

Rhynchosstylis

Pronunciation: rink-oh-STY-lis

Tribe: Vandeeae
Subtribe: Aeridinae

Carl Blume described this small genus in the 1820's. This epiphytic, monopodial genus is characterized by its very thick, leathery, closely arranged leaves with short stems and, vegetatively closely resembles *Aerides* except for the shorter stems and thicker leaves. Due to the erect or pendent inflorescences of closely packed flowers, *Rhynchosstylis* is commonly known as the foxtail orchid (as is *Aerides*). The generic name was derived from the Greek *rhyncho*, beak and *stylis*, column, in reference to the beaked column exhibited in this genus.

The flowers of *Rhynchosstylis* are very fragrant, small and typically white with light to deep magenta, red or lavender-blue spots. Their small size is more than compensated for by the large number of flowers produced on multiple inflorescences. As a result of line breeding, many plants of *Rhynchosstylis gigantea* exhibit boldly patterned flowers or seemingly solid colored dark red-lavender flowers (Sagarit strain). White and even peach-apricot colored forms have recently been introduced. Improvements have also been made to another commonly grown species in this genus, namely *R. coelestis*. In today's marketplace the hobbyist can find examples of this species of a deep lavender-blue color.

Number of species: The World Monocot Checklist currently recognizes 4 species. Two subspecies of *Rhynchosstylis gigantea*; *R. gigantea* subsp. *gigantea* and *R. gigantea* subsp. *violacea* are also recognized.

Distribution: India, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines

CULTURE:

Temperature: Generally warm-growing

Light: Bright, filtered light

Water-Humidity: Daily watering if in baskets or mounted

Fertilizer: Balanced formula weekly when in growth

Potting: Best grown in baskets or mounted