

53. PAPHIOPEDILUM ARGUS

Gustav Wallis, collecting for Messrs. Veitch & Sons in the Philippines, discovered this species in 1873 and sent a consignment of living plants to them. It was described the same year by H.G. Reichenbach who considered it intermediate between *P. purpuratum* and *P. barbatum*, having the dorsal sepal shape of the former and the staminode and general appearance of the latter.

Paphiopedilum argus is readily recognised and distinguished from both by its heavily spotted untwisted petals held at about 20–30° to the horizontal and by its attractive ochre-coloured lip veined with green.

It is endemic to the north of the island of Luzon in the Philippines where it grows in montane forest on east- or west-facing slopes only. It usually grows just below ridge tops in medium shade in thick moss at the bases of stunted trees or in bamboo thickets in leaf litter. The weather here is cool and wet from December until February but warms up so that in March and April temperatures average to 27°C (81°F) in the day and 18°C (64°F) at night. The south-west monsoon brings periods of heavy rainfall in the summer months before drier weather in



Fig. 101. *Paphiopedilum argus*, plant in cultivation. (Photo.: R.B.G., Kew)