

## Beallara Orchid Growing (syn Aliceara) in the Riverina region of NSW

-part of the *Oncidium* alliance

*Beallara* (Blira.) is an *Oncidium* intergeneric 4 way cross between *Brassia*, *Miltonia*, *Cochlioda* and *Odontoglossum*. To achieve this cross breeders usually cross *Miltassia* (*Miltonia* x *Brassia*) with *Odontodia* (*Odontoglossum* x *Cochlioda*) (1).

*Beallara* has recently been renamed *Aliceara* abbreviated to *Alcra*.

They have up to 12 long lasting star shaped flowers on 1.2m long spikes. Flowers are often fragrant (1). They flower in spring and summer in the Riverina although might flower earlier if grown in a glasshouse.



Beallara Marfitch 'Howards Dream'

Generally their care is similar to *Oncidium*s but is a little different due the different species in the crosses.

They can be grown in a well-protected unheated shade house in the Riverina but would do better in a glasshouse where winter temperatures are higher and humidity more favorable in summer.

### Temperature requirements

The optimum temperature is 15 to 29°C but they will tolerate temperature extremes from 1°C to 40°C for short periods. They will tolerate lower night temperatures in winter if daytime temperatures are higher. They will not tolerate frosts. They are generally more tolerant of higher temperatures than *Odontoglossum*s (1, 2) but humidity must be kept higher as temperatures increase. Cooler nights are necessary to flower well.

### Light

They prefer a little more light than *Oncidium*s but less than *cattleyas*. Around 2000-3000fc in summer and 3500-5000fc in winter. In the Riverina region 50-70% shade cloth should be adequate.

### Humidity and air movement

They prefer a humid environment with 55-75% humidity (2). Use water-filled gravel trays or misting to increase humidity in hot weather. Good air movement is important when humidity is high to minimise fungal and bacterial diseases.

### Water

They prefer to be kept moist throughout the growing season but have drier rest in winter (1). Let the plants become almost dry before watering (2, 3). A polycarbonate roof is required in the Riverina region to prevent them becoming too wet in winter.



Beallara Diana Dunn

### **Potting medium**

Potting medium varies with your watering regime and plant size. As they have finer roots they prefer a small bark medium (1). It needs to be open and free draining but retain moisture (2). Repot every 2 years. Do not overpot and use the smallest pot necessary to contain the roots. Plants are less susceptible to overwatering when in smaller pots. Repot when new growths are about 5-8 cm high (3). Squat shaped pots are preferred.

### **Fertilizers**

They require frequent application of quarter to half strength fertilizer during their growing season. A high phosphorus and potassium fertilizer is recommended in mid summer onwards (3) or once flower spikes appear (2). Leach pots periodically to remove excess salts.

### **Diseases**

They behave similarly to Oncidiums. Ensure leaves are dry by evening and maintain good air movement to reduce the risk of bacterial and fungal diseases.



Beallara Tahoma Glacier  
"Sugar Sweet"

### **Further reading and acknowledgements**

The information in this guide has been gained from local growers and the publications below.

1. Gardening Australia Flora's Orchids. ABC Books (2005).
2. Beallara orchids. Nurseries online. <http://www.nurseriesonline.us/Orchids/Beallara-Orchids.html>
3. Open-line Garden show. <http://www.brucezimmerman.com/articles/ORCHIDS.htm>

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These notes are intended as a guide only and are composed from available information and local experience. The Wagga Wagga Orchid Society and its members are not responsible for any loss or damage.