

# The 'majestic' Singapore orchid named in honor of Queen Elizabeth

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After Queen Elizabeth II's death, Singapore's Botanic Gardens loaned a sprig of *Dendrobium Elizabeth* to the British high commissioner's residence.

Elizabeth is majestic, hardy and "very fashionable", said a top Singapore flower curator—referring not to the late monarch, but to an orchid

named after the queen when she visited the former British colony.

After Queen Elizabeth II's death last week, the city-state's Botanic Gardens loaned a towering sprig of *Dendrobium Elizabeth* to the British high commissioner's residence, to be displayed alongside pictures of the monarch.

The [orchid](#) hybrid, with twisted Dresden-yellow petals and a uranium-green lip, was named in honor of the queen when she visited Singapore in 1972, said Whang Lay Keng, curator at Singapore's National Orchid Garden.

"*Dendrobium Elizabeth* is a majestic, robust and resilient plant," she told AFP.

"It's kind of like how Queen Elizabeth carried herself."

Flowering just twice a year, the *Dendrobium Elizabeth* was bred from orchids originating from Singapore and Papua New Guinea, and carries just about 40 blooms per plant.

Orchid-mad Singapore boasts the delicate, colorful blooms as their national flower, and the city-state often christens new hybrids after visiting dignitaries as part of its diplomatic charm offensive.

The tradition took root in 1957 during British colonial rule—which spanned more than 140 years—when an orchid variety was named after the wife of London's high commissioner to Singapore at the time.



"Dendrobium Elizabeth is a majestic, robust and resilient plant," said Whang Lay Keng, curator at Singapore's National Orchid Garden.

Queen Elizabeth first made a state visit to Singapore in 1972, followed by two more trips in 1989 and 2006.

"During the 1970s, the color yellow-green was very popular, so naturally we wanted to select something that was fashionable and very interesting," Whang said, adding that "yellow is a color of royalty".

But the tropical lowland orchid also has very distinct Southeast Asian traits.



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It is a "sun-loving plant that thrives in a moist and humid climate, where sunlight and warmth are important for its growth", the orchid curator said.

Among the more than 200 orchid hybrids named after visiting leaders and celebrities—displayed in the VIP section of the city's sprawling Botanic Gardens—there is also the Dendrobium Memoria Princess Diana. The pastel-white bloom was so dubbed after the death of the princess of Wales.



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