

***Brassophronitis* Edna (1960's)**

vs.

***Brassocattleya* Edna (2020's)**

The orchid world is still evolving, and in more ways than one. Looking at four photos, two of one of the original plants from this primary hybrid, and then two more from a recent remake, 5 different story lines relevant to orchids came to mind.

1. Some 25 years ago, I obtained an original division of what was then known as ***Brassophronitis* Edna 'Summit'** from Albert Tamashausk. Albert grows under lights in an underground cave, so intermediate/cool growers do very well under his conditions. A year or two later, Albert brought his plant to a society meeting, and I took a photo (under artificial light).



Around that same time my own plant bloomed in the greenhouse. I took another photo there in natural light.



The differences between the two flowers are partly

a result of different growing conditions. The different light sources primarily impact on the flower colors.

2. When I researched this hybrid, I found that it was registered by C. Shaw in 1962. This leads me to believe that 'Summit' originated from the original cross (or a very early remake), since the defunct Lager & Hurrell nursery in Summit went out of business in 1975 (and we know that this plant originated there).

Back in the 1950's cultivation of *Sophranitis coccinea* was still a bit of a mystery, so it is not surprising that the original cross was (*Brassavola nodosa* x *Sophranitis coccinea*) according to the registration with the RHS.

3. In 2011 the taxonomists transferred all *Sophranitis* species to the *Cattleya* genus. Thus, what used to be a ***Brassophronitis* (= *Bnts.*)** became a ***Brassocattleya* (= *Bc.*)** overnight.
4. Over the intervening 60-65 years, a great deal of work has been done to improve on the quality of many species, including *C. coccinea*, through line breeding. Some nurseries have produced 7 or more generations in this effort.



AOS award photo

'Cara' 80 pt AM/AOS in 1975

Modern *C. coccinea* resulting from the line breeding efforts.

This photo was taken ca. 2020. It is hard to believe that this is the same species, as the one awarded in 1975.



In 2025 Quintal Farms in Hawaii released a new population of **Bc. Edna**, based on the higher quality *C. coccinea* now available. Also, since the cultural requirements of this species are now understood, they produced the reciprocal cross = (*C. coccinea* x *B. nodosa*). While I do not know for certain, I would not be surprised if they used 4N forms of both parents.

I purchased a dozen plants from this cross, and have selected two I wish to keep:

Bc. Edna 'Fair Orchids'



While the flowers do fade a little as they mature, this generation has significantly stronger color than the original plant.

And finally, when I was almost sold out, the most amazing flower appeared on one of the smallest plants. It should be noted that with the seed pod produced by the smaller parent (*coccinea*), the plants are blooming on smaller stature plants than the old

'Summit' generation.

Bc. Edna 'Akhtar'



These photos illustrate not only how improved many species are by now, but also how much a modern remake can improve on hybrids that were originally produced 50-150 years ago.

I should add, that a great many *Brassavola nodosa* hybrids are coming out of Hawaii now. While most have fairly open flowers, these plants are easy to bloom, and many will bloom twice a year. Another recent selection **Rby. Isabella Cano 'Fair Orchids'** = (*Rlc. Taeko Tamaki* x *B. nodosa*):

