

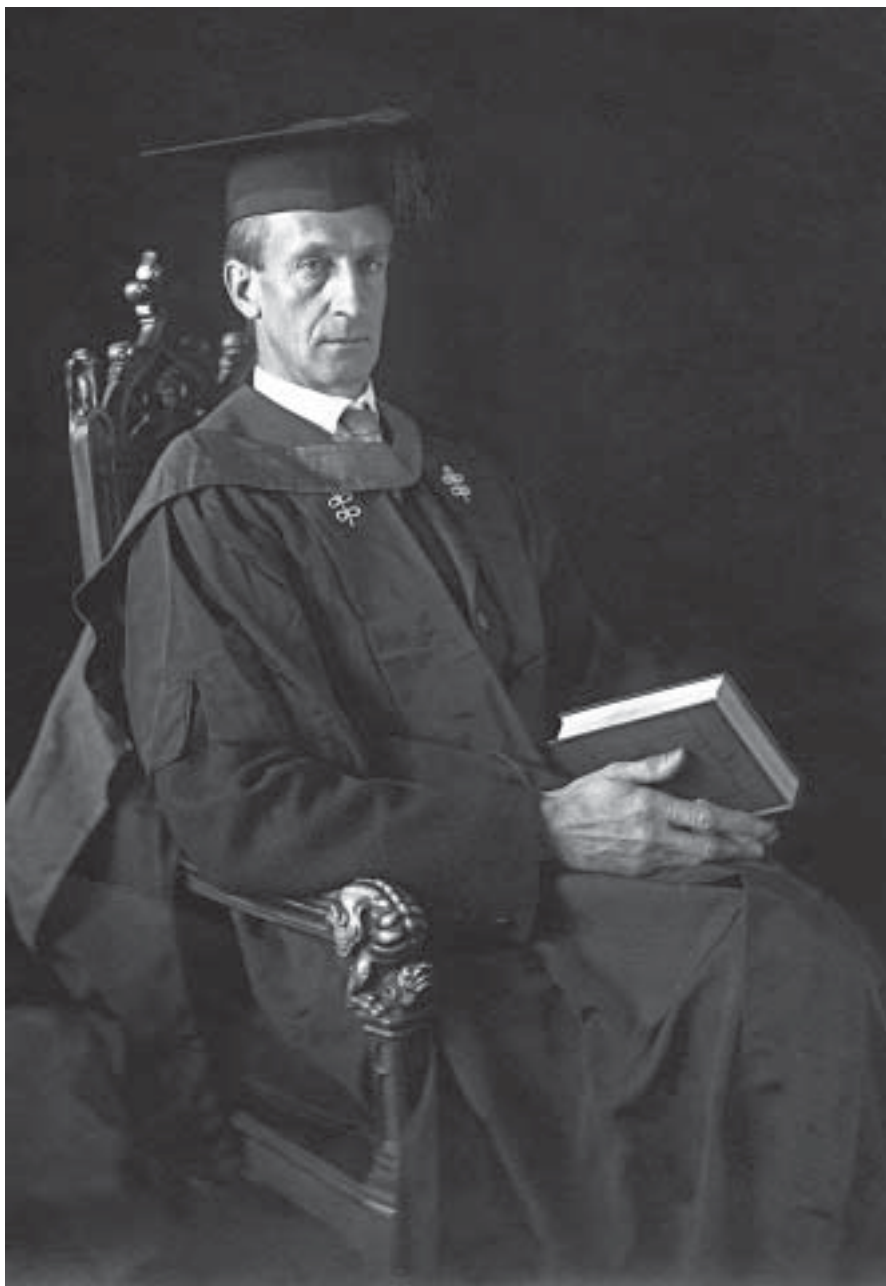
Orchids in Costa Rica

Part II: Charles H. Lankester and Oakes Ames

BY CARLOS OSSENBACH

*“Twenty three years ago today, the good ship ‘Atrato’
(now alas asleep in the depths off the N. Irish coast) left Southampton
with myself on board en route for Costa Rica, and here I am still ...”*

