

Schomburgkia

Pronunciation: schom-BURK-ee-ah

Tribe: Epidendreae
Subtribe: Laeliinae

The genus is named in honor of Sir Richard Schomburgk (1811-1891) who explored and collected extensively in Guyana and later became Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in Australia. Until rather recently, the genus was characterized by two different groups of plants with distinctly different growth and flowering habits. The first of these groups bear hollow pseudobulbs and produced generally branched inflorescences. Based on the morphological differences and recent genetic data, these species have been moved to the genus *Myrmecophila*. These former *Schomburgkia* species include *albopurpurea*, *brysiانا*, *exaltata*, *galeottiana*, *grandiflora*, *humboldtii*, *tibicinis*, *thomsoniana*, and *wendlandii*. The second group (*Schomburgkia*) is characterized by medium to large plants with swollen, ribbed solid pseudobulbs that, if grown properly, turn yellow with age and can resemble a large hand of bananas. In addition, the typically very long inflorescences are not branched and the flowers present terminally. The flowers of *Schomburgkia* share many similar traits so as to make identification of individual species, at times, difficult. Usually they have undulate margins and similar shape and appearance.

Many intergeneric hybrids have been made with *Schomburgkia*. The species most commonly found in collections include *S. lyonsii*, *undulata*, and *crispa*; the type species.

Number of species: About 12 not including those transferred to *Myrmecophila*. It should be noted that, based on recent genetic data as well as morphological characteristics these remaining 12 species have been recently moved to *Laelia*.

Distribution: From Mexico to Brazil and Bolivia

CULTURE:

Temperature: Warm to intermediate

Light: Bright as for Cattleyas.

Water-Humidity: Water two to three times weekly during the summer and less during the winter.

Fertilizer: A good balanced fertilizer applied twice monthly during the active growth and a slight rest after growth stops.

Potting: Put in relatively large pots because of the long rhizome and use an open mix.