Dendrobium Section Spatulata Lindley 1843

Section Spatulata is characterized by the long pseudobulbs carrying all along the stem, 2 ranked leaves that blooms on 1 to more, long, multi-flowered inflorescence arising from the apical nodes of the stem carrying wide open, long lasting flowers with mostly twisted petals and sepals, tri-

lobed lip with 3 or more keels along the midlobe and a prominent mentum.1

The section Spatulata includes about 50 species distributed from the Philippines and Java to north Australia and the islands of the Pacific, as far to the east as Samoa. New Guinea and its nearby islands have about 30 species and are clearly the centre of distribution. The numbers attenuate to the west, south and east from New Guinea, with the Philippines having 1 species, Sulawesi 3, the Moluccas 9, Australia 8, Vanuatu 3 and Samoa 1. This is a section predominantly of the humid tropical lowlands in year-round high rainfall conditions, mostly near the coast and often growing in trees overhanging the water. Exceptions to this occur in northern Australia and southern New Guinea, where a related group of 4 species has adapted to the strongly seasonal conditions and thrives in climates with a pronounced dry season. Another group of about 6 species has adapted to the cooler conditions of the New Guinea highlands, occurring at altitudes up to 1800 m. This section is closely related to sections Machyrhizum and Phalaenanthe, but is quite distinctive. The pseudobulbs are usually long, with 2 ranks of leaves along most of the stem. The dry season adapted species mostly have shorter, more compact pseudobulbs. The flowers are produced on 1 or more long, multi-flowered racemes from the apical nodes. They are widely opening, long-lasting, and most have twisted petals and sepals and a 3-lobed lip with 3 or more keels along the mid-lobe. There is usually a prominent mentum. This section contains several popular horticultural subjects.2

1Jay Pfahl's Internet Orchid Species Picture Encyclopedia at[www.orchidspecies.com](http://www.orchidspecies.com)

**2Lavarak, Bill; Harris, Wayne; Stocker, Geoff. 2000**. *Dendrobium and its Relatives,*

Timber Press.