

A New Natural Hybrid From Eastern Cuba

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ABSTRACT

A new natural hybrid, *Encyclia xosmentii* Sauleda & Esperon, a cross of *Encyclia hamiltonii* Sauleda & Esperon and *Encyclia moebusii* H. Ditr. is described.

In early 2011 at a meeting of the St. Augustine Orchid Society, Marv Ragan of Orange Park, Florida, exhibited a plant labeled *Encyclia pyriformis* (Lindl.) Schltr. He had purchased the plant as a seedling from Hamlyn Orchids of Jamaica. The seed came from a plant in eastern Cuba. The plant resembled *Encyclia hamiltonii* Sauleda & Esperon but the flowers were slightly smaller and with purple lips. At that time *E. hamiltonii* had not yet been described. All of the plants of *E. hamiltonii* from eastern Cuba were being identified as *E. pyriformis*, a species restricted to western Cuba. Plants with the purple lips have been found on several occasions in eastern Cuba where *E. hamiltonii* and *Encyclia moebusii* H. Ditr. are sympatric.

Mujica & Gonzalez (2015) list *E. hamiltonii* as a synonym of *Encyclia phoenicea* (Lindl.) Neumann. *Encyclia hamiltonii* is not a synonym or is it in any way related to *E. phoenicea* as Sauleda & Esperon (2013) have unequivocally demonstrated in the paper describing this species. *Encyclia hamiltonii* grows sympatrically with *Encyclia moebusii*. In the population plants are found with purple lips, which are intermediate between the two species. For this reason we are describing these plants as a new natural hybrid.

***Encyclia xosmentii* Sauleda and Esperon, hyb. nov.**

Encyclia hamiltonii Sauleda & Esperon X *Encyclia moebusii* H. Ditr.

Type: Ex hort. *Ragan s.n.*, 2011. From cultivation. Cultivated by Marv Ragan of Orange Park, Florida from a seedling purchased from Hamlyn Orchids of Jamaica. Seed originally collected in eastern Cuba. (Holotype: FTG).

This natural hybrid is named in honor of William Osment one of the first collectors and hybridizers of Cuban orchids.

William Osment was born in Cuba in 1904. His father William G. Osment was born in England and traveled to the United States in the late 19th century. He enlisted in the US Army and fought in the Spanish-American war. After the war he became the vice-president and director of the

Guantanamo and Western Railroad of Cuba making a fortune with extensive sugar and fruit investments and with his own steamers to transport the goods throughout the world.

William Osment came to Miami, Florida when he was 15 years old. He then moved to Hollywood when it started to be built in 1923. First he worked for the Hollywood Company, followed by the Florida Power and Light Company. Later participated in the building of roads, repairing equipment, and driving buses. He witnessed how the 1926 hurricane destroyed Hollywood although it was nothing more than a swamp at that time. He helped transform it into what it is today.

William Osment had a passion for collecting snails and orchids. His hobby had always been snail collecting, and he frequented Cuba in search of more snails for his ever-growing collection. In one of those trips, his daughter found some orchids that smelled like chocolate, and he decided to bring some back to Florida for her. He built an orchid house in his backyard and began collecting orchids with his daughter and wife, gathering orchids from the Everglades, trading some with others, going on Safaris to South and Central America, and hybridizing them. Eventually he established an orchid business, Osment Orchids in Hollywood, Florida.

Traveling was always something he loved: To Central and South America in search of snails and orchids, to Cuba every few months until Castro took over, and to Haiti for three years while working for the Pan American Engineering Company.

William Osment introduced the first Cuban encyclias to the US in the early 1950's. He introduced *Encyclia phoenicea* (Lindl.) Neuman, *Encyclia plicata* (Lindl.) Schltr., *Encyclia guanahacabibensis* Saulea & Esperon and *E. moebusii* (identified as *E. acutifolia*). In addition, he was the first to bring *Tolumnia* species to the US. William Osment sent plants to W. W. Good Moir in Hawaii for identification. He was the first to make crosses with tolumnias, which he also sent to Moir. Moir named many of the crosses that William Osment originally made. William Osment was a pioneer in hybridizing encyclias and tolumnias.