— Charles Lankester in a letter to Oakes Ames, December 1923



CHARLES HERBERT LANKESTER (1879–1969) was without doubt the dominant figure of Central American orchidology during the 20th century. Better known as “don Carlos,” Lankester had been born in Southampton, England, on June 14, 1879, son of Charles and Helen West Lankester. He lost both parents when he was only three years of age and was raised, together with his sister, by two aunts. After finishing school, he started work at a photo studio and eventually went to London, where he specialized in color photography at the Polytechnic Institute. It was in London where he read an announcement in the *Daily Telegraph*, offering a position in Costa Rica to a young Englishman willing to work as an assistant to the recently founded Sarapiquí Coffee Estates Company. Lankester applied and was hired, landing a few months later in Puerto Limón and going on by train to the capital of Costa Rica, where he arrived just in time to take part in the “Ball of the New Century” offered by Costa Rica’s President Rafael Yglesias in the National Theater of San José.

Sarapiquí, in the Atlantic region, proved too humid for the commercial production of coffee and the plantations had to be abandoned three years after the arrival of don Carlos. Here, however, surrounded by the most exuberant tropical vegetation, his interest arose for plants, insects and birds. As Dr. Louis Williams wrote in his obituary, “don Carlos Lankester arrived at the right place at the right time to join into the active biological exploration of Costa Rica, perhaps the most exciting place biologically on our continent.” Lankester’s talent and



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OPPOSITE Oakes Ames (1874–1950), the great American orchidologist and founder of one of the world's largest orchid herbaria.

ABOVE LEFT *Epidendrum circinatum*, collected by Lankester during one of many excursions with Alfredo Sancho, to whom Ames dedicated *Pleurothallis sanchoi*. TOP RIGHT Dorothea Mary Hawker, Lankester's wife.

ABOVE Charles H. Lankester (1879–1969), Central America's most prominent orchid collector of the 20th century. LEFT Orchids displayed in Lankester's house in Cachí (1913) included this magnificent plant of *Guarianthe* (syn. *Cattleya*) *skinneri* fma. *alba*.



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I fear stimulation of orchidological interest is exceedingly important & likely to be successful in C.R. only if carried out by a professor of botany among his pupils; if we planters, et al who reside here temporarily & for purposes of gain, I think I alone have the necessary madness.

Cultivating Myrmecophilous Orchids

THERE are several species that seem to be definitely myrmecophilous, mostly at elevations up to 3,000 feet (900 m), an exception being *Epidendrum dolabrillosum*, which occurs in Orosi and Navarro [somewhat higher]. It was described by Professor Ames from specimens obtained at Las Concavas, where it is not uncommon and there it is associated with *Pleurothallis pantasmi*, and a small *Peperomia* also takes advantage of the favourable medium provided by the ants' nest to grow luxuriantly.

In both coastal regions and usually in trees hanging over river banks, *Epidendrum imatophyllum* may be found in association with *Coryanthes* and occasionally *Epidendrum elongatum*, whose flower is so much like that of *Epi. radicans* that it seems to defy specific separation when made up as a scientific specimen. These masses of plants are difficult to collect, and can be handled comfortably only after immersion in water has driven out the ants. *Coryanthes* at times grows to a huge spherical mass — one seen at Pejivalle had perhaps over a hundred bulbs with numerous living and dead flower spikes. The flowers are among the most interesting of the group, though the species seems very little known and difficult of culture with ordinary facilities, and it seldom thrives after the disappearance of the rich medium provided by the accretion of humus continually added by the ants. In the absence of this natural symbiotic stimulus, such a medium would have to be provided artificially, and might be secured by well-rotted manure. So delightful and comparatively rare a plant would well repay any efforts that might lead to success in growing it, although the writer well remembers that attempts made at Balboa [Panama], where it should have been easy to establish a suitable colony of ants, eventually ended in failure. Many other orchids, such as *Gongoras*, benefit from similar stimulus, though some species of ants prove detrimental by propagating mealy bug, one of the worst pests for the grower in Costa Rica, where it is nearly everywhere present. — Charles H. Lankester (from pages 7 and 8 of the manuscript of his book *Costa Rican Orchids*).

spirit bespoke of his pedigree: his father's cousin, Sir Edwin Ray Lankester (1847–1929), had been director of the Natural History Museum in London.

