

Latouria Type Dendrobium Orchids



Dendrobium spectabile

Dendrobiums of the Latouria type includes about 50 species distributed from the Philippines to Samoa, but without doubt the centre of distribution is Papua New Guinea, with about 45 species. They are epiphytes of rainforest trees from sea level to high altitudes, usually in areas of year-round rainfall. The plant size ranges from small to very large and the long-lasting flowers vary similarly in size.

The pseudobulbs (pronounced sou-doh-boll-bz) are close together and although mostly club-shaped, vary greatly in shape, some being stout and others long & slender. The leaves lack a sheathing base and are borne near the apex of the stem. The inflorescences arise from near the apex, often appearing terminal, and have a few, rather fleshy flowers. The lip is prominently 3-lobed, with a prominent raised callus.

Some large flowered species are among the most spectacular in the subtribe and members of the section are becoming popular in cultivation.

'Dendrohiuna & Its Relatives'

W. Lavarack, W. Harris & G. Stocker

Many Latouria types have long lasting flowers - e.g. D. Spectabile 7-8 weeks.

Culture: Most require 50-70% shade or if grown outdoors, early morning & late afternoon sun/dappled shade.

Fertilize & water well when in growth. Keep dryer in winter but do not allow to dry completely in the cool months - if kept too wet there may be problems with rotting off - remove plant from pot, use fungicide (cheapest is diluted Condy's crystals) over plant including roots, and repot in fresh medium with improved drainage. Make sure it has good ventilation.

Some orchid hunters remained tight lipped about the habitats & conditions in which orchids they found grew. This was to avoid competition and probably to keep up the popular 'mystery' feeling of orchids, how difficult it was to grow them, and no doubt keep up their prices in UK.

However in 1906 a scrupulously honest collector reported *'Many of the natives take the small plants I reject back to their villages and plant them. Some tie them on trees, others seem to fix them on rocks and again others simply plant them in the ground like cabbages. And the result is not by any means discouraging especially in the first two methods where the men plaster the roots over with mud or cow dung. The plants do well and make good growths and I always found the mud and specially the rotten cow dung full of roots.'*

Latouria Dendrobiums include: (those worth trying in South East Queensland)

D. aberrans, D.alexandrae, D.amphigenium, D.atroviolaceum, D.bifalce, D.biloculare, D.convolutum, D.cruttwellii, D.dendrocolloides, D.engae, D.euryanthum, D.eximium, D.finisterrae, D.forbesii, D.johnsoniae, D.kauldorumii, D.Kip's Special' (this is a *natural hybrid between D. rhodostictum & D.ruginosum from Bougainville Island*)
D.macrophyllum, D.mayandyi, D.otaguroanum, D.polysema, D.punamense, D.rhodostictum, D.rigidifolium, D.shiraishii, D.spectabile, D.tapiniense; D.terrestre, D.woodsii, D.sp.aff.D.subquadratum.

From: Orchids In Your Garden

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