Laelia Lindl., 1831

Pronounced: lay-LEE-uh

Type Species: Laelia *grandiflora*



Native to:

Belize, Bolivia, Brazil North, Brazil Northeast, Brazil South, Brazil Southeast, Brazil West-Central, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico Central, Mexico Gulf, Mexico Northeast, Mexico Northwest, Mexico Southeast, Mexico Southwest, Nicaragua, Panamá, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad-Tobago, Venezuela

The American Orchid Society relays Laelia was formerly a large genus that included species in Mexico and Brazil. With the publication of Genera Orchidacearum Vol. 5 in 2009 the Brazilian laelias were moved into an expanded concept of Cattleya based upon DNA evidence.

Laelia species currently number 24 and include some formerly included in Schomburgkia.

It is not certain what "Laelia" means, but it seems that Lindley gave the genus the name of one of the Vestal Virgins from Greek Mythology, referring to their beauty. Three of the former sections occur in Mexico (and share many structural features) while the majority of species, occur in Brazil. Many of the Mexican species (Laelia *anceps*, for example), grow in dry areas where the plants are subject to extremely low temperatures and even frost, and so they should be grown cooler for their best development. The Brazilian species can be found from sea level up into the mountains, so their growing conditions vary from very warm to cool depending on the particular species. The type species is Laelia *speciosa*, a Mexican species with compact plants and very showy large flowers. Laelia *purpurata*, now Cattleya *purpurata*, the Brazilian national flower.

The former section Parviflorae, the so-called "Rupiculous laelias" from Brazil, includes more than half the species (35+). This section is in the genus Cattleya as recognized by the World Checklist of Selected Plant Families but some taxonomists classify them as Hoffmannseggella.

Number of species:

Twenty-three in the strictest definition of the genus and around seventy in the broadest sense. Color forms number the hundreds. It should be noted that there is currently great debate regarding which species should actually be included in this genus. The World Monocot Checklist currently recognizes only twenty-three species; the "rupiculous laelias" and those of section Cattleyodes having been moved to Sophronitis (see above). In addition, many former Schomburgkia species have been moved to Myrmecophila and the remaining species transferred to Laelia.

Kew notes: Accepted Species

Includes 25 Accepted Species

Laelia *albida* Bateman ex Lindl.

Laelia *anceps* Lindl.

Laelia *aurea* A.V.Navarro

Laelia *autumnalis* (Lex.) Lindl.

Laelia *colombiana* J. M. H. Shaw

Laelia *× crawshayana* Rchb.f.

Laelia *elata* (Schltr.) J. M. H. Shaw

Laelia *eyermaniana* Rchb.f.

Laelia *furfuracea* Lindl.

Laelia *gloriosa* (Rchb.f.) L. O. Williams

Laelia × *gouldiana* Rchb.f.

Laelia *halbingeriana* Salazar & Soto Arenas

Laelia *heidii* (Carnevali) Van den Berg & M. W. Chase

Laelia *lueddemannii* (Prill.) L. O. Williams

Laelia *lyonsii* (Lindl.) L. O. Williams

Laelia *marginata* (Lindl.) L. O. Williams

Laelia × *meavei* Cetzal & Pérez-García

Laelia *moyobambae* (Schltr.) C. Schweinf.

Laelia × *oaxacana* Salazar & R. Jiménez

Laelia *perezgarciae* (Archila & Szlach.) Cetzal & Carnevali

Laelia *rosea* (Linden ex Lindl.) C. Schweinf.

Laelia *rubescens* Lindl.

Laelia *schultzei* (Schltr.) J. M. H. Shaw

Laelia *speciosa* (Kunth) Schltr.

Laelia *splendida* (Schltr.) L. O. Williams

Laelia *superbiens* Lindl.

Laelia × *tlaxiacoensis* Solano & Cruz-García

Laelia *undulata* (Lindl.) L. O. Williams

Laelia *vandenbergiana* (E. M. Pessoa, V. Brito & Ralf-Neto) Van den Berg

Laelia *weberbaueriana* (Kraenzl.) C. Schweinf.

Bechtel, Cribb and Launert disclose in *The Manual of Cultivated Orchid Species* Laela is closely related to Cattleya and Epidendrum but may be identified by its eight rather than four pollinia.

