

BRASSOCATTLEYAS . . . FROM A HYBRIDIZER'S VIEWPOINT

by Frank Fordyce

Among the most "taken for granted" intergeneric hybrids of the Cattleya alliance are the popular Brassocattleyas and Brassolaeliocattleyas. Hybridizers have found wide acceptance among the hobbyists for these dynamic, bold-charactered flowers — for they bear a banner of distinction that none of the other Cattleya alliance can boast. We refer to the intriguing fimbriated labella inherited from *Brassavola digbyana*.

In reviewing the historical background of the *Brassocattleya* (*Brassavola* x *Cattleya*) we note the first major interest appears in Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids during the mid 1920 to 1930 era. Among the first popular clones to be used in any major breeding attempts were the combinations of Digbyano-mossiae (the first *Bc.* hybrid, Veitch 1889), Digbyano-mendelii, Digbyano-schröderae, Digbyano-trianae and Digbyano-warneri. These would naturally be among the first because of the availability to early hybridizers of the species. Other popular parents have been *Bc.* British Queen, *Bc.* Cliftonii and *Bc.* Madam Charles Maron.

One of the most interesting aspects of *Brassavola digbyana* is the varying shades of light green, and to the hybridizer without previous knowledge at hand, it would seem to lend itself to the production of yellow progeny — yet most early attempts in breeding involved a lavender parent with *B. digbyana*. The most obvious attribute of *B. digbyana* is the unusual, bold, fimbriated labellum and possibly this singular outstanding feature is what early hybridizers endeavored to pass along in their breeding programs.

Perhaps, the most outstanding attempt to breed yellow is found in *Bc.* Mrs. J. Leeman (*B. digbyana* x *C. dowiana*) and *Bc.* Heatonensis (*B. digbyana* x *C. Hardyana*). Both of these hybrids have a strong influence on the yellow "Brasso" hybrids of today, for although *B. digbyana* tends to breed a high percentage of lavenders, even when used in combination with yellows, *C. dowiana* appears to overcome the lavender genes in a fair percentage of *Brassocattleya* hybrids.

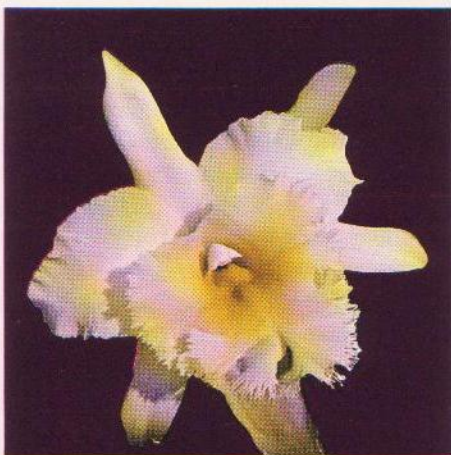
The combination of *Brassavola digbyana* with the *Laelia* genus in breeding began as early as 1898, when Charles Maron registered *Bl.* Digbyano-purpurata, a cross of *B. digbyana* x *L. purpurata*. Veitch and Sons followed in 1899 with *Bl.* Mrs. M. Gratrix (*B. digbyana* x *L. cinnabarina*). A hybrid of *B. digbyana* x *L. tenebrosa* was introduced in 1902 and registered as *Bl.* Helen. These three appear to have been the most popular of their day and I would assume the early hybridizers found the straight *Laelia* influence inferior to that of the *Cattleya* or *Laeliocattleya* combination. It would seem logical that the narrow, often reflexed petals of the *Laelia* would increase the problem of petal reflex already inherent in *Brassavola digbyana*.

