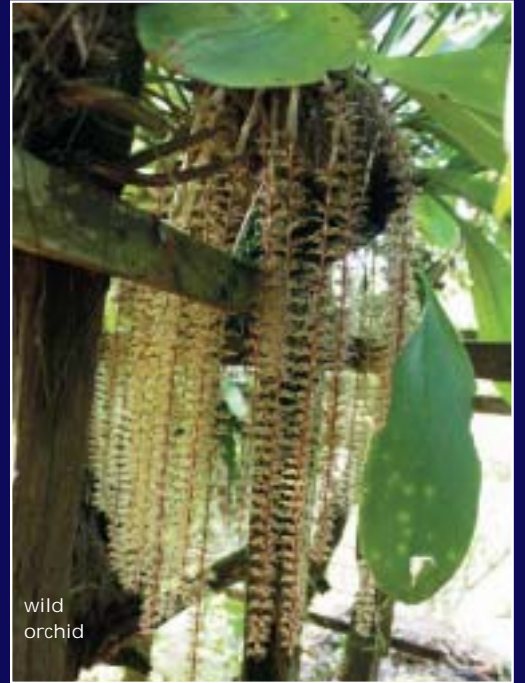




curly horns



Evey and Maureen, beauties of Kawakaan.



wild orchid



pretty red



pretty dancing lady



White against the green



a purple orchid

KAMPUNG Kawakaan, Inanam some 20 kilometres from Kota Kinabalu, the State Capital of Sabah is just a village located on a valley. Like any tropical village, it boasts shady forests, shrubs and plants of various types. Food plants such as tapioca, various types of fruit trees and flowers fringe the dirt road that meanders through the village. The houses stand facing the flat areas of rice fields and vegetable patches, where some villagers can be seen tending to them.

Occasionally vehicles pass by, breaking the peaceful atmosphere and silencing the incessant sounds of insects and birds for a minute. Kampung Kawakaan however has made a name for itself as it has the most numbers of orchids seen in one place, near the city. The contributor to this fame is the Orchid De Villa, an orchid farm established in 1995.

This 12-acre farm supports several shaded areas where hybrid orchids are cultivated. The most common hybrid orchid found in the farm is the Aranda, Dendrobium, Mokara and Oncidium. The bursts of colours in the shaded area of the hybrid orchids are most awe-inspiring when they are in full bloom and not yet harvested for the market. Purple with stripes, dark red, yellow and orange, pink and blood red, they dominate the landscape as do the white with pink and yellow blush. Guide Evey Lau shares that there are many additions to the flowers since it open to the public more than 10 years ago.

"The most attractive are the white flowers with the blushes, the purple flower with curly outer whorls as well as the Red Bull, which of course is flaming red," she says.

These hybrids are acquired from seedlings imported from West Malaysia and Thailand. The hybrid flowers are harvested once they mature and sent to florists and other customers in Kota Kinabalu and the surrounding area, Evey says, adding that the demand for orchids is quite high, so they can only meet demands in this area. The farm has not forgotten the original orchids.

There are some 300 species of native orchids found there; garnered from various parts of the State. They are planted in the same type of habitats of their origin. Visitors can look at them in relative ease, as a path meanders through the area. There, the *Phalaenopsis penduliscapum*, the *Calanthe pulchra*, *Liparis* and *Coelogyne* seedpot stand proudly side-by-side.

It is wonderful to behold these wild orchids in full bloom. Even though they are not as colourful as their cultured cousins are, they present a more ancient beauty that only enthusiasts can appreciate. Evey shares that most enthusiasts like viewing the wild orchid and will spend a long time walking through the wooded area. Actually, the farm does not only display orchids. They also have various types of cactus, in various sizes and growth to view there. Cactus is a personal favourite. The farm has a little bit of something for everybody, actually, including a few *nepenthes* plant there.

For those who wish to view the farm, they can do so from 8am to 5pm.

Colourful beauties of Kawakaan

By Anna Vivienne