

Angraecum

Pronunciation: an-GRAY-cum

Tribe: Vandeeae

Subtribe: Angraecinae

Angraecum was established in 1804 by Colonel Bory de St. Vincent although some credit the French botanist Aubert Du Petit-Thouars with the founding of this genus. Its name is a latinized form of the Malayan word *angurek* which is used to describe orchids with a growth habit similar to the genus *Vanda*. Angraecums are typically monopodial in growth habit and are mostly epiphytic. Some *Angraecum* species are only a few inches high while others can reach over 6 feet. Perhaps most famous is *A. sesquipedale*. Few orchidists are unaware of Charles Darwin's prediction of a moth-pollinator with a very long tongue!

Angraecum is a large genus, and one of the first described of the African orchids. As a result, many species, once placed in *Angraecum* have now been separated into other genus (eg. *Aerangis* and *Jumellea*). Few of the many species of *Angraecum* are found in cultivation. Most common are species such as *A. sesquipedale*, *A. bicallosum*, *A. leonis*, *A. compactum* and *A. distichum*.

Number of species: Approximately 200 species of white or greenish, generally star-shaped flowers. Currently the World Checklist of Monocotyledons recognizes a total of approximately 239 species, including subspecies and varieties (9/2007).

Distribution: Tropical Africa, Madagascar and adjacent islands

CULTURE:

Temperature: Warm to intermediate; depending on whether the species comes from lowland or montane habitat.

Light: Again, depending on the natural habitat with the cooler growing species generally requiring more shade than the warmer growing ones.

Water & Humidity: 40-70% humidity; apply liberal amounts of water during the active growing season but provide very good drainage.

Fertilizer: Monthly; ratio depends on medium used.

Potting: An open, well draining epiphytic mix; treefern, bark or osmunda

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