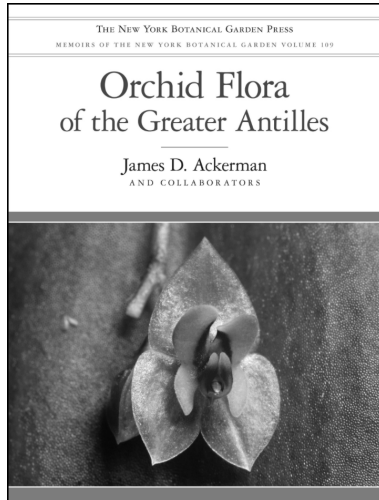


## BOOKS

### Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles

James D. Ackerman and collaborators. New York Botanical Garden Press (*Memoirs of the New York Botanical Garden* 109), New York, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-893275-12-9. Hardcover, 200 × 273 mm, 640 pages, 159 plates (line drawings). English with bilingual identification keys in English and Spanish. \$140 / €96 approx.



The Greater Antilles, which extend from Cuba in the west to Anegada (in the British Virgin Islands) in the east, host a complex flora, and the largest of the West Indies. As several of the largest islands were botanized at the beginning of modern botany, the flora of the Greater Antilles also harbors many of the oldest plant names, whose scrutiny is necessary to understand their correct application throughout the entire Neotropical region. A systematic treatment of the orchid flora of the Greater Antilles was due long ago, to update the knowledge about the islands previously covered by local monographs (i.e., Jamaica, Puerto Rico and, in part, Cuba), and to reveal overall diversity in one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

Renown orchidologist and main author, Dr. James Ackerman (director of the Herbarium and Zoology Museum at the University of Puerto Rico - Río Piedras) has to be acknowledged for assuming the commitment over 20 years ago and for producing an outstanding monograph that will surely resist the test of time.

With collaborations by Paul M. Brown, Marta A. Díaz, the late Ed Greenwood, Eric Hágsater, Carlyle A. Luer, Ernesto Mújica Benítez, Mark Nir, Gustavo Romero-González and Victoria Sosa, the treatment

offers clear and detailed accounts of almost 600 orchid species in more than 100 genera (594 species according to Ackerman's account; the number of genera largely depending on the preferred circumscriptions), 70% of which endemic to the archipelago. With 117 recorded species, the most diverse genus is *Lepanthes*, a species of which (the Jamaican *L. ovalis*) embellishes the cover of the book, followed by *Pleurothallis* (sensu lato) with 71 species, and *Epidendrum* with 45 species.

An artificial, bilingual (English / Spanish) key to the genera is provided at the beginning of the monograph. It is clear that the monographers adopt most of the phylogenetic circumscriptions revealed by recent molecular systematics, with some notable exceptions where traditional approaches have been followed, particularly in the most contentious cases (i.e., *Pleurothallis*). Latest generic assignments are however consigned to a final Appendix, a rational and polite approach to be highly esteemed. For each genus, bilingual keys to the species are provided. Whilst the genera are presented in alphabetical order, making it easier to search for a specific entry, in another appendix the author provides a phylogenetic classification of the orchid genera of the Greater Antilles.

Species treatments include complete synonymy with type citations, description, relevant taxonomic literature (mostly generic treatments), popular names, discussion of taxonomy, distribution, ecology, and conservation status. In several cases, spread throughout the treatment, the discussion chapter is nothing less than a short taxonomic paper on the given topic (see, for example, the discussions of *Campylocentrum jamaicense* on pages 69–70, *Platythelys querceticola* on page 366, or *Trichocentrum undulatum* on pages 537–539).

The book is profusely illustrated with scientific drawings of the highest quality, almost entirely provided by renown illustrator Bobbi Angell (others are by C. A. Luer and Arlee M. Montalvo). With the exceptions of *Goodyera*, *Heterotaxis*, *Maxillariella*, *Pseudogoodyera*, *Pterichis*, *Pteroglossaspis*, *Stenorrhynchos*, and *Tomzania*, all the genera are illustrated by one or more botanical drawings (21 species are depicted in *Pleurothallis*, 15 in *Lepanthes*, 8 in *Epidendrum*). In particular, it is noteworthy that, with a few exceptions, all the specimens used to prepare the illustrations were effectively native to the studied area, something that makes the work

an invaluable source for real comparison of the taxonomic concepts used in the West Indies against their equivalent species in continental floras.

I found the list of lectotypifications and neotypifications (98 in total in the treatment) provided at the beginning of the treatment particularly useful, as well as the initial reference to the only new combination, *Antilla denticulata*. A new species, *Acianthera stenzelii*, is described at the end of Appendix 1, on page 575.

The only fault I can find to this otherwise extensively researched and unexceptionable work is the lack of color photographs. Considering the high degree of endemism of the orchid flora of the Greater Antilles, it will be difficult to find another source for this information in order to have a clearer concept of species that are often limited in distribution to a single island.

I warmly recommend the book to any orchidologist, the serious orchid librarian, and the naturalist interested in the flora of these fascinating islands. It is a highest-quality treatment to stand for many years.