Brassolaeliocattleyas were naturally the next step along the hybridizers path and although intermingled with the new *Brassocattleya* introductions, the *Blc.* group began to appear in quantities in the late 1920's, 1930's and a number in the early 1940 era. Among the early *Blc.* hybrids we find *Blc.* Caligula (*Bc.* Cliftonii x *Lc.* Callistoglossa), *Blc.* Veitchii (*Bc.* Digbyano-mossiae x *L. purpurata*), and *Blc.* The Baroness (*Bc.* Mrs. J. Leeman x *Lc.* Ophir). As the vast majority of Orchid breeding emanated from Britain, the second World War brought a temporary halt to all hybridizing. During and immediately following the war, there began a tremendous upsurge in the world-wide popularity of all orchids, hence it is not surprising to find a large amount of both *Bc.* and *Blc.* hybrids listed in Sanders. Although "Brasso" hybrids do not appear to have increased in quantity as much as straight *Cattleya* or *Laeliocattleya* hybrids, one must remember that singularly, *Brassavola digbyana* is the species behind the entire *Bl.*, *Bc.*, *Blc.* complex, while there are many individual species used in the *Cattleya* or *Laeliocattleya* complex.

This now brings us to the "golden age" of Brasso-influenced hybrids as we know them today. In order for any hybridizer to plot a course of future breeding he must review first the species involved, then the immediate primary hybrids, and progress through the more complex generations. Beyond this, he must compile a working knowledge of the dominant and recessive traits of any individual clones he believes worthy of use as parent stock. In addition, he must, through research and in personal observation, select new, previously untried clones that meet the qualifications he is attempting to achieve.

I have selected a group of *Bc.* and *Blc.* hybrids that, in this writer's opinion, have been and may continue to be, the backbone of the Brasso line of breeding.

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|---|---|
| <i>Blc.</i> THE BARONESS (<i>Bc.</i> Mrs. J. Leeman x <i>Lc.</i> Ophir) | <i>Blc.</i> JANE HELTON (<i>Blc.</i> Dorothy Drury-Lowe x <i>Blc.</i> Xanthea) |
| <i>Blc.</i> MALVERN (<i>Blc.</i> The Baroness x <i>Lc.</i> Canberra) | <i>Blc.</i> JEWEL HIGDON (<i>Blc.</i> Jane Helton x <i>Blc.</i> Zanturano) |
| <i>Blc.</i> KONG-URAI GOLD (<i>Blc.</i> Zanturano x <i>Blc.</i> Malvern) | <i>Blc.</i> LINDA JEAN ADAMS (<i>Blc.</i> Jane Helton x <i>Lc.</i> Lee Langford) |
| <i>Blc.</i> GLADYS LINES (<i>Blc.</i> Jane Helton x <i>Blc.</i> Malvern) | <i>Blc.</i> XANTHEA (<i>Blc.</i> The Baroness x <i>Bc.</i> Sofrano) |
| <i>Blc.</i> RICHARD NIXON (<i>Blc.</i> Malvern x <i>C.</i> Bow Bells) | <i>Blc.</i> XANTHETTE (<i>Blc.</i> Midenette x <i>Blc.</i> Xantheo) |
| <i>Blc.</i> NUGGET (<i>Blc.</i> Palmyre x <i>Lc.</i> Luminosa) | <i>Blc.</i> DAFFORA (<i>Blc.</i> Xanthea x <i>Blc.</i> Zante) |
| <i>Blc.</i> ROBERT GIFFORD (<i>Blc.</i> Golden Queen x <i>Blc.</i> Nugget) | <i>Blc.</i> ZANTURANO (<i>Blc.</i> Tucurano x <i>Blc.</i> Zante) |
| <i>Blc.</i> MODJESKA (<i>Blc.</i> Nugget x <i>Blc.</i> Greenheart) | <i>Blc.</i> FORTUNE (<i>Lc.</i> Mem. Albert Heinecke x <i>Blc.</i> Xanthette) |
| <i>Blc.</i> HARLEQUIN (<i>Lc.</i> Mem. Albert Heinecke x <i>Blc.</i> Nugget) | <i>Blc.</i> GREEN GIANT (<i>Blc.</i> Xanthette x <i>C.</i> leopoldii) |
| <i>Bc.</i> HEATONENSIS (<i>B. digbyana</i> x <i>C.</i> Hardyana) | <i>Blc.</i> GOLDEN GALLEON (<i>Blc.</i> Xanthette x <i>Blc.</i> Camilla) |
| <i>Blc.</i> GREENHEART (<i>Bc.</i> Heatonensis x <i>Lc.</i> Condrey) | <i>Blc.</i> CAMILLA (<i>Blc.</i> Zamilla x <i>Blc.</i> Capella) |
| <i>Blc.</i> ORANGE GLORY (<i>Bc.</i> Heatonensis x <i>Lc.</i> Elinor) | <i>Blc.</i> CONSUL GREIG (<i>Blc.</i> Golden Crown x <i>Lc.</i> Thyone) |
| <i>Blc.</i> PRIMATE (<i>Blc.</i> Primrose x <i>Bc.</i> Heatonensis) | <i>Blc.</i> GOLDEN QUEEN (<i>Blc.</i> Golden Crown x <i>C.</i> Miguelito) |
| <i>Blc.</i> BUTTERCUP (<i>Blc.</i> Golden Myth x <i>Blc.</i> Primate) | <i>Blc.</i> HELEN MORITA (<i>Blc.</i> Gillian x <i>Blc.</i> Consul Greig) |
| <i>Blc.</i> PAINTED DESERT (<i>Blc.</i> Kathy Krugman x <i>Blc.</i> Midenette) | <i>Blc.</i> LLEWELLYN (<i>Bc.</i> Minerva x <i>Lc.</i> Mrs. Medo) |



