

Encyclia

Pronunciation: en-sik-lee-ah

Tribe: Epidendreae

Subtribe: Laeliinae

Subtribe: Bletinae

Encyclia is a genus of epiphytic orchids, segregated from *Epidendrum*, described by Hooker in 1828 establishing **Encyclia viridiflora** as the type species. Since that time, the number of species in this genus, *Epidendrum* and a number of other genera segregated from *Epidendrum* at various times, has varied dramatically. In 1997, Higgins established the genus *Prosthechea*, moving many former **Encyclia** species in a further attempt to classify this group. Over time, there will likely be other changes as well.

Encyclias are extremely variable and range in size from 2 inch plants up to pseudobulbs the size of softballs with leaves 2 feet or more in length. In spite of this variability, they all share the common feature of a lip that, while not fused to the column, more or less enfolds it. The name **Encyclia** is derived from the Greek word *enkyklein*, which refers to the lip encircling the column. Commonly grown species are **Encyclia cordigera** (often seen horticulturally as **Encylia atropurpurea**, a completely misapplied name); **Encyclia cochleata** (now *Prosthechea cochleata*), **Encyclia tampense** and **Encyclia alata**.

Number of species: The World Monocot Checklist currently recognizes 147 species and numerous natural hybrids.

Distribution: From Florida through Mexico, Central America, South America all the way to Argentina

CULTURE:

Temperature: Warm to Intermediate

Light: Most species do well in bright light.

Water-Humidity: Medium humidity. If potted, roots should be permitted to dry out between waterings.

Fertilizer: Balanced fertilizer, no particular rest period.

Potting: Species grow well mounted on cork and can be potted in a medium-sized mix suitable for the grower's conditions. Either a plastic or clay pot is also suitable. If high humidity and adequate moisture can be provided, plants do exceptionally well in baskets.