DIAGNOSIS

Encyclia xosmentii can be distinguished from *E. hamiltonii* by the smaller size of the flowers and the usually purple lip. The labellum of *E. xosmentii* is larger than the labellum of *E. moebusii* but smaller than the labellum of *E. hamiltonii*. The position of the lateral lobes of the labellum of *E. xosmentii* is also intermediate between both parent species. The lateral lobes of *E. moebusii* do not embrace the column but flare outward. The lateral lobes of *E. hamiltonii* embrace the column covering it completely. In all of the individuals observed of *E. xosmentii* the lateral lobes partially embrace the column leaving the top of the column exposed. The size of the lateral lobes is also intermediate between both species. The lateral lobes of *E. hamiltonii* extend beyond the tip of the column. In *E. moebusii* the lateral lobes are smaller and bend backwards while in *E. xosmentii* the lateral lobes are smaller than *E. hamiltonii* and can only partially embrace the column. The shape of the petals of *E. xosmentii* is also intermediate between *E. hamiltonii* and *E. moebusii*.

There are individuals of *E. xosmentii* with smaller lips than usual and with shorter lateral lobes that slightly bend back at the tips. In addition, vigorous plants with tall-branched inflorescences with the floral characteristics of *E. xosmentii* have been observed. These individuals demonstrate possible introgression to *E. moebusii*.

DESCRIPTION

Plant epiphytic or lithophytic, rhizomatous, to 42 cm tall; roots many, thick, canescent; primary stem or rhizome short, stout, creeping, enclosed by imbricating scarious sheaths; secondary stems modified into pseudobulbs, erect, clustered, ovate, to 5 cm long, 2.5 cm thick, basally enclosed by scarious sheaths, 1 to 2 leaved at apex; leaves coriaceous, stiff, linear-lanceolate, acute, to 19 cm long, 1.9 cm wide; inflorescence terminal, to 37 cm tall, peduncles slender, erect, distantly several-sheathed, to 15 flowers; floral bracts ovate, obtuse, concave, to 5 mm long, 7 mm wide; ovary pedicellate, slender, to 2.3 cm long; sepals purple to purplish-brown with darker veins, oblanceolate, acute to sub-acute, to 3.0 cm long, 8 mm wide; petals purple to purplish-brown with darker veins and purplish-brown suffusion, oblanceolate to spatulate, subacute to acute, to 3.0 cm long, 8 mm wide; labellum free from column, deeply 3-lobed, to 3 cm long, 3.0 cm wide, light to dark purple, with 3 dark purple central lines and several lighter lateral lines on disc, lateral lobes purple with short dark purple radiating lines, oblong, obtuse, erect, not embracing column, disc slightly emarginate, callosity under column is two lateral erect keels extending onto disc; column white or flushed with light purple, basally light green, elongate, to 1.2 cm long, 4 mm wide, with membranaceous incurved rounded auricles; anther yellow rarely white.

Natural hybrids are common in the genus *Encyclia* (Saulea & Adams, 1984 and 1990, Dressler and Pollard, 1974). At present 14 natural intrageneric hybrids of *Encyclia* and 1 intergeneric hybrid have been described (Perez-Garcia and Hagsater, 2012). In Cuba several natural hybrids have been described (*Encyclia xcamagueyensis* Seijo et. al., *Encyclia xbrevifolia* (Jenn.) Ackerman & Mùjica-Benitez) and a hybrid swarm (*Encyclia grahamii* (Hook.) Bosmenier et. al.) has been recognized. Several other species described for Cuba recently are possibly natural hybrids. It seems that in Cuba and the Bahama Islands anywhere that encyclias are sympatric, natural hybrids will occur.



Encyclia xosmentii illustration.



Labellum of type flower of *Encyclia xosmentii*.



Labellum of type flower of *Encyclia hamiltonii*.



Type plant of *Encyclia xosmentii*. Morph more closely resembles *E. hamiltonii*.



Encyclia xosmentii. Morph more closely resembles *E. moebusii*.



Flower segments from type plant of *Encyclia xosmentii*.



Encyclia hamiltonii from eastern Cuba.



Encyclia moebusii from eastern Cuba.



Encyclia xosmentii with possible introgression of *E. moebusii*.



This photograph is from William Osment's personal collection of photographs taken in Cuba. It represents the first plant of *Encyclia moebusii* he brought to the United States in the early 1950's. The plant was originally identified in Cuba as *Epidendrum acutifolium* (Schltr.) Carabia.



These photographs are also from William Osment's personal collection of photographs taken in Cuba. It is the first plant demonstrating the characteristics of the introgression hybrid of *E. xosmentii* he brought to the United States in the early 1950's. This plant was also originally identified in Cuba as *Epidendrum acutifolium* (Schltr.) Carabia.

Acknowledgments

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