



ORCHIDS WE SHOULD ALL GROW **by Roy Kreugor**

PROSTHECHEA GREEN HORNET

This particular little gem is a primary hybrid of two well known and loved “cockle shell” orchids, cochlea and lanceifolia. The family tree is a little more complicated with name changes in mid stream.

First members of the Epidendrum family, this group was moved to the Encyclia heading when epis and encyclias were split. Later, the separate genus Prosthechea was created for the “cockle shell” type orchids. Today, there are about 100 species in this group, found mostly from Florida to Brazil.

The plants are sympodial and mostly epiphytes. The distinction all carry is the shell shaped lip, often striped like a cockle shell, and always found at the top of the flower.

Green Hornet is a primary hybrid (first generation cross of two species) of Psh cochlea X Psh lanceifolia. It is an easy plant to grow in cultivation, easier than either parent. It takes its shape and size from cochlea, and its color, green from lanceifolia. Plants can grow to 24” when mature with a typical size of 12-18”. Flowering season is spring to fall, although some will flower almost continuously.

Flowers are borne on slender inflorescences up to 18” tall with 4-12 individual flowers opening almost simultaneously. Flowers are typically 3-4” long with narrow pedals and

sepals and a shell shaped striped lip. The lip is a dark maroon on the outer side with a cream inner side striped with fine maroon markings. Pedals and sepals are a light green. Each bloom lasts from several weeks to a month.

Specimen sized plants are easy to develop since the plant is a vigorous grower. Plants can be mounted or grown in a basket or pot. As with many of the Cattleya related species, I prefer to grow mine in baskets. This allows for heavier more frequent watering and feeding with less risk of root rot or medium deterioration since it dries more quickly and thoroughly.

The plant likes bright light and regular feeding while in growth. It sometimes needs a brief rest period of less food and water in late fall to early winter. Grow it outdoors in bright filtered light or indoors on a bright windowsill.