



## Growing Orchids in the Garden

**John Moye**

*From the February 2004 issue of the Study Group Newsletter.*

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Many species of orchids are equally at home grown as garden plants and can be used to complement other plants or as specimens in their own right. In some instances plants so grown out perform those grown in pots. Where to plant an orchid in the garden depends on the type of plant available, most *Dendrobium kingianum* or *D.speciosum* type plants and hybrids grow well in an open environment. Select an area which receives sunlight for part of the day at least (avoiding strong afternoon sun) and that receives maximum sunlight in late summer-autumn. The dappled light under an open crowned tree is ideal.

Create a rocky area by removing some soil and infilling with blue metal or crushed rock, larger rocks are then placed randomly on this base with spaces filled with smaller rocks and blue metal. Repeat until desired height and shape is achieved and maximum drainage assured. Cover the mass with 50-50 blue metal and 1cm treated pine bark and surround the plants in their desired planting position with this mix also. Water plants regularly until established, depending on area's normal rainfall. I give my plants a light application of liquid fertilizer on a regular basis.

Both species named above and their hybrids are suitable for garden cultivation *D.kingianum* plants come in a variety of pinks, while *D.x gracillimum* (*D.speciosum* x *D.gracilicaule*) has yellow flowers and *D.suffusum* (*D.gracilicaule* x *D.kingianum*) flowers vary from lime green to whitish. Any combination of these plants will put on a stunning display in the Spring lasting 3-4 weeks. Plants known as *D.speciosum* and its several varieties are equally at home grown as epiphytes, simply tie the plant using fishing line or twine onto a rainforest type tree (one that doesn't shed its bark). In time new roots will attach the plant to the tree and this material can be removed. N.B: all epiphytic and lithophytic orchids are protected species, when purchasing these plants ensure the mandatory "protected plant" label is attached.