Lankester met the famous professor Henri Pittier when he visited this interesting region, beginning a lifelong friendship. When his contract expired, Lankester returned to England, but came back to Costa Rica a few months later, called by Pittier to take over the experimental station that the United Fruit Company planned to establish in Zent, near the Caribbean port of Limón, a project that never became reality.

He worked with different companies until 1908, when he returned to England to marry Dorothea Mary Hawker, with whom he returned to Costa Rica, accepting the administration of a coffee farm in Cachí, where he lived for nine years with his wife and young family.

Lankester was first interested in birds and butterflies, but, in the nearby woods, soon began his orchid collections, which in many cases proved to be new species. Lankester started corresponding with Arthur Hill, at that time assistant director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1910, and somewhat later with Robert Allan Rolfe, Kew's most prominent authority on orchids. The first mention of orchids in his correspondence is in a letter to Hill of December 1910, where he wrote: "I have a few orchids chiefly of botanical interest, which I will send when it gets warmer on your side." *Stelis barbata* Rolfe, a plant collected near Cachí and sent to Kew, where it flowered in November 1912, being described by Rolfe in the *Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information of Kew* in

1913, was the first new orchid discovered by Lankester in Costa Rica.

At the same time, Lankester began his collection of living plants, which would become famous years later. His house in Cachí showed beautiful displays of orchids. Lankester returned to England in 1920 to take his five children (four daughters and one boy) to English schools. His youngest daughter was born in England that same year. In the meantime, Lankester traveled to Africa from 1920 to 1922, hired by the British Government to do research on coffee plantations in Uganda. When he returned to England, he found that Rolfe had died the year before, just as he was preparing to travel to Costa Rica and Panama on his first field trip to tropical America. Many orchids that Lankester had brought to Kew were left without identification.

Lankester was back in Costa Rica in 1922, a year that was a turning point in his career as an orchidologist as it brought the first contact with Oakes Ames, which would develop into a deep and long-lasting friendship.

To understand what was happening in the world of orchidology, remember that up to the 1920s, the study and knowledge of orchids was strictly a European business. Orchidology in the 19th century had been dominated by an Englishman, the great John Lindley (1790–1865), followed by a German, Heinrich Reichenbach the son (or *filius*, as he liked to be called) (1824–1889). After Reichenbach's death in 1889, Robert Allan Rolfe (1855–1921) took over the position of world's master of orchidology, soon challenged and replaced by the German Rudolf Schlechter (1872–1925). It was not until Rolfe's death in 1921, soon followed by Schlechter's in 1925, that the first American expert in orchids could rise in the figure of Oakes Ames (1874–1950), who took over a dominant position in the orchid world that was never challenged until his death.

Ames, after returning from a trip to Europe, wrote his first letter to Lankester (Sept. 17, 1922): "At Kew I saw many specimens collected by you in Costa Rica, the greater part unnamed. As it will take some time for Kew to recover from the loss of Rolfe and as the Germans are making great efforts to assemble Costa Rican material through Wercklé, Jimenez and Tonduz, it seemed to me that you might be willing to cooperate with me by



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stimulating orchidological interest among your neighbors." He continued, "It would surely be worthwhile if you can see your way clear to send me herbarium specimens and to send collectors into the orchid regions of Costa Rica. I have already identified and described as new, one of your species of *Pleurothallis*. I refer to *P. palliolata* (Lankester 192). The specimen was sent for determination by Hort. Kew." Ames finished this famous first letter to Lankester by saying: "We must work fast if we hope to keep abreast of the Germans. I was surprised to see how far reaching their efforts have been to secure a monopoly of tropical American species."

