

2. PAPHIOPEDILUM DELENATII

Paphiopedilum delenatii is a delightful and highly prized orchid. For many years, its closest known ally was considered to be *P. niveum* from which it was distinguished by its rose-pink flowers and distinctive ovate, convex, deep pink staminode with a yolk-yellow central mark. Recent discoveries in South-west China and northern Vietnam have shown that the closest allies of *P. delenatii* are to be found there. In particular, *P. armeniacum* and *P. micranthum*, both of which have only appeared in cultivation in the last few years, are very closely related. Vegetatively they are very much alike. The former, however, has a distinctive growth habit with the shoots produced at the ends of long rhizomes and yellow flowers with a relatively longer lip and staminode; while the latter has purple-striped sepals and petals, a much larger more inflated lip and longitudinally conduplicate staminode.

According to Guillaumin, this species was introduced from an unspecified locality in northern Vietnam (Tonkin) where it was discovered by a French army officer in 1913 or 1914. It was first cultivated in France by M. Delenat and later by M. Mornay, the head horticulturist of the 'Fleuriste Municipal de la Ville de Paris'. Mornay's plant received a 'Certificate de Merit  avec f licitations' from the National Society of France in 1925. Poilane rediscovered it in 1922 near Nha Trang in Vietnam.



Fig. 6. Close-up of flower of *Paphiopedilum delenatii*. (Photo.: P. Cribb)