



St. Augustine Orchid Society

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Understanding Your Plant Tag

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

Which one of your children is your favorite? Maybe it will be easier for you to pick your favorite seedling from this cross of C. Mrs. Mahler 'Mem. Fred Tomkins' x C. Fort Motte 'Leopard' made by John Stanton of [The Orchid Trail](http://TheOrchidTrail.com) in Morrisville, North Carolina.

C. Mrs. Mahler 'Memoria Fred Tomkins' x C. Fort Motte 'Leopard'



Cultivar '#2'



Cultivar '#3'



Cultivar '#4'



Cultivar '#5'



Cultivar '#6'



Cultivar '#7'

Knowing how I like the bifoliate, Courtney Hackney forwarded me John's pictures of several cultivars from this grex. All the progeny of a hybridizing event are referred to as a grex. Individual plants within the grex may be given cultivar or clonal names. As of this writing, John just assigned numbers as clonal names for various cultivars. The colors of individual cultivars in this grex range from orangey bronze to purple, and some have lots of spots and others just a few.

The first name of any cross is always the pod parent and the second name is the pollen parent. This means that the pollen from C. Fort Motte was placed on the stigmatic surface of the C. Mrs. Mahler and the seed pod formed on the mother plant. This hybrid has not yet been registered with the Royal Horticultural Society, but once it is any hybrid between



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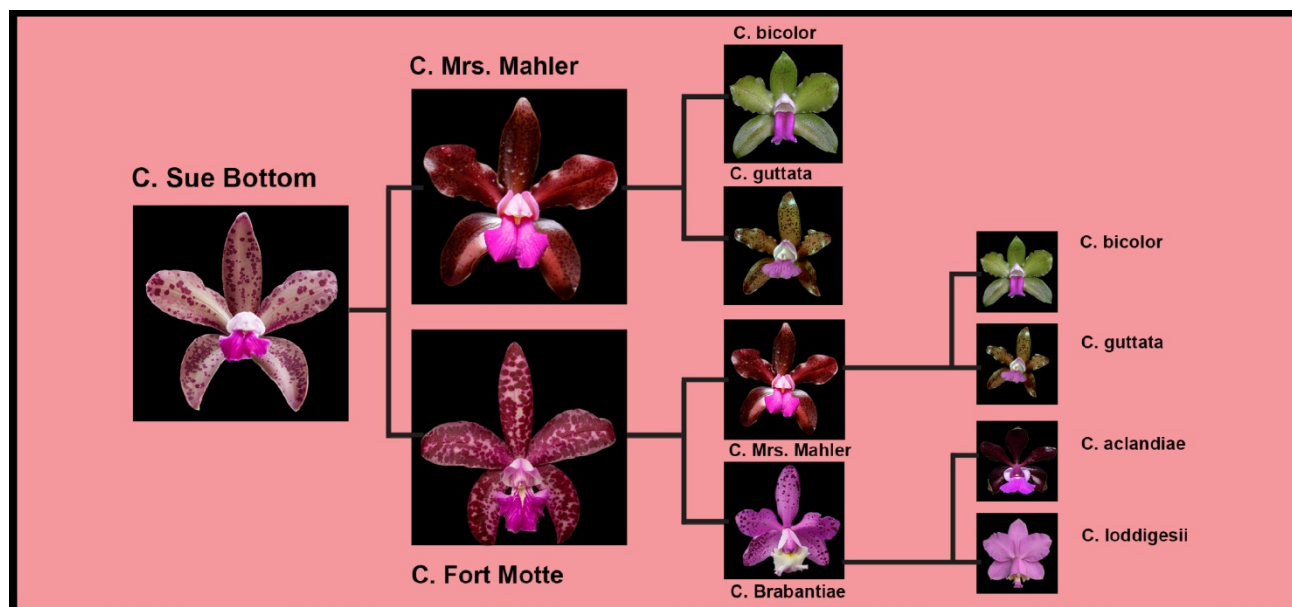
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Mrs. Mahler and Fort Motte will carry the same registered name regardless of which is the pod and which the pollen parent.

You can learn a lot about a plant's genealogy from its name. The abbreviation preceding the plant's name tells you the plant genus, in this case a *Cattleya* as designated by the abbreviation C. A genus is a grouping of plants with similar characteristics that interbreeds easily. The information on the plant tag will allow you to generate your plant's family tree:



Mom is *Cattleya* Mrs. Mahler, a name registered in 1901 for the primary hybrid between *Cattleya bicolor* and *Cattleya guttata*. A primary hybrid is simply a cross between two species parents. Species are subdivisions within a genus of similar orchids that are reproductively isolated from their closest relatives. You can tell that the *C. bicolor* and *C. guttata* are species because the first letter of their species names is not capitalized (species names should also be italicized though this rule is not followed rigorously). You know Mrs. Mahler is a hybrid from the plant tag because the first letter of her name is capitalized.

A specific cultivar of this grex was taken to judging by the American Orchid Society by George Off & Sons in 1977 who named the cultivar 'Memoria Fred Tomkins' after it was given an Award of Merit (AM), a flower quality award. Any division or mericlone from this cultivar should be genetically identical so it will carry the same name as the mother plant. Mom's full proper name is *C. Mrs. Mahler* 'Mem. Fred Tomkins', AM/AOS. Six years later, George Off & Sons were given a Certificate of Cultural Merit (CCM) for the same plant, a cultural award given to the grower.



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Cattleya Fort Motte, the pollen parent or Dad, is the offspring of Cattleya Mrs. Mahler and Cattleya Brabantiae. John Stanton used the cultivar C. Fort Motte 'Leopard' in making his cross. This cultivar was never awarded but it carries a clonal name because Carter and Holmes, the grower who made and registered C. Fort Motte, thought the flower was special enough that they wanted to be able to distinguish it from its siblings. The grandparents are Brabantiae, a primary hybrid between the great grandparents *C. aclandiae* x *C. loddigesii*, and Mrs. Mahler, a primary hybrid between the great grandparents *C. bicolor* and *C. guttata*.

If John Stanton's Hybrid Was Human...		
Orchid Term	Using John Stanton's Cross as the Example	The Human Equivalent
Pod Parent	C. Mrs. Mahler 'Mem. Fred Tomkins', AM/AOS	Mom
Seed Parent	C. Fort Motte 'Leopard'	Dad
Grex	C. Mrs. Mahler x C. Fort Motte	All the Children in the Brood
Registered Name	Seedlings: C. Sue Bottom* Mom's Name: C. Mrs. Mahler Dad's Name: C. Fort Motte	Surname or Last Name
Clonal or Cultivar Name	Seedlings: Identified only by numbers '#2', '#3', etc. as of this writing Mom's Name: Mem. Fred Tomkins Dad's Name: Leopard	Given Name or First Name
Genus	<i>Cattleya</i>	<i>Homo</i>
Species	<i>bicolor</i> , <i>guttata</i> , <i>aclandiae</i> and <i>loddigesii</i> are all present in the bloodlines	<i>sapiens</i>

*Imagine my surprise when Courtney told me that John has allowed him to name this hybrid, and he chose the name Sue Bottom. This cross has been registered with the Royal Horticultural Society as *Cattleya Sue Bottom*, what an honor!



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Cattleya Sue Bottom 'St. Augustine' AM/AOS