plants reached England in 1884 and was sold at auction by Sander at the showrooms of Messrs. Stevens in London. Sander's assertion that the plants were collected just over the Assam border in Bhutan was almost certainly calculated to deceive rival firms. However, soon afterwards Messrs. Low also received a large importation from Assam.

Further importations remained rare until the early 1960s when large collections began to be made in north-east India near to the borders of Burma. U.C. Pradhan (1971) and G.M. Pradhan (1975), both in the *American Orchid Society Bulletin*, given graphic descriptions of its rediscovery, habitat and ecology. *P. spicerianum* grows in the region of Tilchar and the Barak River on limestone outcrops and cliffs at between 300 and 1300 m altitude. This is a region subject to the monsoon rains from June until September. Moist conditions prevail, however, throughout the year as a result of mists rising from the river so that water seeps down through the limestone all the time. The plants grow in shallow humus-filled niches and nooks on the limestone, anchored by their long roots to the rock, with their leaves almost pendent and their flowers produced on stalks almost at right angles to the substrate. They are usually to be found more or less shaded by ferns and gingers (*Globba* sp.).

Recent collections have been reported from northern Myanmar [Burma] and south-western Yunnan. The latter has not yet been confirmed by a voucher but I was shown living plants in a private collection in Baoshan, Yunnan, which were said to have been collected in Yunnan near the Burmese border.

An unusual coloured semi-albino cultivar, 'Sabot Mauve', with a white, pink and ochre lip and ochreous petals, was awarded by the American Orchid Society in 1993.

The impact of *P. spicerianum* in horticulture extends far beyond its charm as a relatively free-growing species with attractive flowers. It was one of the first slipper orchids to be hybridised successfully. The hybrid *P.* Leeanum, of *P. spicerianum* crossed with *P. insigne*, was registered by Sir Trevor Lawrence in 1884. In the following year, Veitch produced *P.* Radrosium (*P. spicerianum* × *lawrenceanum*) and, in 1888, Latham flowered *P.* Lathamianum (*P. spicerianum* × *villosum*). Complex crossings soon followed leading to the production eventually of the modern *Paphiopedilum* hybrids. The role of *P. spicerianum* in these cannot be underestimated.

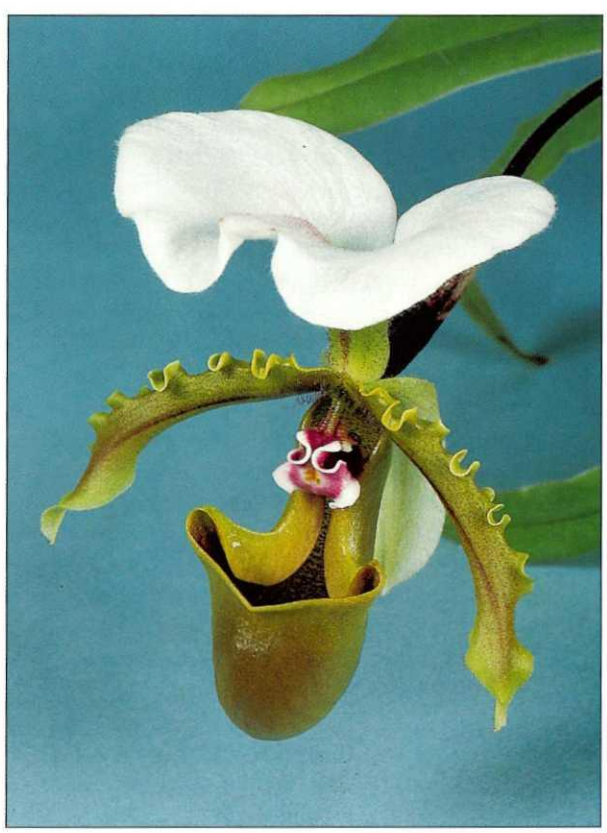

Fig. 82. *Paphiopedilum spicerianum*, close-up of flower in cultivation. (Photo.: P. Cribb)