

ORCHIDS WE SHOULD ALL GROW

By Roy Krueger



EPC LIME SHERBERT X B NODOSA

I've often said that the first orchid that a novice grower should purchase is a *Brassavola nodosa*. It's hardy, forgiving and a willing boomer. On top of that, it emits a delightful citrus aroma.

B. nodosa is also a prolific parent with over 420 primary hybrids registered with it as a parent, and countless thousands of *nodosa* hybrids as registered parents as well. Many of the offspring also impart the easy growing characteristics of the *nodosa* parent. One of these is our subject today.

When crossed with Epc. Lime Sherbert, the offspring shows the best of both parents as well as the easy to grow feature that makes both parents so desirable.

Epc. Lime Sherbert is a cross of a small *Cattleya forbesii* and *Prosthetic mariea*. *Forbesii* is a somewhat difficult to grow bifoliate Catt. It is somewhat cooler growing than most *Cattleya*'s and is typically found at higher altitudes than are found in Florida. *Mairea*, on the other hand is a warm grower and a prolific bloomer.

The offspring, a yet unregistered hybrid starts blooming in a 1 1/2" pot, still a seedling. Then it explodes with growth and rapidly becomes a specimen sized plant.

The plant inherits the best of each parent. Forbesii imparts a beautiful yellow green color. Mariea imparts delicate long petals and seals. Nodosa, as is typical of its hybrids, impart the spade shape lip.

This particular cross is a cross of 2 4N parents. The tetraploidy shows itself in large robust flowers and hearty plants.

The plant blooms in September/October. As it matures, there is a possibility of a spring bloom as well.

The plant needs a mix that drains quickly if grown in a pot. It also will grow well in a basket with little or no mix or mounted on cork or tree fern slats.

I grow this plant in a clay pot with a mix of bark and inorganic like lava rock or stalite. As it matures, I will probably switch it to all inorganic mix. I fertilize weekly with a 13-2-13 with CalMag. During the growing season, the mix is 2 tsp/gallon. In fall and winter, cut the mix to 1/2 strength and when it gets really cold in January, cut back to once a month.

Like its parents, nodosa and mariea, this hybrid is relatively disease resistant. I us systemic fungicide early in spring and again in June. Once a year with a systemic insecticide is sufficient.