Blc. PRIMATE, 'DAFFODIL'

(*Blc. Primrose* x *Bc. Heatonensis alba*)

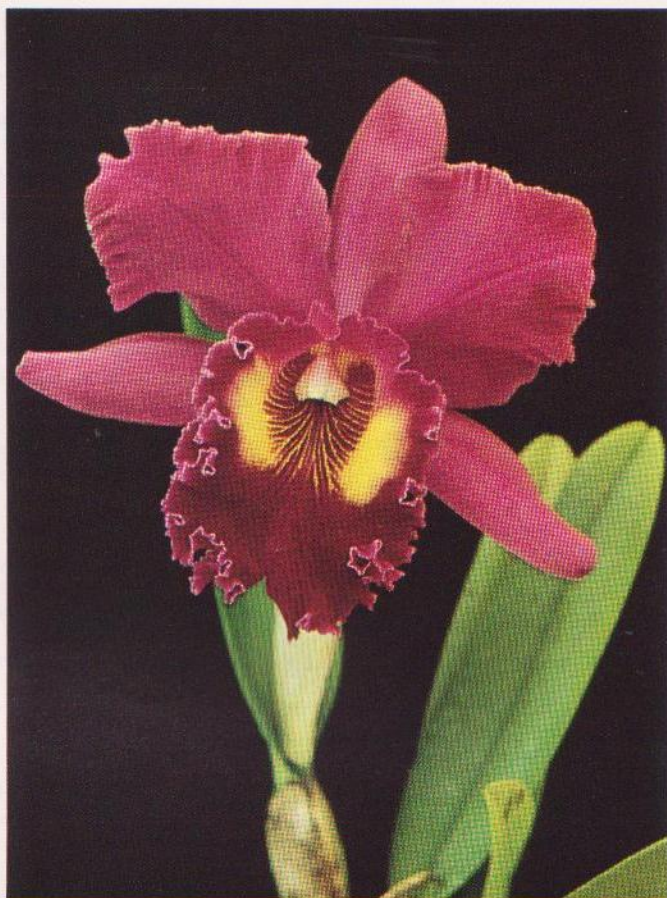
Currently causing much favorable comment as the parent of *Blc. Mamie Fouraker* and *Blc. Buttercup*. It appears to lend its form to a fair percentage of its progeny while allowing the other parent to lend its color. Petals do not reflex and lip is excellent.



Blc. LINDA JEAN ADAMS

(*Blc. Jane Helton* x *Lc. Lee Langford*)

A happy combination of two successful parents. Large in size, a clear, clean-cut, non-fading yellow that does not reflex its petals. Continued breeding along the "Brasso" line will enlarge and close the notch in the lip.