*Franco Pupulin*

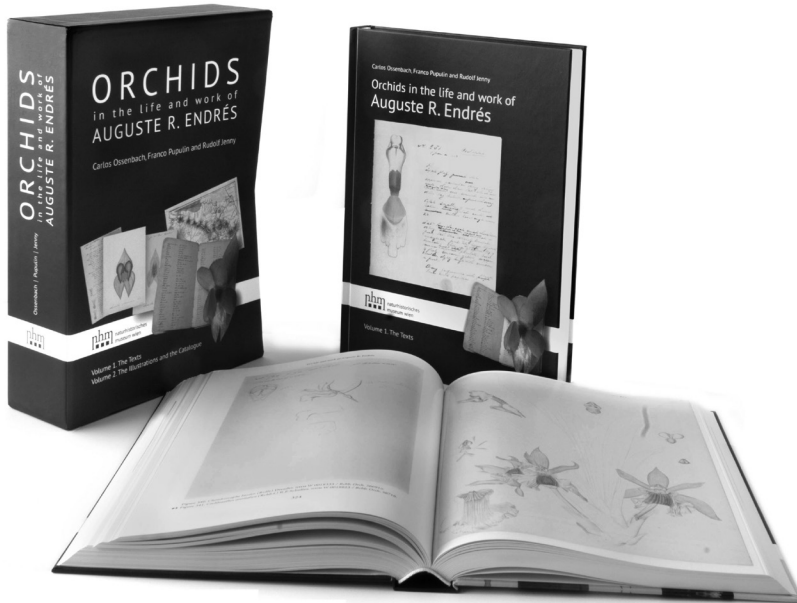
**Orchids in the life and work of Auguste R. Endrés.** Volume 1. The texts.

Carlos Ossenbach, Franco Pupulin and Rudolf Jenny (eds.), with contributions by Christa Riedl-Dorn and Ernst Vitek. [6], xiii, [1], 354 pages, 150 figures.

**Orchids in the life and work of Auguste R. Endrés.** Volume 2. The illustrations and the catalogue.

Carlos Ossenbach, Franco Pupulin and Rudolf Jenny (eds.), with contribution by Ernst Vitek. [6], iv, 536 pages, 407 figures.

Vienna, Naturhistorische Museum Wien, 2013. ISBN: 978-3-902421-77-7. Hardcover, 19 × 27 cm. 2 volumes in box. €385.00 / \$500.00 approx.



A long-standing question in orchidology – Who was Endrés? – is asked again in the first sentence of the Foreword of Volume 1 of this two-volume work. The question is answered here to a large degree through the efforts of several individuals dedicated to finding out just who was Auguste R. Endrés, collector, botanist, author and illustrator of orchids. Although brief sketches of Endrés have appeared in print over the years, the nearly universal lament in these has been how little is known about the person who made such remarkable collections and illustrations of orchids in such a short time in Central and South America. Through a collaborative effort and diligent search of both primary and secondary sources of information, a remarkable story of the life and work of the short-lived Endrés has emerged. Gaps still remain regarding his education and acquisition of such an extensive knowledge of orchids in his early years but incompleteness is not an unusual problem

for biographers. In such cases, the life and work of the subject is pieced together to the extent possible based on bits of available and often diverse information. The authors of this biography of Endrés have accomplished this job very effectively. Moreover, they have skillfully set his life and work within context of the culture, politics, economics, and science of the times.

The basic biography of Endrés presented in Chapter 1 “Auguste R. Endrés (1838-1874) his life” by Carlos Ossenbach traces him from his birth in French Alsace, his emigration to the United States and eventual move to Costa Rica where most of his work on orchids was done, and, finally, to his tragic death in Colombia at the age of 36. At an early age, Endrés became acquainted with several prominent orchidologists and others who helped him in various ways in his success as an independent collector and development as a knowledgeable and productive botanist in his own right. He emigrated to Costa Rica

in 1866 to collect orchids for European botanists. His work there is reviewed with emphasis on the difficulties he faced as a collector and illustrator of orchids and how he managed to sustain himself financially and intellectually for several years under often dire circumstances. In this regard, his is a story that has been repeated many times for other pioneer collectors of plants and animals. In 1874, as his health and finances worsened, he became depressed by what he considered as failure and left Costa Rica. Others, however, question Endrés' personal view of the lack of his own accomplishments. For example, in the chapter on assessment of Endrés as a botanist, Franco Pupulin states: "It is no exaggeration to say that Endrés was the most proficient and dedicated botanist who visited Costa Rica during the nineteenth century." After leaving Costa Rica and briefly visiting Europe and the United States, in late 1874 Endrés accompanied Benedict Roezl, the famous orchid collector, to Colombia to collect orchids. He died shortly after arrival in the country.

