

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Proposals concerning export quotas

A. PROPOSAL

Transfer of *Lycaste skinneri* (Bateman ex Lindley) Lindley var. *alba* Dombrain from Appendix I to Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

The United Mexican States and the Swiss Confederation.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Monocotyledonae

12. Order: Orchidales

13. Family: Orchidaceae

14. Genus: *Lycaste*

Species: *L. skinneri* (Bateman ex Lindley) Lindley var. *alba* Dombrain

Synonym: *Lycaste virginalis* Scheidweiler ex Linden & Rodigas

15. Common Names: English: White Nun
French:
Spanish: "Monja blanca"

16. Code Numbers:

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: *Lycaste skinneri* has been reported from the South of Mexico (in the State of Chiapas) to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Occasionally individuals with white flowers "*alba*" have been found throughout the range. The type *Lycaste virginalis* was collected in Mexico.

22. Population: The plants of *Lycaste skinneri* with white flowers do not constitute populations but are occasional variations or individuals within a normal population with pink flowers. Therefore, no taxon "*alba*" should be recognized as such. The species is highly variable regarding the size and shape of its flowers as well as the colour.

23. Habitat: The species occurs from the South of Mexico to El Salvador, in perennial montane forests with *Podocarpus* at an altitude of about 1,400-2,200 m. These areas have been frequently deforested to provide new zones for agriculture, husbandry and urban development. Nowadays, the species is reported in remaining forest along gullies and hillsides with inaccessible slopes.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: *Lycaste skinneri* var. *alba* was declared the national flower of Guatemala by presidential decree of 1934. It is traditionally and widely cultivated as an ornamental plant by the local inhabitants, especially in Guatemala. It is easy to cultivate in its native areas. It is always present in the orchid exhibitions in Guatemala, in the capital city as well as in Cobán and Salamá.

Plants of this species with pink flowers are traded in local markets. They are cultivated in pots made from tree ferns. They are highly appreciated by amateurs and local people.

The white clones, although rare, are produced by vegetative division of cultivated plants and, in general, are exchanged between amateurs. No trade in this variety has been reported in local markets since 1980.

32. Legal International Trade: The legal international trade in wild plants is non-existent because it is prohibited.
33. Illegal Trade: No data are available.

4. Protection Status

41. National:

411. Guatemala: The collection and export of this species has been prohibited since 1946. Decree 4-89 and its regulation authorize only the export of artificially propagated orchids, and activity regulated by the Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (CONAP).

412. Mexico: *Lycaste skinneri* is included as a threatened species in the Norma Oficial Mexicana NOM-059-ECOL-1994 published on 15 May 1994. The law prohibits the collection of wild specimens for trade purposes. Artificial propagation is officially promoted.

42. International: *Lycaste skinneri* (Bateman ex Lindley) Lindley var. *alba* Dombrain has been included in CITES Appendix I since 1975.

5. Information on Similar Species

In the absence of flowers, it is impossible to distinguish white-flowering specimens of *Lycaste skinneri* from with pink-flowering specimens. On the basis of the vegetative parts, the species hardly can be distinguished from the other species of the genus and even of other closely-related genera such as *Angulosa*. This is particularly important because the plants in trade do not, in general, have flowers. Both genera have been used to produce hybrids. In Guatemala there are natural hybrids of *Lycaste skinneri* with *Lycaste lasioglossa* and with *Lycaste deppei*, which are listed in Appendix II.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

Although wild populations are scarce in Mexico and Guatemala, the species is widely cultivated. As indicated in the decree which protects all orchid species in Guatemala, artificial propagation is officially supported. The fact that *Lycaste skinneri* (Bateman ex Lindley) Lindley var. *alba* Dombrain is listed in Appendix I makes the international trade in artificially propagated specimens difficult.

The Asociación Guatemalteca de Orchideología and associated organizations, in their meeting of February 1993, recommended the transfer of this taxon to Appendix II, a resolution that was communicated to the Conservation Committee of the American Orchid Society.

7. Additional Remarks

The transfer of this species from Appendix I to Appendix II will facilitate and encourage the artificial propagation of the white clones. The culture by vegetative propagation is the only alternative for the conservation of the clone as in the wild it has always been rare. There are hybrids and cultivated plants of this species in other countries of the region.

8. References

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