

19. PAPHIOPEDILUM ROTHSCILDIANUM

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, the eminent Victorian orchid grower, has the distinction of having the most spectacular orchid in the genus named after him. *P. rothschildianum* was introduced into cultivation by M. Jean Linden in May 1887 and, early the following year, by Messrs. Sander & Sons of St Albans. H.G. Reichenbach based his original description on a flower sent to him by Sander and said by the latter to have come from New Guinea. This appears to have been a deliberate attempt by Sander to mislead his competitors because we now know that the orchid is endemic to Mount Kinabalu in north-east Borneo. Linden had also cited the same origin and sold plants under the name *Cypripedium neo-guineense*, a name never validly published.

Further confusion arose from the description of *C. ellottianum* by James O'Brien in November 1888 based on a Sander introduction and said to have been collected in the Philippines. O'Brien's statement that 'it is widely distinguished' from *C. rothschildianum* belies his description and the type collection at Kew agrees well with that species. Asher (1983) has recently resurrected *P. ellottianum* as possibly distinct but his case does not withstand critical scrutiny.



Fig. 40 (above). Close-up of a flower of *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*. (Photo.: C.L. Chan) Fig. 41 (opposite). *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum* flowering in the wild on Mount Kinabalu. (Photo.: A. Lamb)