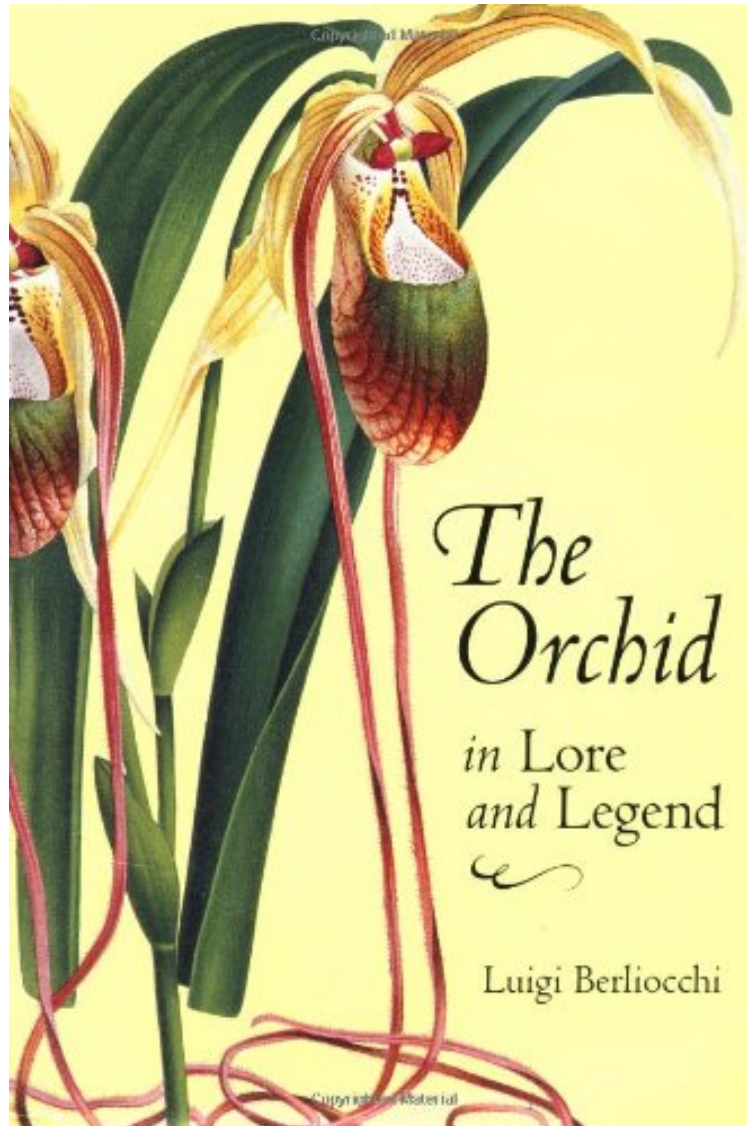


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An elegant, historical survey of the orchid which treats the flower's place in legend; it chronicles the adventurers who introduced these marvels, then discusses the orchids place in art, literature, cuisine even magic. Period engravings.

From BooklistA compelling and pleasurable translation makes accessible the late Berliocchi's amply researched cornucopia of orchid lore. Recounting ancient myths and tracing the tracks of plant explorers, Berliocchi investigates the spell cast by orchids. Moreover, this revelatory chronicle reaches back to prehistoric times to survey fossil remains, then goes forward to offer a detailed history of the flower's beguiling form and exotic beauty in art, literature, horticulture, and society. Elaborated upon by elegant color plates, the book also contains copious illustrations depicting botanical images and unforgettable individuals. Final chapters survey plant structure, genera, and cultural requirements. Berliocchi's perceptive and richly descriptive narrative is certain to please orchid lovers, and will most likely spark the interest of those who have yet to discover these fascinating flowers. Alice JoyceCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A beautiful book and ... a valuable addition to the library of any orchid lover. -- www.bellaonline.comA fascinating account of the impact of orchids on our lives, and an ideal gift for the orchidophile. -- *Taxon*, November 2000A welcome addition to the growing genre of literary works devoted to orchids. -- *Library Journal*, October 15, 2000Berliocchi's comprehensive handbook is both elegantly written and enriching. -- *Publishers Weekly*, September 4, 2000Berliocchi's comprehensive handbook is both elegantly written and enriching. -- *Publishers Weekly*Exquisite botanical illustrations complement the definitive text. -- Rebecca Sawyer-Fay, *Gardener*, May/June 2001From the PublisherExotic orchids have been part of our lives for more than two hundred years. . . . They have a magic whose secret will always elude us, a blend of witchcraft and romance, that sets them apart, above all other plants . . . So begins the late Luigi Berliocchi's account of humankind's discovery of the orchid, from its place in myths and legends of many cultures to its own shadowy prehistory, for the orchid, of one of the youngest plant families, nonetheless has managed to hide its traces. In the second half of the eighteenth century, explorers began to bring back these flowers, which first represented exotic lushness and mystery but later became living symbols of exclusivity, privilege, and beauty. Berliocchi is a true collector, a bibliophile, polymath, and wordsmith who in this book has combined for our delight the magic, the history and botany, the folklore and medicinal values with the culture of those most mysterious of plants: orchids.