

RECENTLY IN FLOWER IN THE NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS***Dendrochilum arachnites* 'yellow'**

Common Name The Spider *Dendrochilum* [refers to the flowers shape]

Synonyms *Acordium arachnites* (Rchb. f.) Rolfe 1904; *Platyclinis arachnites* Rolfe 1904

First described in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* weekly (1882) I. 256 as a 'curious botanical species with bulbs like little gherkins ultimately furrowed, and exceeding an inch in length'. It then goes on to describe the flower, leaves and structure of the plant. According to the *Chronicle* it was first introduced by Mr. Stuart Low from the Philippine Islands. Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach (Rchb. f. for short) describes the plant he has as a 'nice living plant at hand, but I am afraid the novelty will create no sensation in the horticultural world'.

Found only in The Philippines at elevations of 600 to 2300 meters often in bright light as a small sized, warm to cool growing epiphyte with 2" [5 cm] between each, rambling, wrinkled, ovoid pseudobulb carrying a lanceolate (ribbon like) distinctly three veined leaf. Blooms are yellowish approximately 2 cm in size with a soft/faint smell.

There can be up to thirty arching inflorescence per plant, born at the apex of the pseudobulb.

This orchid can be grown in a cool or intermediate glasshouse with medium to bright light, but no direct sunlight. *D. arachnites* will grow fast and take up little space. It can tolerate temperature changes

Pot with fine bark and perlite or sphagnum moss. Plant prefers dry periods so once a week watering is probably sufficient, leaving it to dry between watering and to avoid water logging. Reduce watering during the winter months. Feed regularly during the growing season.

The genus *Dendrochillum* was first described by Carl Blume in 1825. *Dendrochillum* is one of the largest genera with approximately 270 species described, of which under thirty are available in nurseries so maybe Reichenbach was right all those years ago!!! Nevertheless *D. arachnites* will give copious blooms for the dedicated grower.

**MARIE HOURIGAN**

Overheard at the Dublin Orchid Fair:

“Feed? We do not feed orchids; we provide nutrients that are utilized to manufacture food.”





Dendrochilum arachnites

Insert: close-up