

## ORCHIDACEAE

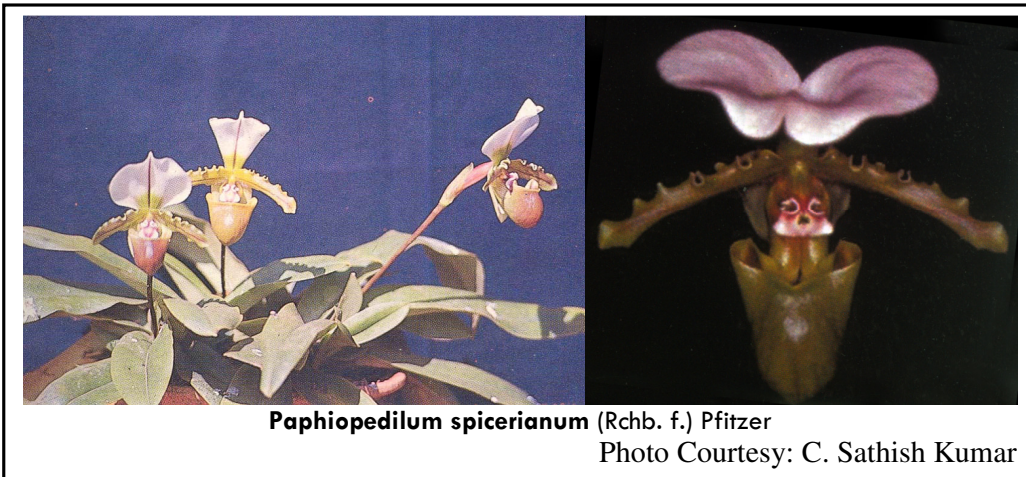
### **Paphiopedilum spicerianum** (Rchb. f.) Pfitzer

*Common English name* : Lady's slipper orchid.

*Distribution* : INDIA: Manipur, Mizoram; CHINA; BHUTAN and MYANMAR.

*Habitat* : Grows under shade on calcareous limestone and in areas receiving heavy monsoon and torrential rains from July to September; found between 300-1300 m. From October to May it derives moisture from mists arising out of rivers and pre-monsoon thunder showers. The hanging leaves drain off excess precipitation during the heavy monsoon. The roots either run on the surface of rocks or penetrate the substratum where it has humus or has been softened. The roots are covered by algae in exposed areas and seedlings often grow along the roots.

*Population status/Cause for RET* : Critically Endangered. Causes of threats are indiscriminate collection of plants for commercial trade, natural calamities like earthquakes and landslides which have decimated the populations from natural habitats. Being a desirable parent in breeding experiments, this species is widely sought after and thus contributed heavily to many modern day hybrids.



*Description* : Terrestrial or lithophytic herbs. Leaves 3-5, linear-oblong, leathery, 15-30 x 2.5-4.5 cm, dark green, purple spotted beneath, margins undulate. Scape up to 30 cm long, erect, slender, hairy, purple, single-flowered. Flowers ca 6 cm in diam.; dorsal sepal elliptic-orbicular, up to 3.8 x 4.5 cm, white, base greenish; petals reflexed, yellowish-green with median line and red streaks. Lip slipper shaped, up to 4.5 cm long, brownish-green; staminode orbicular, brown flushed with crimson.

*Fl. & Fr.* : October - December.

*References* :

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1980). Threatened Plants of India. A State-of-the Art Report. P. 30.

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1984). The Indian Plant Red Data Book - 1, p. 125.

Nayar, M.P. & A.R.K. Sastry (1987). Red Data Book of Indian Plants. Vol. 1, p. 269.