

## Bi-Foliate Cattleyas, The Old and The New

By Jeff Glover

Bi-foliate Cattleya is as you could imagine a very wide ranging and encompassing term. I first encountered it in a Show Schedule many years ago when starting judging. Despite it causing some judges much consternation and regardless of several suggestions to be more specific with this class, the society in question persisted in keeping it in its schedule for decades. Taken literally, this meant that any Cattleya hybrid intrageneric or intrageneric, providing it had 'two leaves' could be judged within this one section/class. Most of the 'bi-foliate hybrid cattleyas', grown and benched those days were of what I consider as the



'leggy' or taller growing type, stemming from species such as *C. intermedia*, *C. amethystoglossa*, *C. skinneri*, and *C. bowringiana*. Consequently, they could be slotted within the desired 'bi-foliate' section and in reality, many plants often shown 20-30 years ago did indeed fit this descriptor. They included primary hybrids such as *C. Interglossa*, (*C. Intermedia* x *C. amethystoglossa*), and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation hybrids such as *C. Penny Kuroda*, *C. Chocolate Drop* and *C. Caudebec*, which interestingly all share *C. guttata* in their profile. The problem was, that while acceptable to be grouped collectively under this classification, there was vast variations in colour, flower size and floriferousness. The only saving grace for the judges in this particular show schedule was that there was also a cattleya-cluster section which allowed some leeway to manoeuvre.

### **C. Interglossa**

However, much has changed since then and subsequent breeding began to see newer 'bifoliate cattleyas' appear at shows. Most notable has been those that can be loosely described as the 'spotted types and indeed while still derived again from bifoliate species such as *C. guttata*, syn. *C. leopoldii*, but; by in particular the widespread use of *C. aelandiae* which is shorter in growth habit than the previously mentioned species, some true classics such as *C. Jungle Gem* have resulted. Yet, while this cultivar has been the exception size-wise, in the main the outcome has been a new range of 'leggy-spotty Catts'.



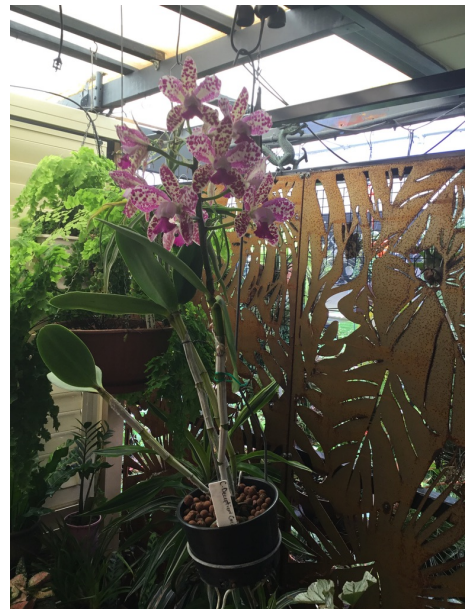
***C. aelandiae***

Hence, the need has arisen for inclusion of a class in show schedules by most societies to cover this type of cattleya breeding as the old collective of 'Bi-floiate' is definitely now too broad of a classification. The arrival of these types heralded a booming interest in these eye-catching and relatively easy to grow and flower orchids. With many nurseries devoting whole breeding programs to this line of orchid. For example, the cultivars bred and registered by the Maidment family of



**C. Jungle Gem**

Queensland's Aranbeem Orchids, are readily recognisable by their continuous use of the Grex Epithet of 'Deception.....', in almost all of their RHS registered plants. This particular type of Cattleya is very easy and rewarding to grow and flower here in Central Queensland. They are heavy feeders and regular weekly fertilizing and watering during late Spring and Summer will produce strong canes and plenty of flowers through their extended flowering season of Autumn/Winter and early Spring. Regular mixes of bark and charcoal suit them best as a growing medium. Continuous breeding of new seedlings makes them readily available through nurseries, and divisions of mature plants from other collectors are often seen on the sales bench. One drawback if any, apart from the 'Jungle Gem' and other *C. aclandiae* derived hybrids, is their size; they do readily grow into large specimens and hence require a bit of space, which can be problematic. But I consider, regardless of this, well worth adding to your collection.



**C. Deception Cacique**