



ACHIMENES: An Introduction

Achimenes is a New World genus native to Mexico in the north and ranging southward through Central America to Peru and Venezuela in South America and eastward to the Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Hispaniola. The genus is distributed in rainforest habitats and can be naturally terrestrial or rupicolous. Achimenes grow in locales which have pronounced dry and wet seasons. Their habitat elevations range from 300 metres upwards to 2300 metres.

Achimenes are principally grown for the range of colours exhibited by their showy blossoms. Their tubular flowers can be up to two inches in length and three inches in diameter. Blossom colours include white, lavender, red, purple, yellow, orange, blue and various shades or combinations thereof.



A. 'Ambrose Verschaffelt'



CLASSIFICATION



Family: GESNERIACEAE
 Subfamily: GESNERIOIDEAE
 Tribe: GLOXINIEAE
 Genus: ACHIMENES
 Sub-genera: None
 No. of Species: 25
 Type Species: *Achimenes erecta*. First described as a genus in 1806 by Christiaan H. Persoon.

Distribution Range: Majority of species are endemic to Mexico with small numbers of species occurring in Central and South America and on the islands of Jamaica and Hispaniola.

Name Derivation: Greek (*Achaemenes, King of Persia*).

Root Structure: Rhizomatous and scaley.

Growth Habit: Helix, trailing or upright.

Chromosome Count: 22



Mixed Achimenes Blossoms

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Temperature: Warm growing - 70 to 90 degrees F; 20 to 30 degrees C.

Watering: Bottom, top or wick watering. Potting mixture must be kept constantly moist during active growth.

Light: High light.

Humidity: 40 to 60 percent.

Fertilizer: Continuously with a higher non-urea based formulation, e.g., 20-20-20.

Soil: Neutral, heading upward to slightly alkaline; pH=6 to 7; Basic Potting Mixture is appropriate.

Propagation: Asexually using tip cuttings, propagules or rhizomes, and sexually (seed) through self or cross pollination. Hybrid plant material will only reproduce true using asexual propagation methods and techniques.



A. 'Wetterlow's Triumph'



A. *pulchella*