**Lycaste**

Description: Large *Lycaste* plants combine broad, pleated leaves with showy, triangu-

lar ﬂowers. Flower: Lateral sepals often are perpendicular to dorsal sepal. Petals are

shorter and broader, bending forward but with tips commonly curling out. The lip has

lateral lobes ﬂanking the column, a broad central lobe bending down and back, and a

curb-like undulation between the two regions. The thin column is long and slightly bent.

Many species are fragrant, with pleasant cinnamon to peculiar soap-like scents. Plant:

Densely clustered pseudobulbs are stout, egg-shaped, and often irregularly ridged. Sev-

eral large leaves arise from the pseudobulb apex and base; leaves are thin, prominently pleated,

and lack a stalk. Most yellow-ﬂowered species are deciduous, retaining sharp defensive spines

on the pseudobulbs. Wiry inflorescences, erect to horizontal, usually bear single ﬂowers.

Distribution and Diversity: Approximately 35 species of *Lycaste* adorn low- to

high-altitude forests as epiphtyes, terrestrials, or rock dwellers. They occur from

the Caribbean and Mexico to Bolivia.

Ecology and History: *Lycaste* blooms are pollinated by male euglossine bees (most

Central American species) and night-ﬂying bees (Andean species), both seeking fra-

grances. In L. aromatica, the lip’s lobes guide bees under the column to receive pollinia

mounted on an erect stalk. After removal, the stalk bends forward as it dries, ensuring

contact with the stigmatic area of the next ﬂower. Upon pollination, the lip wilts rap-

idly, denying bees a landing platform.