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Orchid diversity in Singapore

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Orchids were once the largest family of plants in Singapore, and with *c.* 70 known native extant species, it remains among the top four or five plant families in the nation. The family has been severely affected by forest loss, and it is unknown how habitat fragmentation, edge effects and pollinator presence affect the remaining species in Singapore. Singapore's orchid diversity is representative of South East Asia, and even the entire family. Only one subfamily (Cyripedioideae) is absent in the country, and the species found in Singapore are well dispersed along the orchid tree of life. The genera *Dendrobium* and *Bulbophyllum* were once the biggest plant genera in Singapore, and they remain the largest orchid genera. The remaining species are in genera with three or fewer representatives in the country. The genera *Bromheadia*, *Cymbidium* and *Plocoglottis* each have three native species. The primary forests in Singapore are relatively isolated geographically, and species dispersal between Singapore and the rest of the region is probably rare. There have been many orchid discoveries in Singapore in recent years, including new records, rediscoveries of presumed extinct species and even species new to science. It is likely that these species have persisted in Singapore in low numbers, and their discovery is best attributed to increased survey efforts. This gives hope that even though Singapore's flora is exceptionally well studied, there are further discoveries to be made. There is much potential for study of orchid biology, diversity and evolution in the country.

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