Keep in mind that the famous German orchidologist Rudolf Schlechter was at that time describing hundreds of new

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT *Dichaea lankesteri* is widespread from Belize to Panama.
 OPPOSITE TOP CENTER *Encyclia peraltensis* was collected by Lankester near the small village of Peralta.
 OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT Edwin Ray Lankester (1847–1929), Charles' famous relative.
 OPPOSITE MIDDLE In a letter to Ames dated October 11, 1922, Lankester wrote, "I alone have the necessary madness."
 TOP *Lankesterella costaricensis* (= *Lankesterella orthantha*) is the type species of the genus.
 ABOVE LEFT *Elleanthus tricallosus* Ames & Schweinf., type specimen at the Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium at Harvard.
 ABOVE *Stenorhynchos bracteosum* (= *Coccineorchis bracteosa*) is a terrestrial that grows at high altitudes.



Central American orchid species based on the collections of Powell in Panama, and of Wercklé, Brenes, Tonduz and Jiménez in Costa Rica.

Lankester answered immediately and became, for the next 15 years, the favorite collector of Ames, who discovered among the specimens received from Costa Rica more than 100 new species. In his letter to Ames of October 11, 1922, Lankester wrote: "I fear stimulation of orchidological interest is exceedingly improbable or likely to be successful in Costa Rica ... I think I alone have the necessary madness."

In 1922, Ames began a series of publications on orchids that he named *Schedulae Orchidianae*. In its third fascicle, in January 1923, Ames started to describe many of the Lankester orchids that were deposited at Kew and were left unidentified because of Rolfe's death. Dozens of new species were discovered.

Ames kept describing more and more new orchids from Costa Rica and asking Lankester to send more and more specimens. "Your specimens have arrived They made my day cheerful to the end. I wished they were more. But if you had sent ten times as many, I would still say that." (August, 1923)

In April 1923, Ames wrote to Lankester: "There seems to be a new genus among your specimens, *Lankesterella* would be a good name." Thus, a new genus was born, honoring Costa Rica's greatest orchid collector.

In 1924, Lankester moved to live at "Las Cónovas," a coffee farm that he had acquired in the vicinity of Cartago, and that would become, over the years, the mecca for dozens of botanists and orchidologists from all over the world. Lankester's orchid collection was already enormous. In August he wrote to Ames: "... we hope to move over to the 'finca' about the middle of November, this means among other things the translation of about 1,800 orchids over unimaginable roads."

By December 1924, after only two years of corresponding with Lankester, Ames had already described 66 new species among his collections. No other collector in Central America, with the possible exception of George Ure Skinner in the first half of the 19th century, had discovered so many orchids new to science. A self-made man with no formal botanical training, Lankester had developed a sharp eye

New Species Collected by Charles Lankester from Plant Families other than Orchidaceae

ASTERACEAE

Vernonia lankesteri S.F. Blake ex Standl.

BROMELIACEAE

Araeococcus pectinatus L.B. Smith

CACTACEAE

Discocactus lankesteri Kimmach

CAPPARACEAE

Capparis lankesteri Standl.

EUPHORBIACEAE

Croton triumfettoides Croizat

MALVACEAE

Wercklea lutea Rolfe

PIPERACEAE

Peperomia lankesteri Trel.

RANUNCULACEAE

Thalictrum lankesteri Standl.

SAPOTACEAE

Bumelia lankesteri Standl.

SOLANACEAE

Lycianthes lankesteri Standl.

VERBENACEAE

Citharexylum lankesteri Moldenke

A list of orchids collected by Charles Lankester is on page 127. — *Compiled by Carlos Ossensbach.*



for novelties. Handling and mailing of plants was not a problem in those years, as phytosanitary certificates and CITES did not exist yet.

In 1925, Lankester, who has just reached the age of 45, was at the peak of his success as an orchidologist. He saw his children again during a short trip to England, his new coffee farm was in full production and in July he was elected an honorary member of the American Orchid Society.

