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*Grammatophyllum speciosum*

[Synonyms : *Grammatophyllum fastuosum*, *Grammatophyllum giganteum*]

**TIGER ORCHID** is an orchid. Native from Malaysia to Indonesian Sumatra and to the Philippines, it has large chestnut-brown-blotched, greenish- or whitish-yellow flowers. It is also known as *Anggrek tebu* (Malay), Giant orchid, Letter leaf, Letter plant, Queen of orchids, Queen orchid, and Sugarcane orchid.

This orchid can have a diameter of 10-24 ft. and circumference of 40ft. and it can bear 30 long spikes of flowers in one season. It is probably the largest orchid in volume as opposed to length – and it dies when its fruit reach maturity. A mature plant can weigh over 1 ton.

*Speciosum* is Latin (beautiful, showy, handsome, splendid).

The first tiger orchid plant to bloom in Europe is believed to have been one introduced to Britain. This was grown by a horticulurist from the celebrated Loddiges family and it flowered near London in 1852. (The Loddiges family established a 15 acre nursery in Hackney in east London in the 1770s which was said to have had what was then the largest greenhouse in the world. The enterprise, influential from Russia to Australia, proved to be the most famous European nursery for about 100 years.)

In south-eastern Asia tiger orchid is particularly cultivated as an unusual ornamental air plant. This orchid featured in a Singapore-Australian joint issue of postage stamps on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1998.