



Another way orchids guide pollinators is through sexual mimicry. This term refers to flowers that mimic the females of their pollinators. Deceived males attempt to mate with the flowers, positioning themselves in the “correct” alignment. The pictured Australian orchid *Chiloglottis* mimics female tiphiid wasps.

2: Why Do Orchids Have Such Unique Flowers?

Typically, each orchid flower contains only one or two pollinia, meaning the pollinator either transfers everything or nothing at all. To ensure successful pollination, the flowers must guide the pollinator into an exact position so that the attached pollinium lands precisely on the stigma of the next flower. This is why orchids develop such intricate and complex flowers. Unlike most other plants, orchid flowers can only be divided along one plane of symmetry, making them zygomorphic.



Jeden okvětní lístek vnitřního kruhu bývá výrazně odlišný od ostatních a nazývá se pysk. U většiny orchidejí slouží k přesnému navádění opylovačů.



Další fintou orchidejí je ostruha. Jedná se o úzký a dlouhý výběžek bazální části pysku, který na konci často ukrývá nektar. Motýli tak musí svůj sosák zasunout hluboko do ostruhy, aby dosáhli k nektaru. Tím je zajištěno jejich přesné napolohování vůči brylkám a blizně.



Lady's slipper orchids create so-called trap flowers. Insects are lured through the upper opening into the slipper-shaped lip (labellum) at the centre of the flower but cannot exit the same way. Instead, they must navigate a narrow path past the stigma, then the pollinia with pollen, and only then can they escape.