But Lankester had not finished with his orchid collections and Ames continued the publication of his *Schedulae Orchidianae*, now with Charles C. Schweinfurth as co-author. With the publication of fascicle 9 in July 1925, the number of new species collected by Lankester and described by Ames had reached 99.

In 1927, Lankester visited Charles W. Powell, Panama's famous orchid collector, and wrote to Ames in one of his most famous passages: "I have just spent a fortnight with my fellow sufferer from Orchiditis, CWP, and it was a very delightful time of talk and talk and then talk. I wish we could have had you there as High Priest of our cult. Possibly a few tangles might have been unravelled."

"Las Cóncevas," Lankester's farm, with his beautiful collections of plants, could not go unnoticed to the world's naturalists. Perhaps it must be explained that Lankester did not collect orchids only. His garden had important collections of cacti, palms and

bromeliads, although orchids were always Lankester's favorites. Among the visitors to Las Cóncevas were famous names such as Arthur Hill, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Thomas Barbour of Harvard University; Harvey Stork, William Maxon, Wilson Popenoe, Philip Calvert, James Rehn and Louis Otho Williams.

After 1930, Lankester and Ames seem to drift slowly apart. Ames was occupied more and more by administrative work at Harvard, and Lankester traveled abroad more frequently. In a letter from April 1932, Ames complained about the separation. "I have missed you. Those little crumbs from your orchidologist feasts always made me feel that you were near at hand. Since your return to England I have felt that you had departed almost to another planet!"

In 1932, Lankester was named by the president of Costa Rica to serve on the board of the National Museum, a great honor that he shared with two other famous names in the history of the orchids of Costa Rica: Anastasio Alfaro and, above all, Amparo Zeledón, the grand lady of Costa Rican orchid history.

Lankester visited the Canary Islands in 1934, exploring Tenerife with Professor Balinaga, director of the Botanical Garden. The following year he went to Brazil and, after traversing the South American continent, exited through Bolivia.

The last three orchids that Ames

OPPOSITE Lankester in his garden in El Silvestre (1955), part of his farm, which became years later the Charles H. Lankester Botanical Garden of the University of Costa Rica.

ABOVE LEFT An illustration of *Stelis latipetala* by Blanche Ames, who drew many new orchid species described by her husband, Oakes.

ABOVE MIDDLE *Lepanthes cascajalensis* (= *Lepanthes eciliata*) is a rare species from the heights of Cascajal, northeast from San José.

ABOVE *Pleurothallis dentipetala* is one of the many new species that remained unidentified after Rolfe's death.

described based on Lankester's collections were published between 1934 and 1935 in the Botanical Museum's leaflets of Harvard University. They were three different species of *Stelis*: *Stelis crystallina*, *Stelis latipetala* and *Stelis transversalis*.

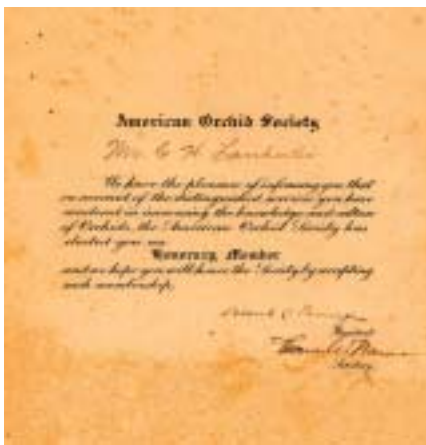
Lankester went one more time to England before the outbreak of World War II and returned to Costa Rica with his wife at the end of 1939, nearly missing being torpedoed in the convoy of ships in which they crossed the Atlantic, a small ship to the side of them being the unfortunate victim.

Lankester's last package of plants was sent to Ames, according to our records, in March 1942, although their correspondence continued until Ames died in 1950.

