

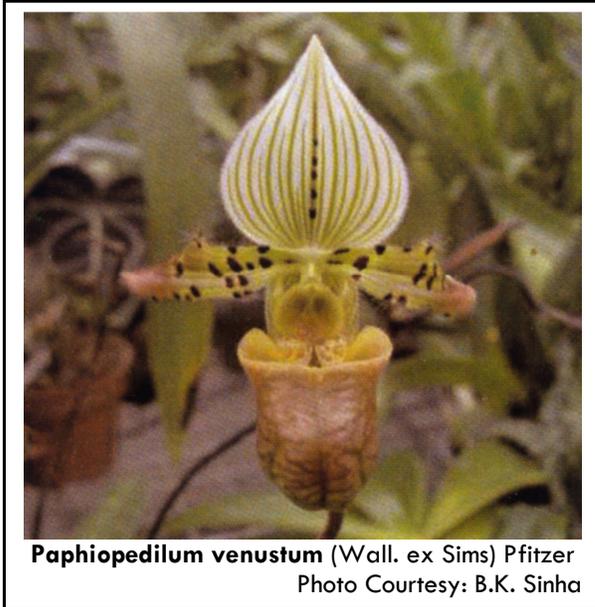
ORCHIDACEAE

Paphiopedilum venustum (Wall. ex Sims) Pfitzer

Common English name : Lady's slipper Orchid.

Distribution : INDIA: Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya; BANGLADESH; NEPAL and BHUTAN.

Habitat : Grows at altitudes of 1000-1500 m near water sources or in moist shady places in association with *Selaginella* spp.



Population status/Cause for RET : Critically Endangered. Excessive collection and destruction of its natural habitat has resulted in its rarity. The species is currently under cultivation in many orchidaria.

Description : Terrestrial herbs up to 35 cm tall. Leaves 5-7, tessellated dark green and grey-green, narrow oblong to elliptic, up to 17 x 4 cm, dark bluish-green above, dull purple beneath. Scape up to 30 cm long, erect, 1 or 2-flowered. Flowers 8-9 cm across; dorsal sepal broadly ovate, ciliate, dark green veined; synsepal similar, 2.4-3 cm long and 1.4-1.7 cm wide; petals linear-oblong, greenish-purple with black spots. Lip greenish-yellow, reticulate, green veined, forming a cylindrical pouch; ovary 4-5.5 cm long, green spotted with purple, shortly pubescent.

Fl. & Fr. : December - February.

Pradhan (Indian Orchids: Guide to Identification and Culture, 1976) described several varieties under this species, but only two (var. *rubrum* and *teestaense*) have been reported from India. These vary from typical variety in the degree of maroon-black spotting of the petals and the intensity of purple colouration in the flower. Cribb (The Genus *Paphiopedilum*, 1998) does not feel it warranted formal recognition.

References :

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1984). The Indian Plant Red Data Book - 1, p. 126.

Nayar, M.P. & A.R.K. Sastry (1987). Red Data Book of Indian Plants. Vol. 1, p. 271.