Acrorchis Dressler

Created by R.L. Dressler in 1989 to accommodate a relatively frequent epiphyte and lithophyte which did not fit any of the hitherto known genera of the Laeliinae, *Acrorchis* is a closely allied to *Jacquiniella* and *Isochilus*. It differs from *Isochilus* mainly because of the rostellum without a viscidium, and from Jacquiniella in the lack of stigmatic flaps on the sides of the rostellum. The shape of *Acrorchis* flowers, and especially the callus, is also reminiscent of *Dimerandra*, but its stems are slender rather than thick and fleshy, and the column does not have terminal wings.

A single plant of *Acrorchis* was originally collected in the late 1970s in Monteverde, Costa Rica, but it was not until 1985 when good herbarium material was prepared from plants collected at Cerro Colorado, Panama, based upon which the genus was eventually described.

The name *Acrorchis* is derived from the Greek words "*acros*," meaning peak or mountain top, and "*orchis*," in reference to the typical habit of the plants living on high ridges and mountain peaks.

The only species of the genus, *Acrorchis roseola*, is common locally in windy cloud forests at elevations of 1300-1900 meters from western Costa Rica to central Panama, where it grows epiphytically but also as a terrestrial in sphagnum mats and on rocks where no large trees are available. The creeping plants are loosely cespitose, forming mats about 15 cm. tall, and they produce fascicles of few ephemeral flowers, white or pale rose flushed with pink, opening one or two at a time. In Costa Rica, it inhabits exposed peaks along the continental divide from the Cordillera de Tilarán to the Cordillera Volcánica Central, but its distribution is possibly wider, as these thin plants remain easily undetected when not in bloom. Due to the short-lived nature of the flowers, the flowering season of *A. roseola* is only partially known, but plants in Costa Rica have been reported in bloom in June and October.

Although it is best suited to a cool garden at high elevations, *A. roseola* can also be satisfactorily grown at sea level (Dressler 1989) placing the plants in a wet spot with sphagnum around their roots and keeping them moist.

Acrorchis roseola Dressler

Alajuela: La Palma de San Ramón, flowered at Jardín Botánico Lankester, *R.L. Dressler & D.E. Mora-Retana s.n.*
Photographed, August 1998. Reproduction ratio 3:1

Acrorchis roseola Dressler

Alajuela: Monteverde, flowered at Monteverde Orchid Garden.
Photographed, 23 May 2001. Reproduction ratio 3:1

Acrorchis roseola Dressler

Alajuela: La Palma de San Ramón, flowered at Jardín Botánico Lankester, *R.L. Dressler & D.E. Mora-Retana s.n.*
Photographed, July 1992. Reproduction ratio 3:1.