oldest family of flowering plants. Orchid varieties have been found all over the world. This leads experts to believe they have been around since before the continents separated!
2. Orchids are the largest family of flowering plants. With more than 25,000 species, there are more orchids on the planet than mammals and birds!
3. The smallest orchid is the size of a dime. The largest weighs several hundred pounds!
4. Orchid flowers are symmetrical. Each flower can be divided perfectly in half, with two equal parts.
5. The vanilla bean comes from a species of Orchid. The Vanilla Orchid is the only commercial grown and harvested Orchid plant.
6. Orchids take about 5-7 years to bloom once germinated. Plants sold in stores are already decades old! At home, they're easy to grow and can re-bloom several times a year.
7. Mature Orchids grow upside down. The blooms are so heavy that the plants end up growing upside down.
8. Orchids have the tiniest seeds in the world. A single seedpod can have up to 3 million seeds inside! The seeds are so small they can only be seen under a microscope.
9. Long live the orchid. Orchids can live up to 100 years!
10. Some orchids bloom for mere hours, others for months. Depending on the species, some orchid flowers will only bloom for a few hours. Other varieties can have blooms lasting months.

<englishgardens.com>



Vizcaya's Orchid Story

During the decade of 1910 James Deering requested a landscape full of orchids in the wooded area surrounding the North Lawn, which is why that location was selected for what became “The David A. Klein Orchidarium.” Working with landscape architects Falcon + Bueno and with the benefit of archival research, the Orchidarium was designed almost exactly like the 1920s original, with a geometrically refined lawn, a hedge and paths surrounded by native plants. The paths that define the edges of the garden align with the stairs on the north side of the Main House, re-establishing the close relationship between landscape and architecture central to Vizcaya. Vizcaya has over 12,000 varieties of orchids. <vizcaya.org>





Sources: <https://vizcaya.org/>, <https://vizcaya.org/posts/orchids/>, <https://vizcaya.org/posts/cattleyas/>, <https://dengarden.com/gardening/Orchids-A-Brief-History-of-the-Fascinating-and-Beautiful-Plant>, <https://sites.millersville.edu/jasheeha/webDesign/websites/OOroot/history.html>, <https://longreads.com/2019/10/08/ugly-history-beautiful-things-orchids/>, <https://www.floom.com/magazine/article/flower-of-the-month-orchid>, <https://gardens.si.edu/learn/blog/history-of-the-orchid-collection-then-and-now/>, <https://plainviewpure.com/the-amazing-true-history-of-orchids-and-what-their-colors-represent/>, <https://www.eatlovesavor.com/for-the-love-of-orchids-history-origin-art-taste-and-elegant-style-of-the-luxurious-flower/>, <https://orchidbliss.com/5-fun-facts-about-orchids/>, <https://www.livescience.com/28547-surprising-orchid-facts.html>, <https://smartgardenguide.com/orchid-facts/>, <https://frustratedgardener.com/2020/01/25/gardens-of-miami-no-2-vizcaya/>, <https://cdapress.com/news/2021/may/02/history-corner-history-orchid/>, and <https://www.englishgardens.com/fun-facts-about-orchids/>.

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