

Cattleya alaorii (Brieger & Bicalho) Van den Berg, Neodiversity 3: 4 (2008).

Tribe: Epidendreae Subtribe: Laeliinae

Common Name: Alaori's Laelia



Synonyms

Laelia alaorii Brieger & Bicalho 1976; *Cattleya alaorii* f. *dietliana* (O.Gruss) Van den Berg 2008; *Hadrolaelia alaorii* (Brieger & Bicalho) Chiron & V.P.Castro 2002; *Laelia alaorii* f. *dietliana* O.Gruss 1996; *Sophronitis alaorii* (Brieger & Bicalho) C. Berg & M.W. Chase 2000

Description

Found in Brazil on mossy branches in primary rainforests at elevations of 200 to 600 meters as a mini-miniature to miniature sized, hot to cool growing epiphyte creeping, sometimes branching rhizome giving rise to erect to suberect, upwards curving, narrow at the base, fusiform, .4 to 1.2" [1 to 3 cm] between each pseudobulb carrying a single, apical, erect to spreading, leathery, rigid, broadly oblong, obtuse to rounded, sometimes apiculate, glossy dark green to purple, shortly petiolate base leaf that blooms at any time of the year on a short to 1.2" [3 cm] long, erect to suberect, terminal, single flowered inflorescence arising from a newly forming pseudobulb. ³

The flowers show their affinity with *Hadrolaelia* by having five definite keels running down the lip, the outermost larger than the smaller, central veins. The plant is of miniature stature, not more than 3-4 in. (up to 10 cm.) high, as it sprawls and creeps across the substrate. The slender pseudobulbs curve upwards from the rhizome, and the dark green leaves are thick and ovate. It has few roots, as do other laelias of this section, only two or three being produced at the time of new growth. They must be preserved with care for the successful culture of this complex of species. One or two flowers are produced per growth, and the developing leaf acts as the sheath, a characteristic found in other members of the section *Hadrolaelia*, flowering as the new growth develops.

The flowers are a pale lilac or lavender with darker rosy overtones, especially on the outside of the sepals and the lip. They do not open fully, the sepals and petals forming a bell-like enclosure around the lip. The inside of the lip and the petals have a pale lavender flush, and there is some yellow coloring in the throat. The lateral lobes of the lip are scarcely defined by a notch or lobing. The ovary is rather elongated and enlarged relative to the size of the flower and with the pedicel measures 5 cm. The petals measure 1.5 cm. wide x 2.4 cm. long and are broadly elliptic in outline. The lip is about 2.5 cm. in both dimensions and is broadly rounded.

The plant is described as very seldom seen in Bahia, where it was originally collected on the Rio Salgado by Alaor de Oliveira. Bicalho published the species in 1976 using the collector's given name for the species epithet. The plants flower in October in Brazil.²

Habitat

Brazil. Plants grow in a limited area of a small range of coastal mountains near Ilhéus in the central part of the state of Bahia. The original discovery was reported at 500 ft. (160 m) along the Rio Salgado not far from the village of Santa Luzia. Because many rivers in Bahia are named "Rio Salgado," the habitat of this species could not be relocated for a number of years. Fortunately, however, there is only one village known as Santa Luzia in Bahia. It is close to Una, just south of Ilhéus. Fowlie (1989) reported rediscovering *Laelia alaorii* in this area at about 1800 ft. (550 m). The plant he found was growing on a horizontal, moss-covered branch in a huge old tree that was laden with bromeliads and other orchids. Unfortunately, the habitat in this region is being destroyed rapidly as the land is cleared for huge cocoa plantations. -- Source: Charles Baker⁴

Awards

Org.	Award	Points	Genus	Name	Cultivar	Flwrs	Buds	Infl.	Avg.	P	Year
AOS	 AM	81	C	alaorii	Rosminah	4		2	2.0		2016
AOS	 AM	85	C	alaorii	Diamond Orchids	2		2	1.0		2011
AOS	 CCM	89	C	alaorii	Diamond Orchids	0		0			2011
AOS	 CHM	83	L	alaorii	Linda Fortune	3	1	4	1.0		2003
AOS	 HCC	76	C	alaorii	Peter Lin	1		1	1.0		2014
AOS	 HCC	77	S	alaorii	Sunset Valley Orchids	1	2	1	3.0		2006
AOS	 HCC	77	C	alaorii	Peaches	2	1	2	1.5		2009
AOS	 HCC	77	L	alaorii	Mary Lou	4	1	5	1.0		1995
AOS	 HCC	76	L	alaorii	Little Rose Bud	1		1	1.0		1995

F-1 Hybrids and Progeny

Cattleya alaorii has been hybridized 27 times since 2001. The most successful cross, made with *Cattleya nobilior* in 2002, is *Cattleya Kiritsubo*. It has produced 8 progeny and has 5 AOS awards. *Cattleya Sacramento Rose* was made by Gold Country in 2005. It is a cross with *Cattleya Mini Purple* which is *C. pumila* by *C. walkeriana*. It has 2 AM's and 4 HCC and 4 progeny in 2 generations. A cross with *Cattleya schroederiae* in 2001, called *Memoria Alberto Wenzel*, was awarded 5 times but has only 1 offspring.



Cattleya Kiritsubo AM/AOS



Cattleya Sacramento Rose AM/AOS



Cattleya Memoria Alberto Wenzel

Breeding Strengths and Weaknesses

According to Alan Koch, *Cattleya alaorii* is useful in breeding miniature Cattleyas because of its ability to bloom several times a year, its recessive pink color producing reds, oranges and bright coral. Its natural cupping is also recessive and when crossed with other Cattleya species, it can produce flat flowers.⁶

Culture

Temperature:	Intermediate to warm.
Light:	Intermediate to bright, good air movement. When growing plants warmer, give them less light.
Water-Humidity:	Seasonal, high during the growing season (spring-fall) and usually low during rest period (usually fall-winter). Well-established plants should be kept dry during winter when temperatures get below 50 degrees F (10C).
Fertilizer:	Balanced fertilizer during the growing season (see above), weekly. Half- to a quarter-strength during rest period (see above).
Potting:	These plants can be grown in pots or mounted, depending on the choice of the grower. In any case, they grow fast and quickly outgrow their pots, which seems to be the condition they prefer and when they grow best. If grown in pots, medium with good drainage is recommended as these plants are intolerant of overwatering.

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References

Aldridge, Peggy. 2008. *An Illustrated Dictionary of Orchid Genera.* Selby Botanical Garden Press.

¹**la Croix, Isobyl. 2008.** *The New Encyclopedia of Orchids.* Timber Press

Meisel, Kaufmann, Pupulin 2014. *Orchids of Tropical America.* Cornell University Press

²**Withner, Carl L. 1988.** *The Cattleyas and Their Relatives: Volume II* Timber Press

³www.orchidspecies.com

⁴OrchidWiz.Database X4.2

⁵<https://secure.aos.org/>

⁶ Koch, Alan., My Addiction to Miniature Cattleyas. *Orchids.* June 2007: 426 – 430.

<http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/qsearch.do>