Additional details of Endrés' life and work are presented in the following chapters: Orchid collecting in that rich coast (Ossenbach and Pupulin); Endrés the botanist (Pupulin); Endrés as an illustrator (Pupulin); The human context: important figures in Endrés' life (Ossenbach and Jenny); Endrés legacy at the Reichenbach Herbarium, Natural History Museum in Vienna (Vitek); On Endrés traces: The Departmental Archives of the History of Science at the Natural History Museum in Vienna (Riedl-Dorn); and, Species Endresianae (Pupulin, Ossenbach, Jenny and Vitek) The remarkable amount of supplemental information included in these chapters greatly expands our knowledge of the man who previously was so little known yet who under often less than favorable circumstances accomplished so much for botany.

Volume 1 is extensively illustrated with 150 numbered figures. This visual treat includes a panoply of mostly color images ranging from maps, portraits, drawings and paintings of orchids, historical photographs, and pages copied from notebooks. Perusal of these illustrations alone would provide a substantial view into the history of tropical American orchidology.

The volume concludes with an extensive bibliography section but, unfortunately, without a much-needed index, at least one to the many individuals covered.

In addition to the Foreword and Introduction, Volume 2 contains two major sections: The Illustrations, and The Catalogue. The 407 illustrations included here represent just part of the unbelievable output of Endrés. Preparatory sketches constitute the largest number of illustrations, followed by pencil tracings of individual species ready for printing, colored drawings of orchid flowers and illustrations apparently not meant for publication. The Catalogue, assembled by Pupulin, Ossenbach, Jenny and Vitek, provides a large amount of information on Endrés-collected orchids that should constitute a valuable resource for orchidologists. Arranged under the present valid names, the list includes notes on localities, dates, habitats and ecology that are cross-referenced to his many illustrations and descriptions. An appendix includes similar data for Endrés-collected specimens contained in the Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium at Harvard University. Volume 2 concludes with an index to the orchid genera included in the volume.

This is a remarkable work devoted to the life and work of Auguste (Augustin, Augustus) R. Endrés, a talented and productive student and collector of orchids in tropical America. Although he died at a relatively young age, the extent of his accomplishments in orchidology deserve the effort expended here to make them better known. These volumes are a testament to the value of collaborative work by a group of like-minded persons. Their dedicated search for any scraps of biographical information available on Endrés as well as their assessment of his collections and his thousands of illustrations and descriptions of orchids is impressive. The physical beauty of the book and its hundreds of illustrations further enhance the effort. This is a major contribution, not only to the life and work of the heretofore elusive Auguste Endrés but to the history of orchidology in general.

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**Orchidee Storie & Personaggi** (Italian Edition)  
**Orquideas Historias & Personajes** (Spanish Edition)

Giancarlo Pozzi. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013 (Italian); 2014 (Spanish, translation by Lucrezia Rendace). 234 pages, several color figures. Available at Amazon, \$9.00.



The author of this small, and almost familiar book, Giancarlo Pozzi, is a dear friend of mine, and to find the right balance in reviewing the work of a friend is always a bit more difficult, on one side or the other.

Even though it presents itself as still another “how-to-grow-orchids” manual, Pozzi’s booklet, available both in Italian (its original language) and in Spanish translation, hardly fits any of the classic orchid book genera. According to the author’s own introductory words, it is “like a tale that guides the reader to explore the beautiful orchid world in any of its many aspects: what they are, where and how they live and reproduce [...] and how to grow them at home”. It includes classic, discursive chapters on orchid fever and familial hyperdiversity, as well as an inevitable text on “What is an orchid”, which precede the illustrated dictionary of the more commonly cultivated orchid genera and intergeneric hybrids.

What makes the book special, however, are the stories. The main text is interspersed with short portraits of a heterogenous group composed of past and present characters of the orchid world, always presented in a very personal way. Many of the stories are typically anecdotic, but some of the short portraits, dedicated to “orchid people” who the author met personally along his long career as an orchid grower and breeder, are

true tales that delicately portray characters of modern orchidology, presented by a talented pen and with a gifted prose.

Many of the portrayed characters are Italians, but there are important exceptions (i.e., Sir Peter Smithers, who inspired Jan Fleming to create the mythical figure of the secret agent 007), and most are growers of any sort, from the level of aficionados to the contemporary representatives of great orchid dynasties like Marcel Lecoufle. All together the presented figures trace an interesting and fun picture that is more about Giancarlo’s life and beliefs in orchids than about the people he interacted with. To be honest, I found that — at least for those pictured people who I also personally know —, Pozzi’s short “portraits” are very accurate and close to capture the particularity of the individual characters and some spots of their orchidologic soul.

This is particularly noteworthy for those characters that are otherwise pretty unknown to the broadest orchid community and help creating a new fresco of the contemporary orchid world and all its variegated nuances. With an extraordinarily simple and direct prose, Pozzi brings the reader inside his world and quickly makes him share with the author a sentiment of sympathy and friendship for each of the portrayed people.

All in all, I doubt that the extension of the relationships and the space dedicated to each of the concerned characters would be enough to provide significant biographical information about them, and this somehow detracts from the merits of the booklet as a source for orchid history. Nonetheless, the freshness

of the writing, the original author's approach, and the first-hand information presented in several stories, make the reading of this work a grateful experience. I strongly recommend it to anybody interested in the human and epochal aspects of orchidology.

*Franco Pupulin*