



# THE MILLION ORCHID PROJECT

With the help of students and local community, Fairchild has been generating large quantities of native orchids with the goal to re-establish them within South Florida landscapes.



***Oncidium ensatum***, “Florida Oncidium” is native terrestrial orchid that grows in densely shaded, hammocks and dry grassy, rocky slopes. It can also be partially epiphytic, growing within debris on the bases of trees. It is distributed in tropical America, the Bahamas and extends into southern Florida.

**Where to plant?** These orchids prefer shady spots with mulch or a rich organic layer. An ideal planting location is at the base of a shady hardwood tree or in a flower garden. If you wish, you may leave the plant outdoors in a pot permanently.

**How to plant?** Find a shady spot in your landscape. Carefully remove the orchid from the pot, making sure not to break any roots. Keep ½ of potting media that is adhered to the roots. Dig a small hole and plant the root ball so that the roots are completely covered. Apply a thin layer of mulch or hummus. After planting water the plants thoroughly. Plants that are in a pots will need to be watered when the media becomes completely dried.



**When to water?** Native orchids require little to no long term care once they become established in the ground. However watering is necessary during establishment phase. For the first month daily watering is highly recommended, after plants are growing new leads, watering is not necessary. Using a hose or misters thoroughly soak the orchid roots and surrounding soil. 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?** Native orchids require no fertilizer once they become established on a tree. 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, please contact Dr. Jason Downing; [jdowning@fairchildgarden.org](mailto:jdowning@fairchildgarden.org) or 305.667.1651, ext. 3354.