



# THE MILLION ORCHID PROJECT

**Congratulations on your native orchid restoration kit! This package provides everything you need to establish your own population of Florida native orchids in your landscape.**



***Encyclia tampensis*:** Commonly called the butterfly orchid 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, mahogany, strangler fig, slash pine, bald cypress, buttonwood, and pond apple.

**Package contents:** 32 orchid seedlings (2 yrs. old), burlap twine, and planting instructions.

**Where to plant?** These orchids prefer tropical hardwood trees, avoiding smooth flaky bark species. Select horizontal limbs that have some shade from the afternoon sun. If possible choose branches that are visible so you can enjoy your plants. You can also plant directly on the trunks of trees and palm and preferably on the north or east face to avoid direct afternoon sun.

**How to plant?** Attach seedlings individually or in clusters of 2-4 orchids using sisal string or burlap twine (provided). Do not apply any of the sphagnum moss provided in the tray, doing so will hinder root attachment and cause the roots to stay too wet promoting root rot. Make sure the plants are tightly secured to the branch and any new root leads are in contact with the bark surface; take special care not to injure the new roots (see photo example below).



Other products such as plastic ties and monofilament can be used but these products are slow to deteriorate and are not biodegradable. You can also reinforce attachment using Liquid Nails glue (not



provided); apply small drops of glue directly to the bark of the tree, allow 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 (see photo).

**When to water?** Native orchids require little to no long term care once they become established on the tree. However watering is necessary during the root attachment phase. For the first month daily watering is required, after roots become attached to tree watering is not necessary. Using hose or misters thoroughly soak the orchid roots and surrounding bark. For best results allow roots to dry for 10-15 minutes and reapply water. Plants that are in a pots will need to be watered when the media becomes completely dried.

**Should I fertilize?** Standard garden fertilizer can be applied monthly to promote growth. We suggest ½ strength (20-20-20) fertilizer or a commercial orchid fertilizer.

To learn more about other ways to participate in The Million Orchid Project, Dr. Jason Downing; [jdowning@fairchildgarden.org](mailto:jdowning@fairchildgarden.org) or 305.667.1651, ext. 3354.