

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Exploring, Explaining and Conserving the World of Tropical Plants

The Million Orchid Project:

Thanks for becoming part of our research team at Fairchild Garden! Your challenge is to grow and protect these rare orchids.

Bletia purpurea



Commonly called this Pine Pink, *Bletia purpurea* is native to pine rockland and cypress swamps and is threatened in the state of Florida. There are usually 3-5 light green leaves, a distinct bulb, and 3-80 pink to purple flowers. It flowers from December to March.

Planting and Care: Find a partially sunny spot. Remove the orchid from its pot, be sure not to break any roots. **Do not remove the soil from plant roots.** Dig a small hole and plant the root ball so that the roots are completely covered. Between October and February water the plant three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). If you wish, you may leave the plant in the pot, and water it heavily every other day. Standard garden fertilizer can be applied monthly to promote growth.

Encyclia tampensis (South Florida Butterfly Orchid)

Commonly called this South Florida Butterfly Orchid, *Encyclia tampensis* is native to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida. The flowering period is May-August with a peak in June. In Florida this orchid grows on a wide variety of native trees including live oak, slash pine, red maple, gum, bald cypress, buttonwood, pop ash, and pond apple.

Planting and Care: Select horizontal limbs that have good exposure to light. It is best to choose branches that are visible, but not reachable from the ground. Use a stepladder if possible. Apply large drops (1-2 cm in diameter) of Liquid Nails glue directly to the bark of the tree, spaced at least 10 cm apart. Allow the glue to harden for 15 to 30 minutes, until it has the consistency of sticky clay. Press the pseudobulb (base of leaves, above roots) into the drop of glue, allowing the roots to hang below the glue and contact the bark. Avoid embedding roots in the glue. For the first month water the plants thoroughly three times a week.



Oncidium ensatum



Commonly known as the Florida Oncidium or Dancing Lady, this orchid is distributed in tropical America, the Bahamas and extends into southern Florida. This species may occur in terrestrial habitats of rich humus in relatively dry hammocks, or as epiphytes at the base of cypress trees in wet forests.

Planting and Care: Find a partially sunny spot on your school grounds. Remove the orchid from the potting media, making sure not to break any roots. Do not remove any media that is adhered to the roots. Dig a small hole and plant the root ball so that the roots are completely covered. For the first month water the plants thoroughly three times a week. If you wish, you may leave the plant outside in a pot. Plants that are in a pots will need to be watered heavily every other day. Standard garden fertilizer can be applied monthly to promote growth.