



ORCHIDS WE SHOULD ALL GROW COLMANARA WILDCAT

By Roy Krueger

Back in the late 1950's and early '60's, orchid breeders were fascinated by the complex Oncidae alliances that they could create. Many were crosses of warm and cool growing varieties in the hope that they could be induced to grow in a broader range of conditions.

One such inter generic cross was the merging of Oncidium, Miltonopsis, and Odontoglossum. The cross was named Colmanara after the famous English breeder, Sir Jeremiah Coleman.

In 1992, Rod McLellan registered his cross of Ons. Rustic Bridge X Onc. Crownborough and named it Colm. Wildcat.

Like most other Colmanara's, Wildcat is a cool to intermediate grower. Wintertime lows can comfortably reach 55-60 degrees. Summer daytime highs should be kept below 80-85 degrees F. These conditions can be met even in West Central Florida if you grow them in bright shade and high humidity with good air movement.

Wildcat is a complex cross, made up of seven or eight species. Colors of the parents cover the spectrum from crisp clear yellows, browns, mahogany, and ranging through heavy waxy maroons and reds.

Since its introduction in 1992, Wildcat has received 49 awards worldwide. The colors have ranged from mahogany to yellows with stripes and spots.

Wildcat grows best in a plastic or unfired clay pot in a medium to fine mix. It should be watered thoroughly and then allowed to approach dry before re-wetting. It should not be allowed to dry hard. Fertilize it weakly weekly with your favorite fertilizer. A bit of time release fertilizer in spring is beneficial. Just remember, like other Oncidae, Colmanara's have relatively fine roots, so don't overload with time release or you will burn the fine roots.

Wildcat is typically a fall to winter bloomer. It puts up spikes of up to 50 blooms 1 1/2-2" in size. There is some modest branching of the spikes. Flowers are relatively long lasting, three weeks or so, longer if the temperature is on the cool side.

If you have good luck with other Oncidums, Wildcat should be a relatively easy plant for you to grow.