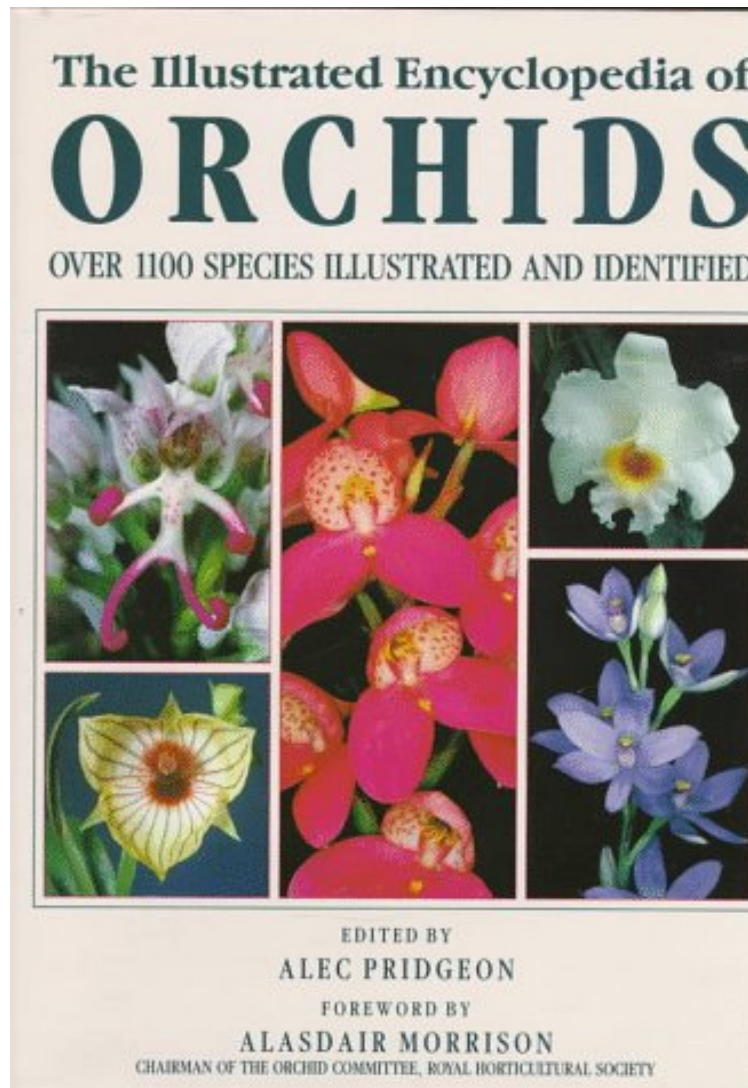


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This handsome reference, now available in paperback, is sure to delight gardeners with a casual interest in orchids as well as the committed enthusiast and professional. Encompassing a wide spectrum of orchid genera, over 1,100 species and hybrids commonly in cultivation are detailed. With an authoritative but accessible text written by acknowledged experts of international renown, the book features all the pertinent topics which guide the reader to an understanding of these wonderful flowers: orchid habitats, distribution, classification, hybrids, pollination, cultivation, and conservation. The alphabetical "Orchids A-Z" section includes descriptions, taxonomy, currently accepted names and synonyms, geographic distribution, notes on culture, and hundreds of color photographs of the best-known species in cultivation.

A necessary and, therefore, highly recommended acquisition for any library with botanical or gardening readers. -- L.G. Kavaljian, July/August 1993 Fills the bill with a rich array of color photographs. -- Donald S. Heintzelman, NW Press, December 13, 1999 Highly recommended for its beautiful photograph and readable, accessible information... popular addition to any general or botanical collection. -- Biological Sciences, ARBA 1994 This is the ultimate guide to orchids. -- Virginia S. Mraz, The Florida Gardener, Spring 1998 the best single volume on the subject and number 7 on Timbers bestseller list. -- Pat Jonas, Brooklyn Botanic Garden About the Author Alec Pridgeon Dr. Pridgeon currently works at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He is perhaps best known as past editor of the American Orchid Society Bulletin and founding editor of the scientific orchid journal, Lindleyana. He has written many books and articles on orchids and has lectured on this topic internationally. Books by Alec Pridgeon: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Orchids Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Basics Unfortunately, the easily acquired orchid has the unwarranted reputation of being difficult to grow--fussy, unforgiving plants that need a home built like a misty cloud forest, with periodic cloudbursts, insects, and the occasional jaguar. Some people devoted bedrooms or basements to their orchids, while others have constructed elaborate glasshouses with different climatic zones, potting rooms, and Mozart piped in to soothe the soul and presumably fortify the plants. But you can start simply with orchids, raising a few plants on the window sill, outdoors in spring and summer, or under fluorescent lights, and discover that orchids are not fussy at all. In fact the very adaptability that has allowed them to colonize all corners of the earth made them very forgiving and rewarding in cultivation . . . In orchid growing there are two guiding principles that underlie all else. If you memorize and practice them your success rate will rise exponentially as the months and years pass. First the most important thing you can do is buy sensibly: purchase plants that suit your growing conditions. If you live in a tropical climate, then buy warm-growing plants rather than alpine or cloud-forest plants. Within certain limits and without breaking your budget you can alter the conditions of your growing area to suit the plants, such as by allowing more ventilation, raising the humidity, increasing light intensity or shading. As much as possible try to duplicate the natural growing conditions of the species or, in the case of hybrids, those species in the background of the hybrid . . . The second principle in orchid growing applies when your plants are already in place in your home or glasshouse and you are responsible for their welfare. Some experienced growers argue that orchids thrive on benign neglect. On the other hand, novices are prone to love their plants to death by overwatering. The Golden Mean between these two extremes is to observe. Inspect your plants regularly, not only for the first symptoms of leaf-spotting fungi or the footprints of a scale insect, but for signs of improper culture--yellowing or loss of leaves, failure to flower, gradual decline.