In the early 1940s, Lankester began



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what he meant to be his final tribute to the orchids of his adopted country: a book that would be called *Costa Rican Orchids*. Soon the word was out. The orchid world wanted to see the book. Paul H. Allen, the foremost expert on the orchids of Panama, wrote to Lankester in 1946: “Through the grapevine, I have heard that you have done a manual on the orchids of Costa Rica. It is most fortunate in my opinion that you have done so, since you have probably seen more species in the field than any living collector.” Lankester not only wanted to write a book, he wanted to raise funds for the conservation of his farm as a paradise of Costa Rican orchids. He wrote to Rodney Wilcox Jones, president of the American Orchid Society from 1942 to 1948, but the answer was not very encouraging. “... I would be inclined to believe there is not much that can be done ... Of course, now with your book coming along, I can see where it could be a basis to start an interest in conserving your place as an orchid haven ...” The years went by, and the manuscript was never published.

Lankester dedicated himself more and more to the building up of his orchid and other plant collections. In 1949 he sold his house in London and decided to stay in Costa Rica for his remaining life, although three of his daughters were married and living in England. As he wrote to Gordon Dillon in 1960: “No idea of returning to live in England, I sold my house in London in 1949, but retain the link of 3 married daughters there, a summer like last year’s is certainly inviting, but the winters —”

In 1955, after his wife’s death, and already 76 years old, Lankester decided to sell his farm, but retained the small part that contained his garden, a piece

of land called “El Silvestre.” Lankester moved to San José to a house he had bought in Moravia, one of the suburbs of the capital. The house is today in possession of Lankester’s grandson Ricardo, and is surely worth a visit if you ever come to Costa Rica.

On June 10, 1961, in a ceremony at the British Embassy in San José, Lankester was conferred the Order of the British Empire by order of Queen Elizabeth II., an honor of which Lankester would be proud to the end of his days.

Charles Herbert Lankester died in 1969, alone but for the company of his daughter Dorothy, and having lived during his last years in a difficult economic condition. As one of his friends wrote in his guest book: “Time is unfair to this place and these people”.

Paul Standley and Louis Williams described Lankester in their obituaries with these words: “Generous to a fault, hospitable to all, he was counselor to all scientists who came to Costa Rica. His interests were catholic — butterflies, birds, but most especially epiphytic plants, orchids, bromeliads and aroids.” “A naturalist in the best and widest sense of that word.”

Shortly before his death, Lankester confessed to his daughter Dorothy: “I am only sorry that, with all the opportunities I had, I never made enough money.”

But Lankester’s legacy was preserved. After his death, his daughter Dorothy needed to sell the garden. The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust from England and the American Orchid Society raised \$25,000 to buy the land, which was then donated to the University of Costa Rica. On March 2, 1973, the Charles H. Lankester Botanical Garden of the University of Costa Rica was officially inaugurated.

ABOVE FAR LEFT *Pleurothallis palliolata*, collected by Lankester near his house in Cachí.

ABOVE CENTER The nomination of Lankester as an honorary member of the American Orchid Society.

ABOVE *Maxillaria lankesteri*, often confused with *Maxillaria wercklei*, which has almost identical, but much smaller flowers.

Acknowledgments

To Ricardo Lankester, for his priceless family documents, to Franco Pupulin, R. Parsons and E. Hunt for their great photographs, and to Dr. Gustavo Romero, curator of the Oakes Ames Orchid Herbarium.

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Carlos Ossenbach is a research associate of Jardín Botánico Lankester, University of Costa Rica. Since 1998 he has worked on a large project of documentation, the Bibliographical Guide to the Orchids of Costa Rica, aimed to combine in a single work all the information sources about the orchid flora of the country. In 2003, he published for the University of Costa Rica Press A Brief History of Costa Rican Orchidology. He is preparing the 3rd International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC), to be held in San José in March 2007. Jardín Botánico Lankester, Universidad de Costa Rica, PO Box 1031-7050 Cartago, Costa Rica (e-mail caossenb@racsaco.cr).

