Prosthechea *mariae* (Ames) W. E. Higgins, 1998

[mar-ee-eye]

Named for Mother of Christ or name after the daughter of the collector

Common Name: Wedding Orchid of Mexico

From OrchidWiz and Charles Baker sheets: Origin/Habitat: Mexico. Found in dry oak forests of the mountains in northeastern Mexico at 3300-4000 ft. (1000-1200 m) in the states of Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosi, Vera Cruz, and Hidalgo. The habitat extends from near the Texas border to just northeast of Mexico City.

Plant Size and Type: A sympodial epiphyte to 12 in. (30 cm) tall.

Pseudobulb: 1-2 inches (2-5 cm) tall. They are tightly clustered, conic-ovoid in shape, and do not have the fibrous core common in most other epiphytes.

Leaves: 2-3 per growth. The oblong leaves are 4-7 in. (9-18 cm) long and are silvery grey-green in color.

Inflorescence: 5-10 in. (12-25 cm) long. One suberect to arching spike arises from between the leaves at the apex of each new pseudobulb.

Flowers: 2-4 per inflorescence. The blossoms are 3-4 in. (7-10 cm) across and open simultaneously. The sepals and petals are yellow to olive. The very large, white lip is ruffled along the edge with green veining in the throat.

A map of the north america

Description automatically generated

**Native to:**

Mexico Central, Mexico Gulf, Mexico Northeast

**Homotypic Synonyms**

Encyclia *mariae* (Ames) Hoehne in Arq. Bot. Estado São Paulo, n.s., f.m., 2: 152 (1952)

Epidendrum *mariae* Ames in Bot. Mus. Leafl. 5: 36 (1937)

Euchile *mariae* (Ames) Withner in Cattleyas & Relatives 5: 139 (1998)

**AOS Awards:**

Prosthechea *mariae*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | FCC | AM | HCC | AQ | JC | CCM | CCE | CHM | CBM | CBR | TOTAL |
| AOS | 0 | 17 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34 |
| Years Awarded | - | 1966 - 2021 | 1967 - 2015 | - | - | 1957 - 1990 | 2006 | - | - | - |  |

Thirty-four awards averaging 3.9 flowers and buds per inflorescences; 8.0 cm. median natural spread.

Close-up of white flowers with green leaves

Description automatically generated

Prosthechea *mariae* ‘Gabriel Amaru’ AM/AOS, 80 points, 2017

Photograph by G. Barfield

Hawaii Center Monthly Judging

**Hybrids**

One hundred fourteen F1 generation offspring found, nineteen or 16.7% have been awarded. Prosthechea *mariae* has two hundred eighteen progeny. Of the thirty-two F1 generation hybrids registered, Prosthechea *mariae* was used fifty times as the seed parent and sixty-four times as the pollen parent. The first Prosthechea *mariae* hybrid was registered in 1953, Cattleychea Ave Maria, (Prosthechea *mariae* x Cattleya mossiae). Cattleychea Ave Maria was originated and registered in 1953 by Raasch. There have been steady registrations of Prosthechea *mariae* hybrids since 1953 with the last registration occurring in 2020.

The Prosthechea *mariae* hybridthat has received the largest number of American Orchid Society awards and has the largest number of registered offspring is Cattleychea Mae Bly, (Prosthechea *mariae* x Cattleya Ann Follis). Cattleychea. Mae Bly has received twenty American Orchid Society awards (AM – 9; HCC – 7; and CCM – 2). Cattleychea. Mae Bly has ten registered offspring and twelve total progeny. Cattleychea Mae Bly was originated by and registered in 1967 by Frederick Thorton.

A close-up of a flower

Description automatically generated

Cattleychea Mae Bly ‘Daniela’ HCC/AOS, 77 points, 2015

Photograph by Jorge Enrique Cespedes Trigueros

Ascociacion Costarricense de Orquideologia Show

From reviewing photographs of Prosthechea *mariae* hybrids on OrchidWiz, I noted offspring of Prosthechea *mariae* have a high propensity to inherit a lip that is large and open. Depending on the base color of the secondary species or hybrid used in hybridization, the offspring lip can be white. When the secondary species or hybrid is green, yellow, or white, there is a higher significance the offspring lip color will be white. Again, if the secondary species or hybrid used in the cross is green, yellow, or white, the sepals and petals have a higher chance of expressing as yellow or green. If the secondary parent has a recessive gene or color, even if the secondary parent is lavender or pink, the offspring still has a chance of expressing yellow or green sepals and petals with a white lip. Prosthechea *mariae* offspring often produce multiple flowers on one inflorescence, and at times can be somewhat crowded.

**References**

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