Blc. NORMAN'S BAY

Blc. GOLDEN GALLEON 'ALPHA NUGGET'

(*Blc. Xanthette 'Chartreuse* x *Blc. Camilla 'Goldilocks'*)

Blc. Golden Galleon represents one of the greatest advancements in the breeding of modern day yellow Cattleyas. All plants of this grex are tetraploids, which renders them especially useful. An outstanding characteristic of practically all clones of *Golden Galleon*, is their special brilliance of coloring. When used, either with other tetraploids or diploids, many new hybrids of brilliant coloring, vigor and resistance to disease can be expected.



Blc. GOLDEN MYTH (*Blc. Mithra* x *Lc. Golden Gleam*)
Blc. MELLOW GLOW (*Blc. Golden Myth* x *Lc. Prince Smilax*)
Blc. MELLOW VISTA (*Blc. Mellow Glow* x *C. Georgie Asder*)
Blc. PACIFIC GOLD (*Lc. Pacific Sun* x *Blc. Golden Myth*)
Blc. EPOCA de ORO (*Blc. Barbara Wilcox* x *Lc. Gattton Glory*)
Blc. WAIKIKI SUNSET (*Blc. Walter Abe* x *Lc. Waianae Sunset*)
Bc. DEESSE (*Bc. Ferrieres* x *C. Lamartine*)
Bc. MT. HOOD (*Bc. Deesse* x *C. Claris*)
Bc. MT. ANDERSON (*C. Bow Bells* x *Bc. Deesse*)
Blc. NANETTE (*Blc. Everest* x *C. Annette*)
Blc. PINKIE (*Blc. Nanette* x *C. Bow Bells*)
Bc. HARTLAND (*Bc. Hannibal* x *C. Leda*)
Blc. NORMAN'S BAY (*Bc. Hartland* x *Lc. Ishtar*)
Blc. MEM. CRISPIN ROSALES (*Lc. Bonanza* x *Blc. Norman's Bay*)
Blc. HERON'S GHYLL (*Blc. Norman's Bay* x *Lc. Ishtar*)
Blc. PAMELA FARRELL (*Blc. Norman's Bay* x *Blc. Heron's Ghyll*)
Blc. LA VERNE NISHIGUCHI (*C. Prospector* x *Blc. Norman's Bay*)

Blc. ERMINE (*Blc. Aurea* x *C. Amabilis Alba*)
Blc. ILLIAD (*Bc. Digbyano-trianae* x *Lc. Orange Blossom*)
Blc. PIMOLA (*C. granulosa* x *Blc. Ojai*)
Blc. JOYANCE (*Blc. Ojai* x *Lc. S. J. Bracey*)
Blc. SHEERWATER PASSAGE (*Lc. Princess Margaret* x *Blc. Norman's Bay*)
Blc. VALERIE TONKIN (*Blc. Norman's Bay* x *Lc. Seattle*)
Blc. DAWN ANGELA (*Blc. Heather Queen* x *Lc. Ishtar*)
Blc. EDWIN CHONG (*Blc. Dawn Angela* x *Lc. Princess Margaret*)
Bc. PRINCESS PATRICIA (*Bc. Cliftonii* x *C. Enid*)
Blc. WENDELL HOSHINO (*Blc. Carinus* x *Lc. St. Gothard*)
Blc. WINSTON HOSHINO (*Lc. S. J. Bracey* x *Blc. Wendell Hoshino*)
Blc. CYNDE FUJINO (*Lc. Mysedo* x *Blc. Wendell Hoshino*)
Blc. MOLFLORA (*Bc. Florence* x *Lc. Molly Tyler*)
Blc. WAKE ISLAND (*Blc. Agnes McWilliams* x *C. Reseda*)
Blc. MARJORIE FREY (*C. Rembrandt* x *Blc. Wake Island*)
Blc. VICTORIA 'COERULEA' (*Blc. Antoinette* x *C. Portia 'Coerulea'*)

Undoubtedly, there are scores of other hybrids that should possibly appear on this list; this is but one hybridizer's viewpoint. Obviously, each individual has his own favorites based upon his own study. I have not attempted to list the individual clones used by hybridizers from a specific cross, although in several instances, only a single clone of an entire cross has been used successfully in hybridizing. It is impossible to cover the overwhelming complexities of every single hybrid listed, but I will emphasize a few points that are of personal interest.