New Orchid Species Collected by Charles Lankester Between 1910 and 1935

- Campylocentrum lankesteri* Ames (= *Campylocentrum fasciola* [Lindl.] Cogn.)
Campylocentrum longicalcaratum Ames & Schweinf.
 (= *Campylocentrum brenesii* Schltr.)
Chondrorhyncha estrellensis Ames
Cranichis lankesteri Ames
Cranichis saccata Ames
Cryptocentrum gracillimum Ames & Schweinf.
Dichaea ciliolata Rolfe
Dichaea lankesteri Ames
Dichaea verrucosa Ames & Schweinf. (= *Dichaea muricata* [Sw.] Lindl.)
Elleanthus tricallosus Ames & Schweinf.
Epidendrum adnatum Ames & Schweinf.
Epidendrum bilobatum Ames
Epidendrum circinatum Ames
Epidendrum crescentilobium Ames
Epidendrum cristobalense Ames (= *Epidendrum laucheanum* Bonhof. ex Rolfe)
Epidendrum dentiferum Ames & Schweinf. (= *Epidendrum jejunum* Rchb. f.)
Epidendrum dolabrilobum Ames & Schweinf. (= *Epidendrum blepharistes* Barker ex Lindl.)
Epidendrum equitantifolium Ames (= *Briegeria equitantifolia* [Ames] Senghas)
Epidendrum estrellense Ames
Epidendrum exile Ames
Epidendrum intermixtum Ames & Schweinf.
Epidendrum lankesteri Ames
Epidendrum nervosiflorum Ames & Schweinf.
Epidendrum peraltense Ames (= *Encyclia diurna* [Jacq.] Schltr.)
Epidendrum ramosissimum Ames & Schweinf.
Epidendrum rugosum Ames
Epidendrum santaclarensis Ames
Epidendrum vagans Ames (= *Prosthechea vagans* [Ames] W.E. Higgins)
Habenaria lankesteri Ames
Hexisea lankesteri Ames (= *Scaphyglottis subulata* Schltr.)
Hexisea sigmoidea Ames & Schweinf. (= *Scaphyglottis sigmoidea* Ames & C. Schweinf.)
Lankesterella Ames
Lankesterella costaricensis Ames (= *Lankesterella orthantha* [Kraenzl.] Garay)
Lepanthes cascajalensis Ames (= *Lepanthes eciliata* Schltr.)
Lepanthes chameleon Ames
Lepanthes estrellensis Ames
Lepanthes exasperata Ames & Schweinf. (= *Lepanthes lindleyana* Oerst. & Rchb.f.)
Lepanthes eximia Ames
Lepanthes grandiflora Ames & Schweinf.
Lepanthes micrantha Ames (= *Lepanthes lindleyana* Oerst. & Rchb.f.)
Lepanthes rostrata Ames
Lepanthes sanchoi Ames (= *Lepanthes horrida* Rchb.f.)
Lepanthes subdimidiata Ames & Schweinf.
Lepanthes tridens Ames
Limodorum lankesteri Ames & Schweinf. (= *Bletia campanulata* Lex.)
Lockhartia lankesteri Ames (= *Lockhartia micrantha* Rchb.f.)
Malaxis lankesteri Ames (= *Malaxis lagotis* [Rchb.f.] Kuntze)
Malaxis uncinata Ames & Schweinf. (= *Malaxis excavata* [Lindl.] Kuntze)
Masdevallia fimbriata Ames & Schweinf. (= *Pleurothallis setosa* C. Schweinf.)
Maxillaria arachnitiflora Ames & Schweinf.
Maxillaria confusa Ames & Schweinf.
Maxillaria foliosa Ames & Schweinf. (= *Maxillaria acervata* Rchb.f.)
Maxillaria lankesteri Ames
Notylia lankesteri Ames
Oncidium lankesteri Ames (= *Oncidium ansiferum* Rchb.f.)
Ornithidium lankesteri Ames (= *Maxillaria quadrata* Ames & Correll)
- Ornithocephalus lankesteri* Ames
Physiphon obliquipetalus Ames & Schweinf. (= *Lepanthopsis obliquipetala* Ames & Schweinf.)
