

Guarianthes are Cattleyas too!

Back in 2003, the multifloral bifoliate Cattleyas from Central America were banished from the Cattleya genus, when they were renamed **Guarianthe**. I do not recall whether this was based on a previously published name, or whether it was a new designation due to some taxonomic nitpicking.

More recently, Sophronitis and many of the larger Laelias were transferred into the Cattleya genus. However, when that 'lumping' of species took place, it did not extend to those stashed away in Guarianthe.

Currently there are 3, 4 or 5 species in this genus (depending upon which taxonomist you consult), plus one natural hybrid:

Gur. aurantiaca - a medium sized plant with orange to red flowers, some with spotted flowers. 20 years ago many plants self-pollinated without ever opening the flowers, but this trait has been eliminated through line breeding. A yellow color form is known.



Gur. bowringiana - a medium to large plant with clusters of pink flowers in the fall. Coerulea, alba & semi-alba color forms are known. Full color form range photos to follow on the next page.

Gur. deckeri - used to be known as a fall blooming variety of skinneri (skinneri-autumnalis). Some taxonomists still consider it to be a skinneri, despite differences in flower structure, flatter pseudo-bulbs and the different blooming season.



Gur. skinneri - a fairly large plant with clusters of pink flowers in the spring. Coerulea and alba forms are known.



Gur. patinii - considered to be the same as skinneri-autumnalis by most taxonomists?

I have not seen this plant in person.



Gur. x guatemalensis - this is a natural hybrid between *aurantiaca* & *skinneri*.



These plants do well under typical *Cattleya* conditions, and can tolerate considerable neglect. We had one *Gur. bowringiana* from at Tewkesbury Orchids, which had not been repotted for some 6-8 years. Yet, it is still growing full size pseudobulbs and blooming well.

Between Kyle Saunders collection and some photos taken at club meetings, we have photos of most color forms. Since this was written in the middle of *bowringiana* season, the following photos are all of that species:

Here the very dark '**Summit**' from the defunct Lager & Hurrell nursery.



'Black Prince'

This is one of the best of the standard color form. This plant is still used extensively in line breeding of this species.



The pure alba forms have not yet acquired the same full flowers we can find in the colored form, but continued line breeding will hopefully improve on this in the future.



A semi-alba form ('One In A Million') was discovered a few years ago. Here a first bloom seedling from a selfing of this color form. This plant has surprisingly good flower shape.



Here is an all pink flower, lacking the dark spot in the lip normally seen in this species. Line breeding should improve on the shape.



And finally the *coerulea* form, which is available with very good flower shape too.



Most of these photos are from young plants. Only '**Summit**' shows blooming of a mature plant. 6-10 blooms seem to be the norm, but I have seen select plants producing 15+ flowers per inflorescence.