

## ‘Mistaken identity’ or ‘It helps if you can read!’

For years, as we did last July, we have brought our plant of *Epidendrum ciliare* to show and tell at the KOS meetings, put it in exhibits if it was in bloom, and in May sold a piece of it at the auction, as I’m sure we have done before. *Epidendrum ciliare* is often called the ‘eyelash orchid’ because of the fringed side lobes of the lip. So what’s the problem? In my random selection from the overflowing magazine rack I picked up the June 2012 issue of ‘ORCHIDS’. Being interested in species, the article by Chuck McCartney on *Epidendrum oerstedii* caught my eye and as I read through it I thought this is a species I’d like to add to our collection. Midway through the article the statement ‘In my experience, there’s also another big difference between the two species. ‘*Epi. oerstedii* blooms as the new vegetative growth develops . . . whereas *Epi. ciliare* blooms on mature growths . . . ‘ That blooming habit exactly describes the plants we have. Next morning a check of the 2 plants in bloom show them to be identical to the pictures in ‘ORCHIDS’. Mr. McCartney’s final paragraph suggests this is a species which should be in more of our collections ‘because of its ease of culture and the bounty of its pretty, fragrant flowers.’ Perhaps it is in more collections than recognized – we now know we have it and have had it since 1996. We bought it at the KOS auction that year with the note that Max had collected it in Mexico. Thus if you bought a plant of *Epi. ciliare* at the auction last May, or perhaps some other year, if it is from us it is NOT *Epi. ciliare* but *Epi. oerstedii*!

– Richard and Elisabeth Vanderlip



*Epidendrum oerstedii* – note inflorescence on left is coming out of leaves that have not started opening.



Close up of *Epi. oerstedii* flower showing lack of ‘eyebrow’ fringe on lip.