

## *Vanda lilacina* Teijsmann & Binnend.

**SYNONYMS:** *Vanda laotica* Guillaumin.

**ORIGIN/HABITAT:** Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and China. This orchid is widespread in Thailand, being found in all regions except the central plains and peninsular Thailand. Collections have been reported from 650-3300 ft. (200-1000 m)

**CLIMATE:** Station #48327, Chiangmai, Thailand, Lat. 18.8N, Long. 99.0E, at 1100 ft. (335 m). Temperatures are calculated for an elevation of 1950 ft. (600 m), resulting in probable extremes of 106F (41C) and 35F (12C).

N/HEMISPHERE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
F AVG MAX	82	87	92	93	91	87	86	84	85	86	83	81
F AVG MIN	53	54	59	67	71	71	71	72	70	68	63	54
DIURNAL RANGE	29	33	33	26	20	16	15	12	15	18	20	27
RAIN/INCHES	0.3	0.4	0.6	2.0	5.5	6.1	7.4	8.7	11.5	4.9	1.5	0.4
HUMIDITY/%	73	65	58	62	73	78	80	83	83	81	79	76
BLOOM SEASON	N/A											
DAYS CLR @ 7AM	5	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
DAYS CLR @ 1PM	9	8	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
RAIN/MM	8	10	15	51	140	155	188	221	292	124	38	10
C AVG MAX	27.9	30.6	33.3	33.9	32.8	30.6	30.0	28.9	29.4	30.0	28.3	27.2
C AVG MIN	11.8	12.2	15.0	19.4	21.7	21.7	21.7	22.2	21.1	20.0	17.2	12.2
DIURNAL RANGE	16.1	18.4	18.3	14.5	11.1	8.9	8.3	6.7	8.3	10.0	11.1	15.0
S/HEMISPHERE	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN

### Cultural Recommendations:

**LIGHT:** 3000-4000 fc. Plants require bright light but may need some protection from direct midday sun. In the habitat, heavy cloud cover dramatically reduces light. This suggests that some shading is appropriate for cultivated plants at midday, especially in summer. Strong air movement should be provided at all times.

**TEMPERATURES:** Summer days average 84-87F (29-31C), and nights average 71-72F (22C), with a diurnal range of 12-16F (7-9C). The warmest days of the year occur during the clear weather in spring, before the start of the summer monsoon. Spring days average 91-93F (33-34C), nights warm from 59 to 71F (15 to 22C), and the diurnal ranged drops from 33 to 20 F (18 to 11C).

**HUMIDITY:** Near 80% in summer and early autumn, dropping to 60-65% in late winter and early spring.

**WATER:** Rainfall is moderate to heavy from late spring into autumn. Amounts then decrease rather rapidly, resulting in a dry season that lasts through winter. Cultivated plants need ample water while actively growing, but the roots must dry rapidly after watering. If plants are grown in pots, conditions around the roots should be open and never become stale or soggy. Water should be gradually reduced after new growth matures in autumn.

**FERTILIZER:** 1/4-1/2 recommended strength, applied weekly when plants are actively growing. Many growers use a high-nitrogen fertilizer from spring to midsummer, then switch to one high in phosphates in late summer and autumn.

**REST PERIOD:** Winter days average 81-87F (27-31C), and nights average 53-54F (12C), with a diurnal range of 27-33F (15-18C). Rainfall in the habitat is very low for much of the winter, but during this time additional moisture frequently is available from heavy dew and night-time mist. Cultivated plants need less water in winter, but they should not stay dry for long periods. Fairly regular early-morning mistings between occasional waterings should provide sufficient moisture in most growing areas. Fertilizer should be reduced or eliminated until new growth starts in spring and heavier watering is resumed.

**GROWING MEDIA:** Plants are usually grown in hanging pots or slatted wooden baskets filled with a very open, fast draining medium. Some are grown with only enough open chunky medium, such as charcoal, wine corks, or large cork chips, to anchor the plant until it becomes established. The roots should grow and hang down as far as they choose and should not be trimmed to make things look neat. Growers indicate that anything more than minimum root trimming can set the plant back 2-3 years. Good air movement around the roots at all times seems to be very important.

**MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:** Grove (1997) reported that this orchid blooms in winter and spring. Cheng & Tang (1988) report that because of deforestation in its natural habitat in China, this small orchid has become rare and is no longer easy to find.

#### **Plant and Flower Information:**

**PLANT SIZE AND TYPE:** A miniature, up to 4 in. (10 cm) monopodial epiphyte.

**STEM:** Up to 4 in. (10 cm) long. The slender, erect stem is enclosed by distichous, overlapping, close-fitting leaf-sheaths that are persistent on the lower part of the stem even after the leaves have fallen.

**LEAVES:** Up to 5 in. (12 cm) long by about 0.3 in. (0.8 cm) wide. Several strap-shaped, erect to spreading leaves are distichously arranged toward the apex of each stem. They are channeled on the top side for their entire length, being rather tightly folded longitudinally near the base but opening to become somewhat flatter toward the irregularly notched apex.

**INFLORESCENCE:** Up to 7 in. (17 cm) long. The erect to somewhat curved flower spikes emerge along the axils of the sheaths on the lower, leafless part of the stem. More than one inflorescence may be produced simultaneously. Flowers are carried in a crowded raceme toward the apex of the spike, each with a spreading pedicellate ovary that is up to 1 in. (2.5 cm) long.

**FLOWERS:** 8-20 per inflorescence. The white sepals and petals have lavender tips, especially the lateral sepals. The lip is white marked with purple dots on the inside of the lateral lobes and the midlobe is fairly densely covered with small pale purple to lavender spots except along the margins. The spreading flowers are 0.8-1.0 in. (2.0-2.5 cm) with sepals and petals that often are overlapping and have rounded tips. The rather narrow petals are twisted about 90° at the base and curve downward or backward somewhat along their length. The lateral lobes of the lip are triangular, and the truncate midlobe broadens slightly at the tip where it has a V-shaped notch in the center of the apical margin and rolls downward and backward. The spur at the base of the lip is broadly conical.

**HYBRIDIZING NOTES:** Grove (1997) reported that *Vanda lilacina* is an interesting parent in that its hybrids can produce several inflorescences, even on young plants.

**REFERENCES:** These cultural notes are written by Charles and Margaret Baker  
ORCHID SPECIES CULTURE <http://www.orchidculture.com/>

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