Judging Bulbophyllum

When judging Bulbophyllum validate the name of the plant with Kew.

Consider what type of award: CBR, CHM, JC, AD (only for hybrids), AQ (needs 12 plants of the cross submitted), quality award (FCC, AM, or HCC), or cultural award (CCM, CCE).

**CBR or CHM**

Both awards need an explanation or reason the award is being given.

A Certificate of Botanical Recognition (CBR) requires 2/3 of the judges to affirm the vote yes. All team judges must sign the award sheet.

A Certificate of Horticultural Merit requires an 80-point minimum score.

All CBR’s and CHM’s go to Species Identification Task Force (SITF). The Species Identification Task Force receives submissions from orchid judging centers or exhibitors. The submissions are labeled by the name submitted under. When the plant's identity is confirmed, the last line in the post will have the correct name. We sometimes update pages with reference material pertinent to the submission.

AOS award identification verifications are required through the Species Identification Task Force (SITF) for all CBR, CHM, or quality or cultural awards to taxa that have never been recorded by the AOS judging system, and for challenges to current awards. The task force, appointed by the JC Chair, consists of a small group of dedicated volunteers and staff, who consult with respected taxonomic authorities worldwide to confirm and verify the awarded species or natural hybrids.

AOS Identification verifications are required through the Species Identification Task Force (SITF) for all CBR, CHM, or quality or cultural awards to taxa that have never been recorded by the AOS judging system. This includes CBRs and CHM given to recognized color forms, subspecies, and varietal forms. Verifications are also for contested awards. The judging center, exhibitor, or their designee should upload submissions directly to the SITF, http://www.aos.org/orchid-awards-and-judging/sitf-form.aspx. To avoid duplicate submissions or failure to submit, exhibitors should check with the respective center chair to determine that center’s preference regarding who submits. At the present time, the SITF only examines plants that have a pending provisional award.

The task force consists of a small group of dedicated volunteers and staff, under the supervision of the Judging Committee, with access to significant reference materials and taxonomic keys. Under most circumstances, a determination can be made using documented references but the SITF also relies on input from respected taxonomic authorities worldwide including, but not limited to, Central and South American experts Eric Hágsater, Franco Pupulin and coworkers, Adam Karremans, Mario Blanco, German Carnivali and Francisco Miranda; Henrik Pederson, an expert in European terrestrials and the flora of Thailand, Jim Cootes from the Philippines, J.J. Vermulen specializing in Bulbophyllinae and the orchids of the Malaya Archipelago, Peter Adams and Phil Spence, Johan Hermans, Phil Cribb, Henry Oakeley and Mark Chase.

The SITF provides the following guidelines. The more information that you can submit, the more quickly a determination can be provided.

Carefully measure and record on either the SITF form or the award sheet, which you can then either upload as a pdf, jpg scan or photograph, or transfer the information into the online form provided.

Record the country of origin or anything known about how the exhibitor got the specimen (e.g., which vendor).

If the plant has been previously identified by an authority, or if the judging team or the exhibitor used a reference in making their determination, please include this information. Include any information that you think might help us.

Take pictures of the whole plant; flower, front and side; the lip and its features; and the column, including the underside and side. Photos of the leaves, pseudobulbs, rhizomes, etc. are also very helpful. More pictures are better than fewer. Including a ruler in the photographs is very helpful. These photographs do not need to be taken the day of the award, or taken by the award photographer, however, photographs of flowers and flower segments should be taken as soon as possible after the judging session to assure that properly open flowers are represented. Please find photo requirements here.

We recommend that you try your best to document the flower without destroying it, though often it is the details of the lip and column (column wings, horns, lip crests and their shape, shape of side lobes, etc.) that define one species from another. Determine if the exhibitor could take more photos if it were required, and if this is possible have the more detailed photos taken later. Should you need to dissect a flower, you should only do so with the exhibitor’s permission!

SITF tries to do most verifications with photographs but occasionally we need pickled material. The smaller the flower, the more likely we are to require a pickled specimen. If additional flowers and a pickling solution (flowers can even be pickled in 40-proof liquor if that’s all that’s available) are handy, the exhibitor should consider preserving flowers.

Submit all information via the online SITF form above. The system will take full size photos, at least up to 5MB file size. It may accept higher resolution files, but if it does not upload the photo, please try reducing the file size.

After submitting the award to SITF, an email is sent to the SITF administrators notifying them of the submission. Once approved for posting, the submitter will receive an email confirmation with a link to the SITF public blog. Should you have any additional information or photos that you would like to add to the entry, please send those to awardid@aos.org

**Cultural Merit or Excellence Award**

“A specimen plant of robust health and appearance with an unusually large number of flowers.”

CCM must receive 80 + points.

CCE must receive 90 + points.

Size and condition of plant (50 points)

Floriferousness (30 points)

Flower condition (20 points)

The description should not repeat information which is included in the measurements or implied by the nature of the award. Terms such as ‘Larger than average’ and ‘a large well-grown plant’ are redundant when measurements are also given.

**Judges’ Commendation (JC)**

Awarded to flowers or plants, individually or in groups, for a distinctive characteristic or aspect of historical or other importance which, in the opinion of the judges, is worthy of recognition. Judges’ Commendations must record the specific values for which the award is given. Granted without scoring by an affirmative vote of at least 75 percent of the judging team assigned. All team judges sign the award form. Plant receives a clonal name.

**Award of Distinction (AD)**

Awarded once to a cross, exhibited individually or collectively, representing a worthy new direction in breeding. The award is granted unanimously without scoring by the judging team. If the Hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Distinction is not given a cultivar name. All team judges sign the award form.

**Award of Quality (AQ)**

Awarded once to a strain (the result of a mating of specific cultivars), exhibited by a single individual as a group of not less than 12 different clones or the inflorescences thereof, of a raised species or hybrid, which may or may not have been made before when the result is of sufficient improvement over the former type. The parental cultivar epithets and the hybridizer of this strain, not necessarily the registrant of the hybrid), must be provided by the exhibitor upon entry. At least one cultivar of the exhibited strain must receive, or have received, a flower quality award. It is granted unanimously without scoring by the judging team assigned. The specific values for which this award is granted must be recorded by the judging team. If the hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Quality is not given a cultivar name. All team judges sign the award form.

**Summary**: How to judge Bulbophyllums

1. Check for synonyms. Check award record.
2. Single flower per inflorescence – each should be ‘near perfect,’ no significant blemishing, no displeasing twists, feathers, and tassels should be equal, flowers that are recondite or hidden beneath the foliage should be looked at equally. Lift the leaf for bract.
3. Many flowers per inflorescence – need to be individually equal in form and size, plus uniform in arrangement, no “kicking anybody out of bed.”
4. If doubt exists over identification, make the award provisional and sent it to SITF.
5. Reward pleasing colors and presentation. Keep in mind that one person’s mud may be another person’s harmoniously suffused pastel, sunset, or desert tone.
6. If the orchid is scoreable, then score it.
7. Write the best description you can, because you never know when the photograph will be poor or non-existent.
8. Use the General Scale to judge Bulbophyllum.

**Reference**

Wilson, C. (2022). Judging Bulbophyllums by Charles Wilson, Atlanta Judging Center. American Orchid Society. https://www.aos.org/all-about-orchids/webinars/judging/judging-bulbophyllums.aspx