



AN ORCHID S

furnished with prickles

without horns

having a shallow notch

insect-loving

exuding

flesh-colored

somewhat pendulous, drooping, nodding

golden-shoed

golden-eared

coiled

resembling a gnat

winter-flowering

having two dots or spots

a surface blistered or puckered, as the leaf of a Savoy Cabbage

imperfectly formed

deviating from the normal



*Re: Hothouse: The Orchid Room, Hewlett Gallery, January 1992
Laurie Palmer*

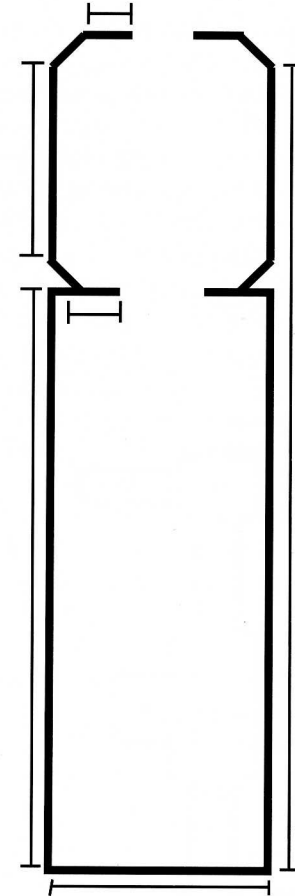
In the cloud forest, epiphytic orchids live without soil, high above ground, their naked roots dangling in air, or wrapped around whatever they have found to cling to and boost them up. A light green spongy coat called velamen on the outside of the roots absorbs moisture, while the leaves convert light—available only high in the canopy of leaves—to energy.

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Ten years ago in San Francisco I bought what looked like a root at a garden store and put it on the mantel. The person at the store had said it needed nothing. I had just moved in with someone and this self-sufficiency interested me. Three weeks later it had a long shoot coming out of it, though I can't remember if it was green, then a fat bud, which, when it popped, filled the apartment with such a smell that we rushed it to the dumpster, like a dead rat.

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Every morning on my way to work at the University I passed a giant garage out back of the sculpture department with a wall of windows. Inside was a planet-walking robot. Sometimes it was outside on the parking lot exercising in the early morning mist. Wooden boxes were arranged on the asphalt as fake rocks and the robot's instructions were to maneuver between, or to lift and carry, the plywood rocks. Young men sitting on fences applauded energetically when the robot performed without stumbling or squashing a rock.



Hewlett Gallery

