

# The Amazing Orchids

## *Background*

Nature's most fascinating flower family - Orchidaceae (the Orchids) - blooms in some 28,000 different species of every imaginable color and shape. The orchid flowers are like tiny organic sculptures of amazing grace and beauty, some of which unbelievably mimic objects and animals of the natural world.

It should come as no surprise that these exotic flowers grow most abundantly in tropical zones - South America, Africa, and parts of Asia - yet, orchids are found in all parts of the globe. The majority of orchids are epiphytes (generally called "air plants") and most species give off fragrances to attract pollinating insects. The range of fragrances is astounding: chocolate, honey, mint, cinnamon, and even beer and carrion! Some even give off the pheromone scent of female bees to attract male bees.

Orchids represent cities and regions in China and India and are the national flowers of countries such as Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Singapore, and Venezuela. The gallery below highlights just a few of the amazing blooms of this whole fascinating family.

## *Gallery of Fascinating Orchids*



*Monkey Face Orchid*



*White Egret Orchid*



*Cradling Baby Orchid*



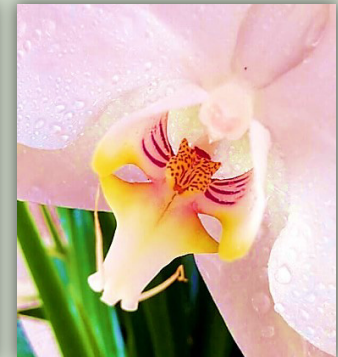
*Ballerina Orchid*



*Dancing Lady Orchid*



*Flying Duck Orchid*



*Tiger Face Orchid*



*Dutchman's Shoes Orchid*



*Flying Moths Orchid*



*Lady Slipper Orchid*