Laelia Species Awards

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Species | FCC | AM | HCC | AQ | JC | CCM | CCE | CHM | CBM | CBR | TOTAL |
| *albida* | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 |
| *amesiana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *anceps* | 5 | 53 | 55 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 3 |  | 138 |
| *aurea* | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| *autumalis* | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 4 |
| *callistoglossa* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *cattleyoides* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *colombiana* | - | 6 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | 1 | 12 |
| *elata* | - | 1 | 2 | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **3** |
| *euspatha* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *eyermaniana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *furfuracea* | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| *gloriosa* | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 |
| *gouldiana* | - | - | 1 | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| *halbingeriana* | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| *heidii* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *hookeri* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *longipes* | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 6 |
| *lueddemannii* | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| *lyonsii* | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| *marginata* | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 3 |
| *moyobambae* | - | 1 | 4 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 6 |
| *primulina* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *rosea* | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 4 |
| *rubescens* | - | 3 | 4 | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | - | - | - | 16 |
| *schultzei* | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 |
| *speciosa* | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| *splendida* | - | 16 | 4 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 22 |
| *superbiens* | - | 9 | 7 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 18 |
| *undulata* | - | 11 | 3 | - | - | 6 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 23 |
| *weberbaueriana* | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| *xanthotropis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| *x crawshayana* | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| *x christinae* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |

Laelia Species Awards

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Species | FCC | AM | HCC | AQ | JC | CCM | CCE | CHM | CBM | CBR | TOTAL |
| *x dellensis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x euterpe* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x finckeniana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x gouldiana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x juvenilis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x meavei* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x oaxacana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x oweniae* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x oweniana* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| *x veitchiana* | - | - | - | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | 0 |
| *x veitchii* | - | - | - | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | 0 |

Laelia Species Offspring and Progeny

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Species | F1 | Progeny |
| *albida* | 24 | 188 |
| *amesiana* | 0 | 0 |
| ***\**** *anceps* | 339 | 856 |
| *aurea* | 17 | 20 |
| *autumalis* | 39 | 62 |
| *callistoglossa* | 0 | 0 |
| *cattleyoides* | 0 | 0 |
| *colombiana* | 17 | 17 |
| *elata* | 1 | 1 |
| *euspatha* | 0 | 0 |
| *eyermaniana* | 2 | 2 |
| *furfuracea* | 7 | 7 |
| *gloriosa* | 22 | 34 |
| *gouldiana* | 22 | 36 |
| *halbingeriana* | 0 | 0 |
| *heidii* | 3 | 6 |
| *hookeri* | 0 | 0 |
| *longipes* | 43 | 96 |
| *lueddemannii* | 19 | 43 |
| *lyonsii* | 37 | 59 |
| *marginata* | 4 | 4 |
| *myobarnbae* | 10 | 10 |
| *primulina* | 0 | 0 |
| *rosea* | 8 | 10 |
| *rubescens* | 77 | 125 |
| *schultzei* | 10 | 11 |
| *speciosa* | 31 | 40 |
| *splendida* | 55 | 68 |
| *superbiens* | 65 | 99 |
| *Undulata* | 98 | 173 |

Laelia Species Offspring and Progeny

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Species | F1 | Progeny |
| *weberbaueriana* | 1 | 1 |
| *xanthotropis* | 0 | 0 |
| *x crawshayana* | 2 | 2 |
| *x christinae* | 0 | 0 |
| *x dellensis* | 0 | 0 |
| *x euterpe* | 0 | 0 |
| x eyermaniana | 2 | 2 |
| *x finckeniana* | 1 | 1 |
| *x gouldiana* | 0 | 0 |
| *x juvenilis* | 0 | 0 |
| *x meavei* | 0 | 0 |
| *x oaxacana* | 0 | 0 |
| *x oweniae* | 0 | 0 |
| *x oweniana* | 0 | 0 |
| *x veitchiana* | 0 | 0 |
| *x veitchii* | 0 | 0 |

Laelia building block include:

1. Laelia *anceps* is the Laelia building block based on three hundred thirty-nine offspring, eight hundred fifty-six progeny and having received one hundred thirty-eight American Orchid Society awards.

A close-up of a purple flower

Description automatically generated

Laelia *anceps* ‘Carlos Solis’ AM/AOS, 80 points, 2016

Photograph by Jorge Cespedes

Ascociacion Acostena de Orquideologia Show

A close-up of a purple flower

Description automatically generated

Laelia *anceps* ‘SanBbar Super Splash’ AM/AOS, 83 points, 1996

Merritt Collection, Specific Photographer not disclosed

Pacific South Regional Judging

A close-up of a white and purple orchid

Description automatically generated

Laelia *anceps* hf veitchiana ‘Elizabeth’s Eyes’ AM/AOS, 83 points, 2004

Photography by Judy Cook

Atlanta Judging Center

A close-up of a white flower

Description automatically generated

Laelia *anceps* var. vestalis ‘Twin Oaks’ AM/AOS, 83 points, 2004

Photography by OWZ Lib

No Venue Information Provided

The American Orchid Society notes that Laelia *anceps* features prominently in the development of cold tolerance in cattleyas. The species is dominant for its long inflorescence and characteristic four-angled pseudobulbs. The species imparts attractive shape, size, substance, and flower flatness to its hybrids. The color is recessive allowing hybridizers to develop a wide range of colors with the exception of yellow.

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