

# Oncidium

On-SID-ee-um

## Oncidium 'Sharry Baby'



Generally known as the 'dancing lady' orchids, *Oncidium* are native to subtropical and tropical areas of the Americas. The habitats vary considerably for the somewhere "over three hundred" species from hot, humid lowlands and Caribbean islands to over 2 miles high in the Andes. Added to all the *Oncidium* species are hundreds of intrageneric hybrids, crosses between different *Oncidium* species and intergeneric hybrids, crosses between an *Oncidium* species and another orchid genus.

'Sharry Baby' is one of the more popular *Oncidium* hybrids. The cinnamon-brown and white flowers are only about 4 centimeters across, but they are densely arranged on branching inflorescences up to three feet (1 meter) long. 'Sharry Baby' almost always blooms in autumn, but with a little bit of care, the plant may bloom twice a year. 'Sharry Baby' has given rise to a number of its own descendants—Sweet Fragrance, Yellow Flash, and Red Fantasy.

Standard *Oncidium* care should be given to the 'Sharry Baby'. One of the only exceptions is that 'Sharry Baby' typically requires higher light conditions than some of the other *Oncidium*s in order to initiate flower spikes. This higher light oftentimes causes little black dots, often compared to freckles on the human skin, to appear on the leaves. These dots are completely harmless. This is a natural characteristic of 'Sharry Baby' and is no cause for alarm.

Among the multitude of plants 'discovered' by Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland was a lavender and yellow orchid, *Oncidium ornithorhynchum* (literally bird's beak). Unlike many *Oncidium*, bird's beak is fragrant. Although 'Sharry Baby' does not look much like its maternal grandmother, it inherited a warm and wonderful scent—chocolate with just a hint of vanilla.