

## COELOGYNE DAYANA

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*Coelogyne Dayana*, Reichb. belongs to a noble race of pseudo-bulbous epiphytic orchids comprising over fifty named species distributed in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Asia. The genus occurs at various altitudes in India, Borneo, Malaya and China. Most of the species are beautiful and therefore favourites in cultivation.

The genus is divided into two sections, viz., the true *Coelogyne*s, most of which have beautiful, thick, and large foliage, with drooping racemes, and the *Pleiones* which have the peculiar habit of throwing out flowers from the soil even before the appearance of any leaves. *Coelogyne Dayana* is indigenous to the high forests of Borneo where it is found growing on tree trunks and rocks. It was introduced into Ceylon about 1890.

It has handsome long plicate leaves produced from the apex of the long ovoid pseudo-bulbs. It is also very conspicuous for its large brownish coloured flowers borne alternately on a long drooping raceme two to three feet long. The flowers last for nearly 20 to 25 days.

For successful cultivation of the members of this genus a certain amount of light and warmth is required. A good rooting medium for large leaved *Coelogyne*s of the type of *C. Dayana* may be made up of equal parts of decayed wood, old coconut husk, small bits of bones and charcoal and a good quantity of half-decayed leaves or Sphagnum moss. The latter should be chopped finely before being mixed up with the compost. *Coelogyne* as a rule has a tendency to grow and lead on in one direction till it reaches the rim of the receptacle, indicating that it needs repotting or rebasketing. The plant, however, does not tolerate much disturbance and it should not be too frequently tampered with. Repotting, therefore, should be avoided unless the compost is old and sour or the plant is overgrown.



*Coelogyne Dayana*, Reichb.

Coelogynes may be grown to best advantage in shallow perforated pans or teak baskets suspended from the roof of the green house or verandah in the warmest position. Sections of the Tree Fern (*Alsophila* or *Hemitelia*) cut up into lengths of 6 to 12 inches have been found handy for its cultivation. The thick base sections of the fern trunk can be used after scooping out the soft and pithy substance and filling them with the above compost in a fine state. The plants need top-dressing as soon as the flowers are over. All Coelogynes will welcome an ample supply of water during the growing season and watering should be continued till the plants come into bloom, and then the supply should be reduced. The syringe may be used freely during the dry weather to keep the foliage fresh and to prevent any undue shrivelling of the pseudo-bulbs. Propagation is affected by carefully dividing the pseudo-bulbs with a growing lead to each division. Old and leafless pseudo-bulbs rarely produce new plants unless they are severed with a sound and healthy root-stock.