

The Genus *Angraecum*
(an-GRAY-cum)
Tribe: Vandaeae
Subtribe: Angraecinae



Angraecum arachnites

Angraecum was established in 1804 by Colonel Bory de St. Vincent. However, some still credit the French botanist Louis-Marie Aubert Du Petit-Thouars as the founder. Its name is a latinized form of the Malayan word 'angurek' which is used to describe orchids with a growth habit similar to the genus *Vanda*.

Approximately two hundred known species of white or greenish, generally star-shaped flowers, typically monopodial in growth habit and mostly epiphytic. They

range from only a few inches high while others can reach over 6 feet. Flowers range in size from minuscule to a natural spread of about 8 inches (20 cm). The strongest traits that prevail from one species to another are the white flower color (sometimes replaced by green, brown, or amber in one or more of the segments) and the broad, concave lip. The most famous which most will agree is the *Angc. sesquipedale*. (Charles Darwin's prediction of a moth-pollinator with a very long tongue!)

Most *Angraecum*'s are epiphytic, although a few are lithophytic or semi terrestrial. Their leaves are mostly leather, linear, tongue or strap shaped, jointed at the top of the sheath, and to some extent unequally obtusely bilobed at the tip. The inflorescences emerge from the axils of the leaves and are one or more flowered. Dorsal sepals and petals are free and the lateral sepals and petals do not extend forward and outward like those of the *Jumellea* genera. Their lip is entire, or rarely loose, shell or keel shaped, the base usually enveloping the column and the flat portion, or blade, forming the spur. The column has no "foot" and the clinandrium (the cavity between the anther sacs) is shallow and deeply bilobed in front with a tooth like rostellum in the middle. There are two pollen masses or pollinia. The ovary may be stemmed (pedicellate) or unstemmed (sessile)

Angraecum is a large genus and one of the first described of the African orchids. The many species which were once placed in the genus, *Angraecum*, have now been separated into other genera. eg. *Aerangis*, *Jumellea*, and *Rangaeris*)

Number of species:

Currently, the World checklist of Selected Plant Families recognized a total of 223 species, 4 subspecies, and 7 varieties. About 1/4 of the species are located on the continent of Africa. Many of the species of *Angraecum* are considered to be at risk of extinction in the wild and are protected from international trade under CITES. The species sororium which are endemic to Madagascar and are threatened from over collecting, loss of the hawkmoth pollinators, habitat fragmentation, and fire.

Distribution:

Tropical Africa, Madagascar and adjacent islands. Angraecum is by far the largest genus of the alliance with more than 200 named species. When we consider the basic criteria on which orchids are judged to include flower size, beauty, and lasting qualities, this genus is the most distinctive of the orchids.

Culture:

Warm to intermediate temperature depending on the species whether coming from lowland to mountain habitat. The light requirements depending on the habitat. Cooler growing species requiring more shade than warmer ones. Water/humidity again depending on habitat. Most, however, are forest species and appreciate fairly dense shade and high humidity.

Sections of Angraecum:

There are 19 sections of Angraecum listed by Dr. Leslie A. Garay.

Angraecum	Acaulia Garay	1 flower, rarely 2; very short stem. few leaves
Angraecum	Pectinaria Benth.	1 flower, rarely 2; plant erect with stem; leaves several to many all along stem;
Angraecum	Perrierangraecum) Schltr.	1 flower, rarely 2; plant erect with stem; leaves several to many all along stem; ovary
Angraecum	Filangis Garay	1 flower, rarely 2; plant erect with stem; leaves several to many all along stem; ovary
Angraecum	Angraecoides (Cordem.) Garay	1 flower, rarely 2; plant erect with stem; leaves several to many all along stem; spur

Angraecum	Pseudojumellea Schltr.	1 flower, rarely 2; plant erect with stem; leaves several to many all along stem; spur
Angraecum	Gomphocentrum (Benth.) Garay	Many flowered; flower thin textured; stem distinct; inflorescences from lower leaf
Angraecum	Lepervenchea (Cordem.) Garay	Many flowered; flower thin textured; stem distinct; inflorescences many flowered
Angraecum	Lemurangis Garay	Many flowered; flower thin textured; stem short; inflorescences few; 1 to 3
Angraecum	Nana (Cordem.) Garay	Inflorescence many flowered; flower thin textured; stem distinct; flowers minute, often
Angraecum	Boryangraecum Schltr.	Inflorescence many flowered; flower thin textured flowers small to medium sized, more or
Angraecum	Chlorangraecum Schltr.	Inflorescence many flowered; flower fleshy in texture; stem
Angraecum	Humblotiangraecum	Inflorescence many flowered; flower fleshy in texture; stem very prominent; spur conical
Angraecum	Angraecum	Inflorescence many flowered; flower fleshy in texture; stem very prominent; spur filiform,
Angraecum	Afrangraecum Summerh.	
Angraecum	Arachnangraecum Schltr.	
Angraecum	Conchoglossum Schltr.	
Angraecum	Dolabrifolia (Pfitzer) Garay	
Angraecum	Hadrangis Schltr.	

Awards for Angraecum: Top 8 Primary Hybrids

species marked with an * are utilized the most in hybridization

species	cross	primary hybrid	year	progeny	# awards
sesquipedale*	eburneum*	Angcm. Veitchii	1899	6	37
magdalenae	sesquipedale	lemforde white beauty	1984	3	15
longicalcar	scottianum	Longiscott	1982	1	9
florulentum	eburneum ssp.xer	Shooting Star	2010	0	8
eburneum	longicalcar	Famille Lecoufle	2013	0	6
sesquipedale	praestans	Appalachian Star	1992	1	5
sesquipedale	giryamae	Orchidglade	1964	0	5
magdalenae	viguieri	Vigulena	1987	0	5