

BUYING ORCHIDS

1. Only buy small seedlings from a quality Nursery. They should grow their plants well and have up to date crosses. Buy three to five plants of each cross that you buy. Buying seedlings puts you right up with the latest available and on the same footing as the nurseries
2. Parents to be not over 30 years old. You need to be able to look up their family tree, see if their family has quality named orchids in their back- ground. If there are no similar plants in both family trees, it is called an outcross and the chances of quality offspring are not great. Selfings are not very good either for quality.offspring. Sibling crosses do produce some good offspring. (Rsc Goldenzelle “High Noon” x “Orange Pumpkin”)
3. Mericlones are not always good orchids. When you buy them they are already quite old. For instance, the plant is already six to seven years old when it is mericloned. When you flower it is four to five years older. The nurseries would be flowering seedlings from the original plant by this time. Depending on the number of mericlones made, (no more than 500), the quality can drop off.
4. When buying mature plants, try to get them in flower so you can see what you are getting. If they are divisions of known quality plants, not in flower, you have to rely on the nursery or growers honesty. Ask an experienced grower from your club for advice.
5. Quality orchids come at a price, and yes a lot are overpriced. If the price is over \$100 dollars, the plant would have to be well known. (Burdekin Bells, Chincogan, Burdekin Charm, Burdekin Dream, Mem. Gordon Vallance) and a lot of currently awarded mini cattleyas and non-exhibition cattleyas)
6. If the” clone” name is not in the catalogue or on the tag in the pot, ask the nursery or grower what it is. Rsc. Sylvia Fry “Supreme” “Bette” “Esse” are good parents, “Dundas” “Olga” etc., are not. Rsc. Island Charm “Carmela” “Sugar” are good parents; the other clones have not reproduced. There are a huge number of plants that are good parents, check out their progeny to see what quality they have bred, awards, prizes at shows etc. If a plant has been awarded, it will have a clone name, to set it apart from others of that cross. A lot of plants have clone names, just so the owner knows which plant it is in their collections, especially if they have others of the same cross, it does not mean that these plants have been awarded.
7. Mauve is very dominant colour. Want to change a colour use white. Changing to art shade and yellows is difficult because those crosses are usually not related. The range of colours that are coming out of minni Catt breeding has gone ahead dramatically in the last decade. Minni Catts are easy growing, flowers are fairly good quality and colour and they will flower at least a couple of times a year. They are a must have in the collection.

8. Spotted cats are very popular, very striking and usually multi flowered. The base colour and spotting can vary, but they are worth having a few in the collection.

9. Buying seedlings is really a gamble and the number of good ones that can win a show or receive an award are few and far between. But, when you do get one of these it is well worth the effort. Remember that all the orchids you see at meetings, shows, visitations and nurseries were all seedlings to start with.

10. When buying flowering size plants on visitations to other societies, or at society shows (other than nurseries) try to get them in flower so you can see what you are buying.

Hope the above helps growers to sort out how to buy additional plants.