**The Genus Pleurothallis**

R. Br 1813

Type species: *Pleurothallis ruscifolia*

Pleurothallis was first described by Robert Brown in 1813. He named the genus from the Greeek pleuron (rib) and thallos (short, branch) in allusion to the many rib-like stems which arise in tufts in many of the species. Pleurothallis is allied to Masdevallia but the flowers are much smaller and lack the characteristic sepaline tube of Masdevallia. Pleurothallis is a conglomerate genus, a taxonomists dream (or perhaps nightmare) and in a constant state of flux. There is no simple description of Pleurothallis, as it is a huge genus comprising species from miniscule to very large in size, epiphytic to terrestrial, clumping to creeping in growth, thick or thin leaved, erect to pendent. The flowers can be delicate or thickly textured; racemes can be single flowered or many flowered, short to very long, but they have one common denominator: they all have two pollinia. According to Carl Luer 1999. The largest genus within the Orchidaceae in the New World with more than 1000 species represented from all parts of subtropic and tropical Americas. Their cultural requirements are as varied as their plant form so each species should be treated according to the enviroment that it is found. Recent genetic work suggests that Pleurothallis should be divided into approximately 17 different genera while Luer has recently suggested the creation of 49 segregates.

Pleurothallis species are found throughout the American tropics. It is easy to find trees with 5, 6, 7 or more different species on one branch! There are some species for just about any growing condition, from the warm to intermediate to cool greenhouse; from wet to dry growing areas. The one thing that brings these diverse plants together is flower size. Most Pleurothallis flowers are so small that a magnifying glass is often needed to appreciate their beauty and complexity. As with any small flowered species, it is a specimen-sized plant in full bloom that catches the eye and forces appreciation from even a die-hard Cattleya lover!

Most pleurothallids really like high humidity; 70% should be considered a minimum. Most originate originate in cloud forests in the Andes, where 100% humidity is not unusual. It's easiest to provide this humidity in an orchidarium, and the plants are generally small enough that you can put quite a large collection in there!

Though there is a great deal of diversity in this genus, most like cool temperatures that stay below 70°F (21C). If temperatures get too hot, they will quickly dry out, shrivel, and die; possibly in a matter of hours. The higher the light, the cooler the temperatures need to be, and vice versa. Most species like low-to-intermediate lighting; 700-1500 footcandles is reasonable. Most pleurothallids hate to dry out. Water as they approach dryness if you are able to provide plenty of humidity; keep them moist more consistently if the humidity is low.

Judging is done using Pleurothallis judging scale.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Significant species | Offsprings | Awards | Special characteristics |
| Pths. marthae | 2 | 4 AMs, 1 CHM |  |
| Pths. teaguei | 3 | 2 AMs, 1 HCC, 4 CCMs, 1 CCE, 1 CHM, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. gargantua | 4 | 2 AM, 3 HCCs |  |
| Pths. simulans | 0 | 1 AM, 1 HCC, 3 CCMs, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. palliolata | 1 | 2 HCCs, 3 CCMs, 1 CCE, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. cardiothallis | 0 | 3 AMs, 2 CCMs, 1 CHM, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. nuda | 1 | 1 AM, 2 HCCs, 1 CCM, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. allenii | 1 | 1 AM, 1 HCC, 3 CCMs, 1 CBR |  |
| Pths. bivalvis | 1 | 4 CBRs, 1 CCM, 1 CHM |  |

* Subgenus Aberrentia
* Subgenus Acianthera
  + Section Brachystachyae
  + Section Cryptophoranthae
  + Section Sicariae
    - Subsection Pectinatae
    - Subsection Sicariae
  + Section Tomentosae
  + Section Tricarinatae
* Subgenus Acuminatia
  + Section Acuminatae
  + Section Alatae
* Subgenus Aenigma
* Subgenus Ancipitia
  + Section Ancipitia
* Subgenus Andreettaea
* Subgenus Antilla
* Subgenus Apoda-Prorepentia
* Subgenus Arthrosia
* Subgenus Crocodeilanthe
* Subgenus Didactylus
* Subgenus Dracontia
* Subgenus Dresslera
* Subgenus Elongatia
* Subgenus Empusella
* Subgenus Kraenzlinella
* Subgenus Madisonia
* Subgenus Masdevalliantha
* Subgenus Mirabilia
* Subgenus Mirandia
* Subgenus Mixis
* Subgenus Mystax
* Subgenus Physothallis
* Subgenus Pleurobotryum
* Subgenus Pleurothallis
  + Section Abortivae
  + Section Pleurothallis
    - Subsection Acroniae
      * Series Acroniae
      * Series Amphygiae
    - Subsection Antenniferae
    - Subsection Longiracemosae
    - Subsection Macrophyllae- Fasciculatae
    - Subsection Macrophyllae-Racemosae
    - Subsection Perplexae
    - Subsection Pleurothallis
  + Section Truncatae
* Subgenus Proctoria
* Subgenus Pseudooctomeria
* Subgenus Pseudostelis
* Subgenus Restrepioidia
* Subgenus Rhynchopera
* Subgenus Rubellia
* Subgenus Sarracenella
* Subgenus Scopula
* Subgenus Specklinia
  + Section Cucumeres
  + Section Effusae
  + Section Hymenodanthae
    - Subsection Apodae-Caespitosae
    - Subsection Longicaulae
  + Section Mentosae
  + Section Muscariae
  + Section Muscosae
  + Section Tribulodes
  + Section Sylphia
* Subgenus Talpinaria
* Subgenus Tridelta
* Subgenus Uncifera
* Subgenus Unguella
* Subgenus Xenion

**BUILDING BLOCK DATA**

**Pleurothallis teaguei**Luer 1996

Synonym: Acronia teaguei (Luer) Luer 2005; Zosterophyllanthos teaguei (Luer) Szlach. & Kulak 2006

Found in Ecuador at elevations of 750 to 1550 meters as a large sized, warm to cool growing epiphyte with erect, stout ramicauls enveloped basally by 2 to 3, close tubular sheaths and another on the middle third and carrying a single, apical, horizontal to spreading, coriaceous, cordate-ovate, acute, basally sessile and deeply cordate leaf that blooms in the summer on a fascile of successive single flowered inflorescence arising through a reclining spathe and holding the flower close against the leaf base.



**Varieties*:*** *N/A*

**Awards**: 2 AMs, 1 HCC, 4 CCMs, 1 CCE, 1 CHM, 1 CBR

**Hybrids:** 3 known hybrids Pths. Dev Debrincat (x gargantua) (2007), Pths. Walnut Valley (x phymatodea) (2015), both registered by Ecuagenera and Pths. Anna Maria Botticelli (x nossax) (2015) registered by A. Valenza

**Reference:**

OrchidWiz Encyclopedia version 3.3

Orchid Plus Online

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