

RESEARCHERS DEVELOP NEW ORANGE PHALENOPSIS

A sprig of the “Orange Lover” variety of moth orchid developed by the Council of Agriculture’s Kaohsiung District Agricultural Research and Extension Station.

Using methods of distant hybridization and embryo rescue, Taiwan’s Greater Kaohsiung’s Agricultural Research and Extension Station introduced an orange-color gene from Vanda orchids into moth orchids, and has developed new varieties of pure orange colored moth orchids.

The station has already developed more than 50 combinations by hybridizing moth orchids with the orange color genes from vanda orchids.

With the developed variety “Orange Lover” successfully registered at the Royal Horticultural Society in 2012, three other types of orange moth orchids — the “Orange Girl,” the “Orange Cinderella” and the “Orange Venus” — have recently been approved by the organization, marking the start of a new chapter for Taiwan as “moth orchid kingdom,” the station said.

Station researcher Tsai Chi-chu (蔡奇助) said the moth orchid is one of the nation’s most important agricultural export products, with exports worth more than NT\$100 million (US\$3.33 million) a year since 2012.

Taiwan faces competition from Europe, China and Southeast Asia, especially with the Netherlands expanding efforts to collect and cross breed over the past decade, he said, adding that the Netherlands’ advanced cultivating skills and comprehensive

marketing strategy has allowed it to become the largest moth orchid sprout producer in the world.

Moreover, Tsai said the pure orange-colored moth orchid is a cross-bred variety made through the station's "orchid cross-breeding technique service platform," and the platform is expected to also assist the industry to overcome obstacles in the process of hybridizing to develop new, unique moth orchid varieties.

The genome complexity of these varieties is high and they are difficult to breed using traditional hybridization methods, so there is no fear that companies in the Netherlands can produce similar varieties, he said.

Tsai added that the new varieties are expected to be unique in the market, and unlikely to suffer price competition. ●

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AN ALL-IRELAND POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2015-2020 is currently being developed. It is being led by the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the Pollination Ecology Research Group in TCD. The Action Plan provides an important framework to bring together pollinator initiatives across the island of Ireland, and is the start of a process by which we can collectively take positive steps to protect Irish pollinators and the service they provide into the future. The plan outlines actions necessary under a number of keys areas: data needs, research needs, policy needs, education and communication needs, and site based actions. A steering group, representative of key stakeholders, will oversee publication and implementation of the plan which will go out for a two month public consultation phase in January-February 2015. A one-day **All-Ireland Pollinator Symposium** will be held in Waterford on the 17 February 2015. This meeting will present the plan and provide opportunity for public engagement. There will also be a series of talks on how best to move forward on specific actions. It is hoped that all those with an interest in Irish pollinators and their conservation will attend.

To register, please visit the National Biodiversity Data Centre event page (<http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/home-page/event-registration/>)
The registration fee is €10

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