

Christmas Orchid or Darwin's Orchid *Angraecum sesquipedale*

By Keith Nelson

The *Angraecum sesquipedale* is called the Christmas Orchid because it typically blooms in December or January. The flowers only last 4 to 6 days. The plant is quite large, sometimes reaching three feet. The flowers are 6 inches across.

Native to Madagascar, Darwin identified the plant in 1862. The spur is an incredible 10 to 12 inches long. Darwin predicted a moth would be found with a proboscis long enough to reach the end of the spur. This was considered unlikely (crazy) at the time. The moth was discovered in 1903 and observed pollinating the flower. This can now be seen on You Tube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUiZDhsoJrA>

It is a warm growing orchid requiring a loose potting medium and likes frequent watering. This is one species that does not like to have its roots disturbed. When potting put it in a large enough pot to accommodate years of growth.

This orchid was exhibited at Orchid Quest 2017.



Photograph by Keith Nelson
Angraecum sesquipedale