



# RHS *Plants*

Profiling five orchids that have gained the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM), the Society's highest plant accolade

## Phalaenopsis

Clare Hermans, Chair of the RHS Orchid Committee, says:



'Over the past 20 years, *Phalaenopsis* hybrids have become the world's most popular pot plant. Behind their success has been their

tolerance of low light levels and centrally heated rooms, combined with long-lasting flowers. Today, new hybrids have increased the colour range available and more named cultivars can be purchased.

'Profiled here are five of the 12 AGM *Phalaenopsis*, including two new ones that are obtainable from supermarkets.'

❖ All plants shown have RHS hardiness rating H1a (warmer than 15°C / 59°F).



### RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show

The RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show will be held in the RHS Lindley Hall on 29-30 March, 10am-5pm, with a preview Late event from 6-9pm on Tuesday 28 March. Exhibitors from around the world will show and sell wonderful tropical and hardy orchids.

❖ Advance tickets: members £5, non-members £6; on the door £9. [www.rhs.org.uk/londonshows](http://www.rhs.org.uk/londonshows)



PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHAN HERMANS

#### ◀ 'Kleopatra 4'

- ❖ Large cream flowers, heavily spotted purple with a plain lip.
- ❖ Flower size: 8cm (3½in) wide.
- ❖ 2 flower spikes; flower spike height (H): 50cm (20in).

#### ▲ Hsinying Yenlin 'Purple Princess'

- ❖ Intensely dark pink-violet, white-edged flowers with a dark purple lip.
- ❖ Flower size: 4cm (1½in) wide.
- ❖ 2-3 branching spikes; H: 20cm (8in). >>>



RHS/TIM SANDALL

## How to grow

Sara Rittershausen, owner of Burnham Nurseries, offers some growing advice:

- ❖ Keep in a warm room with a minimum temperature of 18°C (64°F).
- ❖ Avoid a south-facing position in summer to prevent leaves from getting burnt. Full light in winter is beneficial.
- ❖ Clear pots are a useful way to keep an eye on the plant roots. White or grey roots are healthy but dry and ready for watering - they turn green when wet. Brown roots are dead and rotten through overwatering. Aerial roots are a sign of a happy, healthy plant.
- ❖ Always water from the top, allowing the water to run through the open bark compost. Do not allow the pot to sit in water, which can rot the roots, leading to dehydration and a sickly plant. Let the orchid's root system dry out well between waterings to prevent root rot. Check weekly, and water only when dry.
- ❖ *Phalaenopsis* can bloom throughout the year. To encourage reflowering from the same stem, trim back to an unbranched 'eye' when the initial flowers are dying off. Side branches should then grow with more buds and a brand new stem may also be produced from the base.
- ❖ Sara Rittershausen on *Vanda*: p89.

### More online

For more about the AGM (and hardiness ratings), to read Graham Rice's selection of AGM plants for March, or to buy AGM plants, visit: [www.rhs.org.uk/agmplants](http://www.rhs.org.uk/agmplants)

❖ Find plants, suppliers and growing information at: [www.rhs.org.uk/findaplant](http://www.rhs.org.uk/findaplant)



CLARE HERMANS

### Rong Guan Peacock 'Rotterdam'

- ❖ Flat pink-white flowers with contrasting darker pink lip, and more spikes than an average mass-market *Phalaenopsis*.
- ❖ Flower size: 7cm (2¾in) wide.
- ❖ 3-4 spikes; H: 40cm (16in).



### Yellow Lightning 'Bee Sting'

- ❖ Bright yellow, red-edged flowers.
- ❖ Flower size: 7.5cm (3in) wide.
- ❖ 2 spikes; H: 50cm (20in).



### Taida Sweet 'Stripe Beauty' (also sold as Pink Balanz)

- ❖ White-striped pink flowers with pink lip.
- ❖ Flower size: 8cm (3¼in) wide.
- ❖ 2 spikes; H: 50cm (20in).