

ORCHIDACEAE

Paphiopedilum fairrieianum (Lindl.) Stein

Common English names : Asian Lady's slipper orchid, Lost Orchid.

Distribution : INDIA: E. Himalayas in southern Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh; BHUTAN.

Habitat : Grows on crystalline lime stone, sheltered grassy slopes, moss covered boulders in oak forest floors and in gravelly areas at altitudes of 1200-2400 m. Grows well in areas receiving high rainfall during monsoon but is dry and cool for the rest of the year.

Population Status/Cause of RET : Critically Endangered. Lindley described this species based on a cultivated plant exhibited before the Horticultural Society by R. Fairrie of Liverpool. The species was rediscovered after about half a century by G.C. Searight from Torsa or Amuchu Valley, Chumbi District in west Bhutan. Indiscriminate collection, grazing and forest fires have cumulatively contributed to its decline in population. It is cultivated in many orchidaria and private nurseries. This is cultivated in



Paphiopedilum fairrieianum (Lindl.) Stein

Photo Courtesy: C. Sathish Kumar

National Orchidaria of Botanical Survey of India at Shillong and Yercaud.

Description : Terrestrial, clump forming herbs. Leaves 15-20 x 2-3.5 cm, linear, obtuse, green. Scapes ca 25 cm long, slender, one flowered usually, rarely two-flowered. Flowers 6-8 cm diam.; dorsal sepal ovate, margins undulate, white yellowish-green at base, streaked with brownish-purple; petals fringed with black hairs, curved outwards at the tip, pale yellow-purple veined; lip elongated, greenish-violet with purple veins.

Fl. & Fr. : October - December.

References :

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1980). Threatened Plants of India. A State-of-the Art Report. P. 28.

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Walter, K.S. & H.J. Gillett (1998). 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants. P. 715.