

# Cattleya gaskelliana Rchb.f 1883

SUBGENUS *Cattleya* SECTION *Cattleya* Lindley

Gaskell's *Cattleya* - English Orchid Grower 1800's



## Synonyms

*Cattleya elegantissima* Linden 1881; *Cattleya gaskelliana* f. *alba* (B.S.Williams) M.Wolff & O.Gruss 2007; *Cattleya gaskelliana* var. *alba* B.S.Williams 1889; *Cattleya labiata* var. *gaskelliana* N.E. Brown 1883

## Description

A medium sized, cool to warm growing epiphytic species that is found at altitudes of 700 to 1000 meters in Colombia and Venezuela with clavate, compressed, grooved pseudobulbs subtended by greyish sheaths and carrying a single, apical, elliptic-ovate, thick, coriaceous leaf and blooms in the late spring and late summer on a terminal, 3 3/4" [9 cm] long, few, fragrant flowered inflorescence arising on a mature pseudobulb subtended by a large basal sheath. <sup>3</sup>

Flowers large, sometimes nearly equaling *C. warscewiczii*, the largest flowered species in the entire alliance. The petals and sepals are purple-violet suffused with white. The generally pale color is sometimes deeper

and more uniform, and the petals rarely have a central lighter rib. The distinctly trumpet-like lip is similar in color to the petals, though the lower part may be paler. The front edge has a pale rose—mauve crisped margin. The throat is an orange or tawny yellow bordered with a zone of yellow- white in front of which is a mottled patch of rich amethyst-purple. Plants of this species flower in summer from July through September, developing rapidly once the leads start to grow. It is famous for its vigorous growth, the flowers appearing sometimes in less than two months from the breaking of dormancy of the lead bud. It grows well in a cool position and requires less moisture than other cattleyas, being kept practically dry during the resting period. The species was dedicated to Holbrook Gaskell of Woolton, near Liverpool, England, an orchid collector and grower. Originating in north-eastern Venezuela it was introduced and named by Messrs. Sander of St. Albans, who first flowered and sold it at Stevens' Rooms in 1883. Varieties include alba with white sepals and petals and a lip creamy white with yellow markings remaining in the throat; semialba types with white sepals and petals and normally colored lips; coerulea forms with pale blue-mauve color, especially one called 'Blue Dragon'; and variety 'Hodgkinsonii', which is white with the front of the lip crimson rather than the usual purple. It must be kept in mind with these varietal designations that they are not botanical varieties in the proper current sense of the term, only horticultural color forms that have been given these epithets. As such, there may be more than one alba form, even half a dozen, all of which may be different clones. Technically, only the first named deserves the varietal name as a clonal designation. All subsequent white clones should be given their own distinctive names, even though they be the same color pattern combination as the original white form. This, of course, leads to four terms in the name, but the term alba could be left out if the clonal designation was sufficiently descriptive. Plants of this species are not often seen in collections today, and it deserves more attention. Late spring or summer flowering cattleyas, however, are of little interest to the commercial grower who wishes large crops for late fall, winter or spring holidays. Private growers will have to fill this gap, encouraging interest in such species by greater sensitivity to clonal forms and the growing of such species.<sup>2</sup>

## **Habitat**

Venezuela. Plants are normally found in coastal mountain valleys in northeastern Venezuela, just west of the island of Trinidad. They grow at 2300-3300 ft. (700-1000 m) in the tops of tall trees. In the highest part of the habitat, plants grow on rocks, in full sun, on boulders and rocky outcrops. -- Source: Charles Baker<sup>4</sup>

