



Super Floral Retailing has created this page for the education of store-level employees. To download a reprintable PDF, please go to www.superfloralretailing.com and select "Current Issue."

oncidium



Photo courtesy of McLellan Botanicals

Oncidium spp. 'Gower Ramsey'
Dancing-lady orchid, Dancing-doll orchid, Butterfly orchid

BOTANICAL NAME

Oncidium spp. (on-SID-ee-um)

COMMON NAMES

Dancing-lady orchid, Dancing-doll orchid, Butterfly orchid

DESCRIPTION

Most *Oncidium* orchids are found in sprays with dozens of delicate florets that are 1 inch to 1.5 inches across blooming along a central branching stem.

COLORS

The most common *Oncidiums* are mostly

yellow with brown speckles although there are some species that have red, maroon, green and white colorings.

VASE LIFE

Consumers can enjoy *Oncidium* sprays for up to three weeks if they remain on the stems and in water. If the flowers are used in corsages, they will last for two to three days. Lasting quality also will depend on the variety and the care and handling the flowers receive.

many species

The *Oncidium* genus has more than 650 species. They are among the most commonly encountered orchids in the retail flower trade today.

availability

Oncidiums are available year-round from world markets.

vase-life extenders

TEMPERATURE Keep *Oncidiums* at temperatures between 55 F and 60 F. Blackening can occur if the flowers are refrigerated below 50 F. Avoid excessive heat and drafts.

WATER Frequent, light misting is beneficial, but avoid standing droplets of water on the flowers.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Oncidiums* show a low sensitivity to ethylene gas.

of note

PROCESSING If the flowers appear limp or wilted after you unpack them, submerge them in tepid water for 10 minutes to rehydrate them before processing as usual.

DESIGN TIPS *Oncidiums* in sprays form a linear or filler look for designing, and the individual florets can be used as form flowers in corsages, hairpieces and other diminutive designs.

CONSUMER CARE Advise customers that *Oncidiums* do best in locations with high humidity and good air movement.



Oncidium spp.—Dancing-lady orchid, Dancing-doll orchid, Butterfly orchid



Photo courtesy of McLellan Botanicals

Oncidium spp. 'Bartley Swartz'
Dancing-lady orchid, Dancing-doll orchid, Butterfly orchid

quality checklist

BLOOMS Check for signs of discoloration on petals, which indicates old flowers or flowers that have been exposed to low temperatures.

fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME "*Oncidium*" is from the Greek word "onkos," meaning "tumor" or "swelling," referring to the warty callus of the lip of the florets.

FAMILY These beautiful spray orchids come from the largest family of plants, the *Orchidaceae*, which has 600 to 800 genera and 17,000 to 18,000 species native to all parts of the globe. Relatives include *Cymbidiums*, *Dendrobiums* (Singapore orchids), *Phalaenopses* (moth orchids) and *Paphiopedilums* (lady's-slipper orchids).

HOME SWEET HOME *Oncidium* orchids have origins in many parts of the world, including tropical Central and South America.

HISTORY The genus was established in 1800 by Swedish botanist Olaf Swartz, who chose *Oncidium variegatum* as the original name. **sfr**

Some information provided by:
Aloha Orchid Nursery, www.alohaorchid.com
Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifeflowers.org
Flowers and Plants Association, www.flowers.org.uk
Kauai Orchids

Reach "Cut Flower of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.