

COLLECTING HYBRIDS

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The pleasure of collecting different orchids, particularly hybrids, is a pastime enjoyed by an ever growing number of people. Some of us are very dedicated to the task, while others attend a show once a year and buy whatever catches their eye.

For those who buy seedlings, there is the regular event each year - of the first flowering of those purchases from previous years. This is one of the real joys derived from having a collection that has these new gems appearing regularly.

As a fairly avid collector of orchids, I have spent my share of time sorting through the trays of seedlings wherever I found them. When I found something I liked, I always bought two. I have no idea why I began doing this, but I always have and it has paid dividends many times over.

Genetically there are a huge array of possibilities available in every flask of seedlings, so buying more than one has often produced two very different plants. The first photograph shows two versions of *Dendrobium* Bellinger River. These two were in the same pot and flowered for the first time together. At first I didn't believe my eyes, but there is no doubt that they are from the same flask.

I have included a number of photographs of one *D. speciosum* intervarietal cross, 'Windermere' x 'Daylight Moon', which I saw exhibited at Kempsey this year. Every one of the variations pictured was an excellent orchid, and every one was different. As these shots indicate, there are differences in flower size, shape, spike habit and colour.

So next time you are looking at a seedling that has not yet flowered, resist the urge to say "I've got that". The truth is that you have a sibling, that's all you can be sure of. Exciting isn't it!



Dendrobium Bellinger River - siblings from the same pot.