Obviously, we should consider selected clones of the species itself as valid subjects. The majority of these have within their makeup gene packages that tend to breed into their progeny a lavender coloration. This is highly desirable in the breeding of purple crosses, but a great disadvantage in the breeding of true white or yellow hybrids. There are a few select clones that are "tried and true" albino forms, which when used with other known parent stock give rise to a predicted color range.

It must also be remembered that when breeding Cattleyas, the lip color is normally inherited separately from the petal and sepal color.

As in all hybridization, the possibility of peloria occurring is an ever present factor, and one that hybridizers eagerly search for. Peloria is an abnormality . . . one might call it "consistent in its inconsistency" such as splashed petals . . . occurring in specific clones regularly each time they bloom. As outlined in "THE ORCHIDS," edited by Carl Withner, "A striking peloric form is the unique *Brassavola digbyana* var. *fimbripetala*. In this plant the petals are fringed, as in the labellum . . . though not to such a striking degree."

Upon close study you will find the largest portion of our list of *Bc.*, *Blc.* hybrids are in shades of yellow or allied color ranges. We find hybridizers leaning heavily to the "Brassos" for several reasons: 1. The progeny may be scented; 2. Hybrids may produce flamboyantly beautiful lips; 3. Overall flower size is large; 4. Plant strength is increased; 5. It is the opinion of many hybridizers that through the inclusion of the "Brasso" influence, deformities that so often are found in *Laeliocattleya* breeding may be substantially reduced or even eliminated.

When contemplating the use of any parent stock, we must weigh the negative side as well as the positive. On the "red pencil" side of the ledger we find the following bad features that must be considered: 1. Petals often reflex; 2. Quantity of blooms per stem is often reduced; 3. Progeny grow so strongly with such great distance between bulbs that they become a space problem much more rapidly than others of the *Cattleya* alliance; 4. There is an ever-present chance that packages of lavender color genes may be passed on to progeny you wish to keep free from color; 5. Unless careful selection is made among the purple "Brasso" hybrids, there is a chance of the progeny blooming in a light shade of lavender-pink, instead of the intended vibrant purple shades.

Certain hybrids are more successful in a breeding program than others, and it appears that among the yellow shades specific clones of *Bc. Mrs. J. Leeman*, *Bc. Heatonensis*, *Blc. The Baroness*, *Blc. Nugget*, *Blc. Consul Greig*, *Blc. Green-Heart*, *Blc. Jane Helton*, *Blc. Malvern*, *Blc. Zanturano* and *Blc. Golden Myth* have established themselves as respected stud plants. Among those that show promise for the future breeders are selected clones of *Blc. Malvern*, *Blc. Richard Nixon*, *Blc. Primate*, *Blc. Painted Desert*, *Blc. Mellow Glow*, *Blc. Linda Jean Adams*, *Blc. Xanthette*, *Blc. Fortune*, *Blc. Golden Galleon*, *Blc. Joyance* and *Blc. Waikiki Sunset*.

Blc. Nanette is a hybrid that keeps appearing time after time and has produced wide-spread feelings of delight to depths of sadness when its progeny began to bloom. Upon checking the parentage, we find *Blc. Nanette* to be *Blc. Everest* x *C. Annette*. *Blc. Everest* is *Bc. Mrs. J. Leeman* x *Lc. Canhamiana*. *Lc. Canhamiana* is bred from a semi-alba *L. purpurata*. On the side of *C. Annette* we find *C. quadricolor* x *C. warscewiczii* 'M. Beyrodt,' another semi-alba. Therefore, when apparently albino forms of *Blc. Nanette* are used with whites such as *C. Bow Bells*, a substantial group of the progeny produced are light pinkish-lavender. If that is what is desired, as in *Blc. Pinkie* (*Blc. Nanette* x *C. Bow Bells*), all is well. However, many an unsuspecting hybridizer has been sorely disappointed when fully expecting true semi-albas, finds a bench full of wishy-washy lavenders.