Pleurothallis angusta Ames & Schweinf.
Pleurothallis arietina Ames (= *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps* Rchb.f.)
Pleurothallis cachensis Ames
Pleurothallis cerea Ames (= *Myoxanthus octomeriae* Schltr.)
Pleurothallis costaricensis Rolfe
Pleurothallis crassilabia Ames & Schweinf.
Pleurothallis crescentilabia Ames
Pleurothallis cucullata Ames (= *Pleurothallis rowleyi* Ames)
Pleurothallis dentipetala Rolfe ex Ames
Pleurothallis dichotoma Ames (nom. ill.)* (= *Pleurothallis aristata* Hook.)
Pleurothallis geminicaulina Ames
Pleurothallis glomerata Ames (= *Pleurothallis chloroleuca* Lindl.)
Pleurothallis longipedicellata Ames & Schweinf.
Pleurothallis nana Ames & Schweinf. (= *Trichosalpinx nana* [Ames & C. Schweinf.] Luer)
Pleurothallis palliolata Ames
Pleurothallis papillifera Rolfe
Pleurothallis peperomioides Ames
Pleurothallis peraltensis Ames (= *Trichosalpinx blaisdellii* [S. Watson] Luer)
Pleurothallis peregrina Ames (= *Pleurothallis sclerophylla* Lindl.)
Pleurothallis periodica Ames (= *Pleurothallis simmleriana* Rendle)
Pleurothallis pompalis Ames
Pleurothallis rectipetala Ames & Schweinf. (= *Pleurothallis phyllocardia* Rchb.f.)
Pleurothallis saccata Ames (= *Pleurothallis colossus* Kraenzl. ex Kerch.)
Pleurothallis sanchoi Ames (= *Pleurothallis leucantha* Schltr.)
Pleurothallis scandens Ames (= *Myoxanthus scandens* [Ames] Luer)
Pleurothallis segregatifolia Ames & Schweinf.
Pleurothallis strumosa Ames
Pleurothallis vinacea Ames (= *Pleurothallis segoviensis* Rchb.f.)
Restrepia lankesteri Ames & Schweinf. (= *Restrepia trichoglossa* F. Lehm. ex Sander)
Scaphyglottis bicallosa Dressler
Sobralia atropubescens Ames & Schweinf.
Sobralia carazoi C.H. Lank. & Ames
Sobralia mucronata Ames & Schweinf.
Spiranthes lankesteri Standl. & L.O. Williams (= *Hapalorchis pumilus* [C. Schweinf.] Garay)
Stelis barbata Rolfe (= *Stelis microchila* Schltr.)
Stelis carnosiflora Ames & Schweinf.
Stelis cascajalensis Ames (= *Stelis superbiens* Lindl.)
Stelis crystallina Ames
Stelis cucullata Ames
Stelis cuspidata Ames
Stelis distantiflora Ames (= *Stelis effusa* Schltr.)
Stelis elliptica Ames & Schweinf. (= *Stelis tridentata* Lindl.)
Stelis fractiflexa Ames & Schweinf.
Stelis glandulosa Ames (= *Stelis argentata* Lindl.)
Stelis lankesteri Ames
Stelis latipetala Ames
Stelis minutiflora Ames & C. Schweinf. (nom. ill.)*
Stelis propinqua Ames (= *Stelis superbiens* Lindl.)
Stelis sanchoi Ames
Stelis transversalis Ames
Stelis vestita Ames
Stellilabium distantiflorum Ames & Schweinf. (= *Dipterostele distantiflorum* [Ames & C. Schweinf.] Garay & G.A. Romero)
Stenorrhynchos bracteosum Ames & Schweinf. (= *Coccineorchis bracteosa* [Ames & C. Schwinf.] Garay)

*(nom. ill.) Illegal names previously used to describe other species.

— Compiled by Carlos Ossensbach with currently accepted names in parentheses provided by Ron McHatton, PhD.