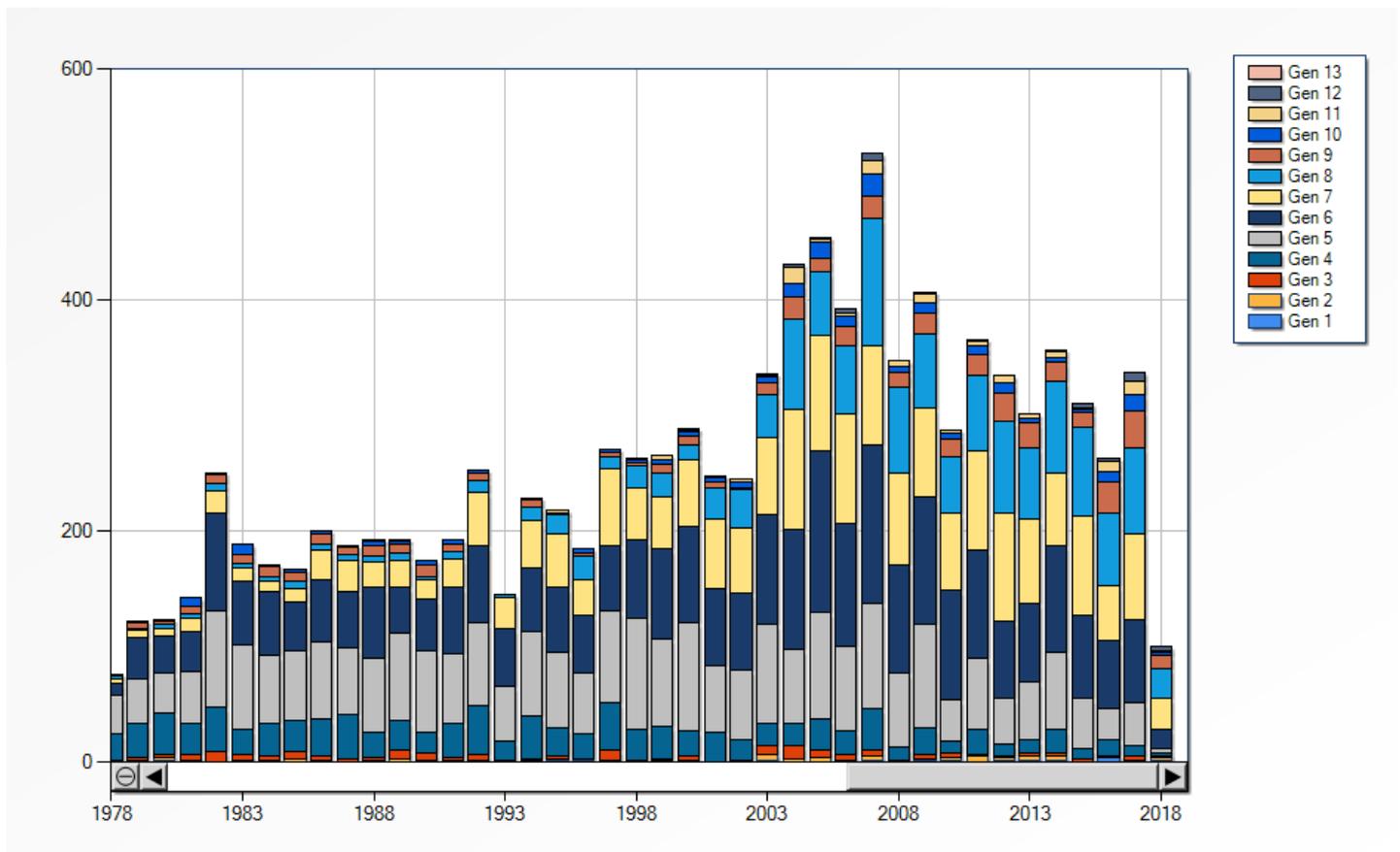
**Awards**

Origin	HCC	AM	FCC	JC	CBM	CHM	Total
	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>
Years	<b>1973-2017</b>	<b>1986-2015</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1962</b>		

**F-1 Hybrids and Progeny**

**Hybrids: Total of 14,960 to the 13<sup>th</sup> generation**

Generation	Before 1940	1940-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-10	After 2010
<b>F-1</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>



Although *Cattleya gaskelliana* has been used in hybridization since 1893, the bulk of the work has been done since 1980 with almost 400 hybrids per year since 2000. *C gaskellians* is a genetic component of 15,000 hybrids

in 13 generations. It is part of many famous hybrids of the 40's, 50's and 60's including Bob Betts, Bow Bells, Mount Anderson, Princess Bells and Mount Hood.



Cattleya Bow Bells 'Christmas Chimes'

1945

207 F-1

4,304 Progeny



Cattleya Bob Betts 'White Lightning'

1950

275 F-1

1,994 Progeny



Rlc. Mount Anderson 'Big Surprise'

1962

66 F-1

539 Progeny

### Breeding Strengths and Weaknesses

*Cattleya gaskelliana* has many alba forms and produces white hybrids for the late spring early summer season. It has a tendency to produce flowers of poor form by reducing the roundness of the flowers. Another flaw is a loss of good texture and a relatively open flower form. These flaws can be overcome by crossing with *C trianaei*.<sup>6</sup> It is easy to grow, is very free flowering and has large 7 inch flowers with a good fragrance. It has contributed significantly to the development of coerulea forms.<sup>7</sup>

### Culture

*Cattleya gaskelliana* is a vigorous, easy to grow, free-flowering plant. It will normally begin growing in the United States -in early February and complete its growth by mid-May. It should be watered sparingly until the new growth is about 3 inches long. Then water should be increased until it is receiving heavy waterings as the growth matures. Always remember to allow the medium to dry out, however, between waterings, otherwise, if the roots are kept too wet, they may rot and die. *Cattleya gaskelliana* is one of the *Cattleya* species that produces flowers as the growth is maturing. In other words, it does not produce a growth and then rest for a few months before flowering as do *Cattleya mossiae* and *Cattleya trianaei*. Like most other *Cattleya* species, *C. gaskelliana* needs lots of sun and air to grow and flower well. The night temperature should be 58 F-60 F and the day temperature 80 F-85 F. *Cattleya gaskelliana* normally produces three to five flowers on a flower stem in mid-

May in the United States. The flowers do not stay in bloom as long as *C. trianaei* or *Cartleya schroederiae* and three weeks is normal. Once in flower, the plants should be kept in the coolest part of the greenhouse so the flowers will last longer. After blooming, the plants will sometimes make a second growth, which, unlike *C. warscewiczii*, does not seem to diminish its flower production the following year. Repot the plants only when you see new roots starting from the lead pseudobulb.<sup>7</sup>

## References

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

<sup>1</sup>**la Croix, Isobyl. 2008.** *The New Encyclopedia of Orchids*. Timber Press

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

<sup>2</sup>**Withner, Carl L. 1988.** *The Cattleyas and Their Relatives: Volume I* Timber Press

<sup>3</sup>[www.orchidspecies.com](http://www.orchidspecies.com)

<sup>4</sup>OrchidWiz.Database X4.3

<sup>6</sup>**Hackney, Courtney 2004.** *American Cattleyas*. Self Published

<sup>7</sup>**Chadwick, A. A. 2001** *Cattleya gaskelliana* Queen Bee par excellence, *Orchids*. 540 – 545