

NOTICE

THE SWISS ORCHID FOUNDATION AT THE HERBARIUM JANY RENZ

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ABSTRACT: To celebrate the 100th birthday of the famous orchidologist Jany Renz and the seven years of activity of the Swiss Orchid Foundation at the Herbarium Jany Renz, we are pleased to inform the public about the state of affairs at the Foundation.

When Jany Renz died in 1999 he bequeathed his herbarium and his library to the University of Basel, and in 2001, the Swiss Orchid Foundation at the Herbarium Jany Renz was founded. The aims of the Foundation are to maintain and curate the legacy of Jany Renz and to make his collection available to a worldwide audience. After the registration and digitalization of all herbarium specimens, books and separates, the approximately 20,000 herbarium specimens of the Renz collection are online at www.orchid.unibas.ch.

For systematic-taxonomic research, herbariums are important sources for revisions, monographs, and lately DNA to perform phylogenetic analyses. Herbarium specimens are often the last evidence of long destroyed vegetation. Furthermore, the herbarium specimens of Jany Renz are of excellent aesthetics and quality. Over a hundred of them are type specimens of his new classifications. The section of the website on modern reference literature is complete and therefore a very valuable base for orchid research. The separates-collection, consisting of roughly 5000 scientific articles about orchids, comes from different sources and represents an outstanding rich and complete collection of orchid literature. Both collections are integrated in the index of the Basel University Library <http://aleph.unibas.ch>.

After having inventoried the Jany Renz's scientific cultural heritage, the Foundation decided to make the whole collection virtually available worldwide. Along with informative articles about the Foundation and Dr. Jany Renz, the website of the Foundation offers access to the 26,000 herbarium specimens from all over the world. It also makes the collections of Renz, of

the Botanic Institute at the Basel University, of the Botanic Association Basel, and the historic orchid collection of Bernoulli and Cario available. With the approximately 5000 hand-colored drawings from Renz' library still to be digitized and other graphic materials that are provided by authors from all over the world, the Swiss Orchid Foundation hopes to present as complete a version as possible of the World Orchid Iconography.

In order to catalog new records including easy georeferencing, researchers designed a stable and flexible system based on the internet programming language PHP and the database MySQL[®] in 2005. The World Orchid Iconography is maintained and continuously updated by civilian workers under the direction of Dr. h.c. Samuel Sprunger.

Currently the website of the Swiss Orchid Foundation at the Herbarium Jany Renz contains about 36,000 pictures with updated nomenclature from all over the world. All orchids from Europe, Asia Minor, and Northern Africa are virtually available either as herbarium specimens, hand-colored drawings, or photographs. This picture library is an important instrument for scientists, non-professionals, enthusiasts, and cultivators worldwide in order to get access to visual and nomenclatural information on orchids.

Furthermore, all visitors to the website of the Foundation have free access to the Bibli-Orchidea, a comprehensive database with 140,000 records and thus 80% of the worldwide available orchid literature. This database is maintained and continuously updated by the orchidologist Dr. Rudolph Jenny. The publishing

