

36. PAPHIOPEDILUM HENRYANUM

Amongst the orchid novelties that have emerged from China in the past decade few are as striking as *Paphiopedilum henryanum*. It is a small slipper orchid but the flower is distinctively coloured, boldly marked and thick textured. In many ways it resembles a miniature complex hybrid of the latter years of the last century. It is, however, a wild species, all the more remarkable for its late discovery attributed to Henry Azadehdel after whom it is named. It was described by Guido Braem in 1987 based on one of Azadehdel's collections that flowered in cultivation in Germany.

It just pipped *P. dollii*, described by Lückel, into press, the latter name being relegated into synonymy as proposed by Braem (1991). *P. henryanum* is closely allied to *P. insigne* and *P. exul*, both of which have spotted dorsal sepals. However, it differs in having smaller flowers borne on a smaller plant with shorter narrower leaves, the distinctive bold spots on its sepals and petals, short petals and rose-purple lip.

Its distribution straddles the Yunnan/Vietnamese border where it grows in small colonies on north-facing steep slopes and cliffs at about 1000 to 1200 m elevation.

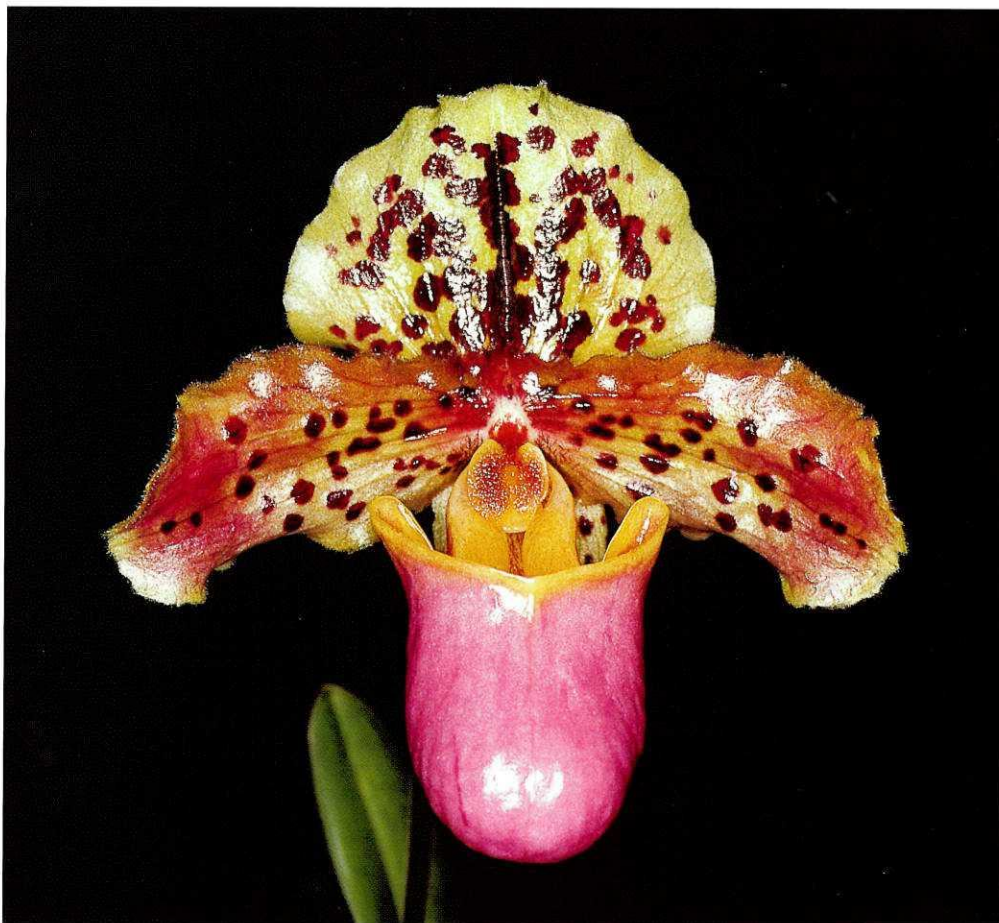


Fig. 70. *Paphiopedilum henryanum*, flowering in cultivation. (Photo.: P. Cribb)