

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Orchids in New York City



Orchids are in bloom in New York City!

Evidences of spring in New York are everywhere, there are robins in the trees, showy daffodils, tulips and hyacinths bloom with wild abandon in the city's parks and in sidewalk gardens, and **Rockefeller Center** once again played host to **The 25th New York International Orchid Show**, [www.gnyos.org](http://www.gnyos.org), from April 12 &ndash;17, 2005.



No other flower seems to capture the hearts and appreciation of audiences everywhere as that of the exotic orchid with its stunning showgirl flowers that range in size from tiny to enormous, and come in a striking rainbow of colors. Legend has it that witches used the orchids and their tuberous roots to prepare magic potions; they used fresh roots to promote love and dried roots to promote passion. 17th century herbalists called the orchids Satyrios, in reference to the Greek Mythology God, Satyros. Victorians highly prized the mysterious orchid and went on orchid hunts with the zeal of big-game safari hunters to find rare and exotic specimens. Today, "hunting" for a prize orchid is infinitely easier with growers coming to the New York International Orchid Show from Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and throughout the United States including as far away as Hawaii, to bring their "finds" to the new breed of collector.



People often think that orchids have almost "diva" qualities, beautiful but often temperamental. Their exotic names like Brassias, Cattleyeas, Cymbidiums, Dendrochilum, Dendrobium, Lycastes, Masadevallias, Miltoniopsis, Oncidiums, Paphiopedilums, Phaius, Phalaenopsis, Phragmipedium, Pleurothallids, and Vandas perhaps contribute to their allure and star status, but the truth is that orchids are much more abundant than one would think. Orchids belong to the Lily order, and can be found on every continent except Antarctica, and are equally at home in the desert, in the tropics, or in a swamp. The major consideration for indoor home orchids though remains in providing the right lighting (Low light: North, East or West window with indirect light, Medium light: East or West window with some direct sunlight, or Bright light: South facing window with direct light) depending on the type of orchid you select, as well as providing them with the right amount of watering, the right amount of fertilizer, and the right temperature, okay, perhaps they are a bit diva-like, but they are definitely worth it when they dazzle you with their spectacularly beautiful blooms that last for several weeks.

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I attended the show on April 15, 2005, and found it to be a dizzying array of exotic beauties that seemed to fascinate and mesmerize the audience, as they stood before each of the orchids with slightly glazed eyes or tried to capture the orchid's beauty with their cameras. I know the feeling, as I too, was quite caught up in the moment, as I took photo after photo of the astonishing flowers. Besides the endless orchid displays, there was also Ikebana floral arrangements, which were showstoppers with their creativity and design. In addition to the orchid show, vendors were on hand to sell a heady assortment of orchids, planters, books, antique orchid prints, original orchid paintings, prints, cards, clothing, mugs, and other orchid related gardening souvenirs. I went home with my head filled with orchids and eagerly wait to return to the 26th New York International Orchid Show next year.

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