The hybrid *Bc. Deesse* (*Bc. Ferrieres* x *C. Lamartine*) shows a great amount of promise as a parent even with its involved parentage. *Bc. Ferrieres* (*B. digbyana* x *C. Dionysius*) could be either purple or semi-alba, for *C. Dionysius*

is (*C. Fabia* x *C. warscewiczii*). There are purple, yellow and semi-alba forms of *C. Fabia* and white, semi-alba and purple forms of *C. warscewiczii*. The other *Bc. Deesse* parent is *C. Lamartine* (*C. Lord Rothschild alba* x *C. trianae* var. *alba*). To further confuse the issue, *C. Lord Rothschild alba* is *C. dowiana* x *C. gaskelliana*. Because of the involved parentage, it is important to trace the exact clones used from the hybrid's inception and finally choose the finest, clearest white form available for further use. The individual parent clone that appears to produce good results is *Bc. Deesse* 'Rainier,' producing such outstanding hybrids as *Bc. Mt. Hood* (*Bc. Deesse* x *C. Claris*) and *Bc. Mt. Anderson* (*C. Bow Bells* x *Bc. Deesse*) among others.

Progressing to the purple section of our Brasso family, we find hybrids such as *Bc. Cliftonii*, *Blc. Dawn Angela*, *Bc. Hartland*, *Blc. Caligula* and *Blc. Veitchii* as the backbone of the early purple "Brasso" hybrids.

More recently we find *Bc. Princess Patricia*, *Blc. Norman's Bay*, *Blc. Heron's Ghyll*, *Blc. Mem. Crispin Rosales*, *Blc. Wendell Hoshino*, *Blc. Cynde Fujino* and *Blc. Marjorie Frey* as the most popular modern breeders. I personally believe *Blc. Mollflora* (*Bc. Florence* x *Lc. Molly Tyler*) will be among the new "greats," along with an increased interest in *Blc. Marjorie Frey* (*Lc. Rembrandt* x *Blc. Wake Island*).

Another new hybrid, *Blc. Sheerwater passage* (*Lc. Princess Margaret* x *Blc. Norman's Bay*) has everything it takes to become one of the fine new Brasso parents also.

Blue hybrids are currently a challenge to the hybridizer and it is my feeling that the "breeders of the blues" should

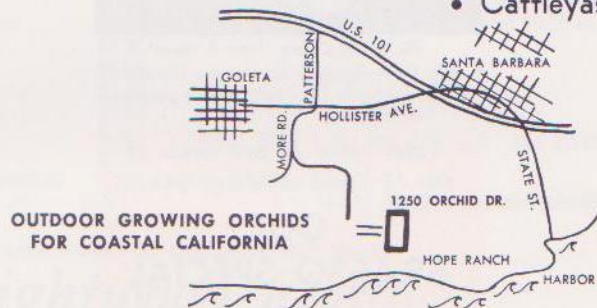
seriously consider *Blc. Victoria 'Coerulea'* (*Blc. Antoinette* x *C. Portia 'Coerulea'*). This is a beautifully-formed blue "Brasso" with a darker blue "Brasso" lip.

The surface has hardly been scratched, but possibly you may have been stimulated into your own research program involving our delightful "Brassos." This is but one hybridizer's opinion . . . there are many. It is a generalization of what has been done; the hybrids that have produced substantial results. Our next step is to select proven superior, individual clones from the crosses listed and hybridize them with a definite goal in mind, always searching for that elusive greatness, for we too are convinced THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

• Cymbidiums

• Cyripediums

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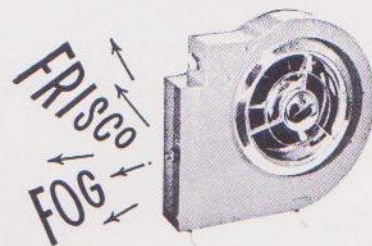
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