



NEMATANTHUS: An Introduction

Nematanthus is a New World genus native to the coastal rainforests of southeastern Brazil. The genus was described in 1821 by the German botanist Heinrich Adolph Schrader (1767-1836). It derives its name from the display of unusually long pedicels (flower stems). This characteristic is especially prominent in species such as *N. brasiliensis* and *N. fluminensis*.

Nematanthus are epiphytic shrubs growing in the open rainforest. They are usually found growing on trees in forest clearings, as well as along creeks and sometimes on rocks. The majority of species are found growing at elevations between 500 and 1200 metres above sea level. Flowers range from orange and yellow through to combinations of white and maroon.

CLASSIFICATION



Family: GESNERIACEAE
 Subfamily: GESNERIOIDEAE
 Tribe: EPISCIEAE
 Genus: NEMATANTHUS
 Sub-genera: None
 No. of Species: 30+
 Type Species: *Nematanthus corticola*

Distribution Range: Southeastern Brazil.
 Name Derivation: From the Greek words *nema* (or *nemato*) for threadlike and *anthose* for flower.
 Root Structure: Fibrous.
 Growth Habit: Helix.
 Chromosome Count: 16.

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Temperature: Relatively warm growing - 70 to 80 degrees F; 20 to 30 degrees C. *Nematanthus* will drop leaves rapidly in temperatures exceeding 80 degrees F (30 degrees C), especially if overwatered.

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

Light: Medium to high light.

Humidity: 40 to 50 percent.

Fertilizer: Continuously with a non-urea based formulation, e.g., Dyna Gro 7-9-5.

Soil: Neutral, heading downward to slightly acid; Basic Potting Mixture is appropriate.

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



N. 'Green Magic'

Distribution Range



N. 'Christmas Holly'



N. crassifolius



N. 'Butterscotch'