

***Cymbidium lowianum* (Rchb.f.) Rchb.f.**

Low's Cymbidium [English Nurseryman 1800's] - In China Bi Yu Lan

Synonyms

- *Cymbidium giganteum* var. *lowianum* Rchb.f. in Gard. Chron., n.s., 7: 685 (1877)
- *Cymbidium hookerianum* var. *lowianum* (Rchb.f.) Y.S.Wu & S.C.Chen in Acta Phytotax. Sin. 18: 303 (1980)
- *Cyperorchis lowiana* (Rchb.f.) Schltr. in Repert. Spec. Nov. Regni Veg. 20: 108 (1924)
- *Cymbidium lowianum* var. *ailaoense* X.M.Xu
- *Cymbidium lowianum* var. *kalawense* (Colyear) Govaerts
- *Cymbidium lowianum* var. *lowianum*

Cymbidium lowianum was first collected in 1877 by Boxall for the firm of Low in England. It was found growing in the upper Burma (now Myanmar).

Cym. lowianum is a large plant with compressed pseudobulbs, which can grow to a length of 8 or 9 inches and the leaves to three or four feet. These leaves are broad, ribbed and dark green in color. The bloom spike starts among the lower bract quite early in the season and seems unusually small on first appearance. However, it continues to grow longer than the other species.

The petals and sepals vary in color from a clear apple green to a green overlaid with a distinct bronze sheen. The lip is marked at the tip with a wide and heavy band of chestnut to dull crimson in the form of a V. This lip mark characterizes *Cym. lowianum* and its hybrids. In shape the petals and sepals are rather narrow but well balanced. (Crosby 1952).

There are three accepted varietal forms of *Cym. lowianum* (see above). *Cym. lowianum* var. *lowianum* (which includes the xanthic form var. *concolor* – lacking red pigmentation), The variety *kalawense* is more commonly known horticulturally as *Cym. iansonii*.

The clone *Cym. lowianum* var. *lowianum* 'Comte de Hemptinne' HCC/AOS with clear-green sepals and petals plus a solid red "v" on the lip, has the reputation of providing the unreduced gamete (the chromosomes did not reduce from 40 to 20). (Butcher 2018).

The first Cymbidium hybrid, a cross between *Cym. eburneum* and *Cym. lowianum* was introduced in 1899 as *Cym. Eburneo-lowianum*, or synonymously as *Cym. Veitchii*, name after its hybridizer. This cross was awarded an FCC by the RHS and played an important role in the production of later-day hybrids. (Turner 1981).

The first cross to give hope that a line of red Cymbidium breeding was possible was made in 1919 and named *Cym. Ceres* (*Cym. insigne* x *Cym. iansonii*). The clone *Cym. Ceres* 'F.J. Hanbury' FCC/RHS is the best known and a key player in the future of breeding for reds, but its parentage has been questioned. This clone was deliberately incorrectly registered and is in fact a *Cym. Ralph Sander*. (Butcher 2018). *Cym. iansonii* is considered a synonym of *Cym. lowianum* and the clone *Cym. Ceres* 'Superbissimun' was awarded with an AOS/FCC in 1944.

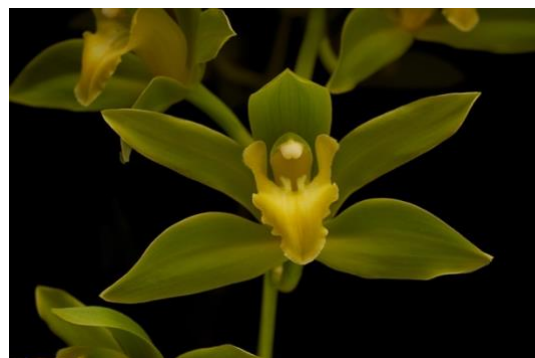
According to OrchidWiz X9.1 *Cym. lowianum* has 41 offspring (First generation) and 16,823 total progenies. About AOS, the latest is an HCC (77 points) awarded 8 years ago to: *Cym. lowianum* 'Comte d' Hamptonne'.



Cym. lowianum 'Comte de Hemptinne'
HCC/AOS (77 points)
Photo: Ramon de los Santos

The highest quality award is an AM (80 points) granted to *Cym. lowianum* 'Concolor' 2014.

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Cymb. lowianum 'Concolor' AM/AOS (80 points)
Photo: James Osen

Sorting the *Cym. lowianum* hybrids out, *Cym. Leedja Cleon* (*Cym. Babylon* x *Cym. lowianum*) is the most AOS awarded with 2 AM and 4 HCC. The flowers were large, shapely and of delicate light pink coloring. (Hetherington 1959).



Cym. Leedja Cleon 'El Sueno' HCC/AOS 76
Points
Photo: CSA

Cym. Pauwelsii (*Cym. insigne* x *Cym. lowianum*) is top on the list of number of F1 offspring, having 188 and six AOS cultural awards, one CCE 96 awarded in 2018 with 770 flowers on 31 inflorescences.



Cym. Pauwelsii 'Kessander'
CCE/AOS (96 points)
Cym. insigne x *Cym. lowianum*

Photo: Teck Hia

References

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- Crosby H. W. 1952. *Cymbidium lowianum*. American Orchid Society Bulletin. Vol. 21 (5): 386.
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