

Building Block

***Angraecum sesquipedale* Thouars, Nouv. Bull. Sci. Soc. Philom. Paris 1: Tabl. Angorkis (1809).**

The one and half foot-long orchid

**Synonyms**

- *Aeranthus sesquipedalis* (Thouars) Lindl., Bot. Reg. 10: t. 817 (1824).
- *Macroplectrum sesquipedale* (Thouars) Pfitzer in H.G.A.Engler & K.A.E.Prantl (eds.), Nat. Pflanzenfam. 2(6): 234 (1889).
- *Angorkis sesquipedalis* (Thouars) Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 2: 652 (1891), nom. superfl.
- *Mystacidium sesquipedale* (Thouars) Rolfe, Orchid Rev. 12: 47 (1904).
- *Angorkis dolichangis* Thouars, Nouv. Bull. Sci. Soc. Philom. Paris 1: Tabl. Angorkis (1809).

*Angraecum sesquipedale*, was made famous by Charles Darwin's prediction that there would be a pollinator could reach to the bottom of the extremely long spur, which could be about 14" (35 cm). The unique moth pollinator, long-tongued "hawk moth" (*Xanthopan morgani*) was discoverer, about 100 year later of his prediction.

The leaves are distichous (two-ranked) and rather stiff, 26 to 34 cm long and 4 to 6 cm wide, sharply keeled dorsally. Their apices are obtuse and asymmetrically reflex (notched)

The inflorescence is one to four flowered and, usually, more or less upright, produced from the axil of a leaf. The peduncle is 5 to 12 cm long. The floral bracts are 1.5 to 2.2 cm long, deeply concave and appressed, thickened at their apices.

The sepals are 8 to 8.5 cm long and about 2.5 cm wide at the base, tapering to the acute and slightly folded apex. They are roundly keeled dorsally.

The petals are 7 to 7.5 cm long and about 2.5 cm wide at the base, narrowing quickly to about 1.5 cm and the tapering to a long, slender point, spreading sideways and partly upwards.

The lip is 3-lobed, 6.5 to 7.5 cm long and 3.5 to 4.5 cm wide at its widest across the rather shallow, rearwards rounded but frontally cornered side lobes. It is about 1.5 cm wide across the rear of the front lobe which tapers to a thick slender point. The spur entrance is fairly wide and green. The spur itself is slender and hangs down straight to a length of 32 cm or more. (Teuscher, 1976).

OrchidWiz X6.1 shown 24 first generation offspring and 103 awards, the table below, taken from OrchidWiz X6.1, showed the decreasing numbers of grexes across generations.

4 Generations of Progeny				
G	Grexes	Awdd.	% Awdd.	Awds
1	24	11	45.8%	103
2	10	6	60.0%	13
3	3	0	0%	0
4	1	1	100.0%	2

According to Orchid Pro *Angcm. sesquipedale* earned 39 AOS awards, 5 FCC, 17 AM, 15 CCM, 1 CBM and 1 CBR.

There are very good adaptable *Angcm. sesquipedale* hybrids, like the Larger-growing hybrids such as *Angcm* Orchiglade (*Angcm sesquipedale* x *Angcm giryamae*) and *Angcm* Ol Tukai (*Angcm comorense* x *Angcm sesquipedale*) thrive in 10 – 14 inches (25 to 35 cm) plastic pot.

*Angraecum* Orchidglade 'Fre-Bak' CCM | AOS (80 points)  
*Angraecum sesquipedale* x *Angraecum giryamae*



*Angcm. Veitchii* (*Angcm. sesquipedale* x *Angcm. eburneum*) got 27 AOS awards, being the most awarded among all grexes using *Angcm. sesquipedale*. They have been awarded mainly because culture reason and probably impart floriferousness to the progeny.



Photo: James Harris

*Angraecum* Veitchii (*Angcm sesquipedale* x *Angcm.eburneum*)  
 'Biltmore's Rising Star' AM/AOS (88 points) and CCM/AOS (84 points)

In the first-generation list, two crosses are interesting, one using *Vanda* and the other having *Phalaenopsis* as parent. Both are relative modern hybrids and unfortunately not pictures are available.

*Angraecum Longidale* 'Bonnie' FCC/AOS (92 points) (*Angcm. sesquipedale* x *Angcm longicalcar*) is a nice cross because make a compact, well arrangement cross. It resembles a giant *Vanda falcata*.

*Angraecum Longidale* 'Bonnie' FCC/AOS (92 points)  
(*Angcm sesquipedale* x *Angcm.longicalcar*)



Photo: Bonnie & Will Riley

Since 1899 there are registered four generations of progeny and 38 grexes, the reason of this low number could be some incompatible chromosome counting between species in the group. However, breeding with some species of the same genus can get unique pure white color like *Angraecum Lemforde White Beauty* 'Eleanor', awarded with an FCC/AOS (90 points), it is a cross between *Angraecum magdalenae* x *Angraecum sesquipedale*. The White color of its sepals and petals are pure white was imparted by *Angcm. magdalenae*.



Photo: William Alleyne

*Angraecum Lemforde White Beauty* 'Eleanor'  
FCC/AOS (90 points)  
(*Angcm. magdalenae* x *Angcm sesquipedale*)

The black background makes a better contrast to the white color flowers.

*Angraecum* Lemforde White Beauty 'Mr. Wonderful'  
FCC/AOS (82 points)  
(*Angcm. magdalenae* x *Angcm sesquipedale*)



Photo: J. Stewart

As positives features are well balance star shaped, unique long spur and hard texture. Apparently the nightly jasmine scented are not inherited throughout their progeny. The negative aspect perhaps is the genetic incompatibility to breed, also for Fred Hillermann, the hybrid has two major faults: it grows too large for most greenhouses and it has what he called "flower twist", which makes for a "messy" inflorescence. Also, he noted while observing *Angcm. eburneum* inflorescence the buds "turn around" on the peduncle (flower stem), causing the lip to face upward, rather than the usual out and downward form and the spur to point down.

## References

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Hillerman, F. 1982. An Angraecum Tale. *American Orchid Society Bulletin*. Vol. 51. August 1982. N 8. Pag. 819 – 826.

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