

NEWS  
RELEASE

# ORCHIDS OF VANUATU



Vanuatu is estimated to have over 160 species of orchid distributed over the archipelago, with 158 species in 69 genera being recorded from one survey alone (Orchids of Vanuatu. Lewis and Cribb, 1989). This is probably an underestimate as further studies are undertaken. A high estimate puts Vanuatu as having up to 31 endemic species of orchid.

The orchid flora are mostly epiphytes living on trees although there are terrestrial species growing on the ground. The predominant colours of Vanuatu's orchids are pink, yellow and white, with flowers being most visible during the wet season. The outburst of flowers is varied with some seen as solitary while others are massed in showy displays of pendulous flowers.

Vanuatu's orchids have much in common with those from Solomon Islands, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Malay archipelago and nearby Pacific Islands, with the theory that long distance wind dispersal of seeds has led to this distribution.

Vanuatu Post highlights just four of these beautiful species in this stamp issue:

**35 vatu *Dendrobium gouldii*** - found in Efate, Erromango and Santo, this orchid has clustered stems, variable sized and coloured flowers. It is located in open country beside roads and clearings and is a lowland plant growing up to 500m.

**60 vatu *Dendrobium polysema*** – with yellow or greenish heavily spotted flowers and leaves up to 22cm long, polysema is located in rain forest between 150 and 700m. Its distribution is Ambae, Efate, Erromango, Santo and Pentecost.

**90 vatu *Dendrobium spectabile*** – lowland swampy forest, lowland forests and planted coconut trees provide the habitat for this orchid. Its large, sometimes grotesque flowers are yellow and usually heavily mottled with maroon. In Vanuatu it is mostly found on Santo.

**110 vatu *Flickingeria comata*** – the habitat of this cream or pale yellow orchid is in mangroves or rainforest up to 500m and is found mainly on the islands of Santo, Banks, Pentecost and Efate.

<b>Collectors Notes:</b>		<b>For further information please contact:</b>
Designer:	Sue Wickison, Wellington, New Zealand	<b>The Manager,</b>
Printer:	BDT Security Printers, Dublin, Ireland	<b>Philatelic Bureau,</b>
Process:	Offset Litho	<b>Vanuatu Post,</b>
Perforation Gauge:	13.5 per 2 cms	<b>Port Vila, Vanuatu.</b>
Stamp Size:	36mm x 36mm diamond shaped.	<b>Tel. + 678 22000,</b>
Denominations:	35, 60, 90 and 110 vatu.	<b>Fax + 678 23900</b>
Paper:	110 gsm, PVA gum stamp paper.	<b>E mail</b>
Period of Sale:	27 November, 2002 for two years.	<a href="mailto:vanuatupost@vanuatu.com.vu">vanuatupost@vanuatu.com.vu</a>