

## 45. PAPHIOPEDILUM HOOKERAE

This beautiful orchid was another of Hugh Low's introductions from Borneo for Messrs. Low & Sons. H.G. Reichenbach described it in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* in 1863 based on a plant from the Low importation flowered by W. Marshall of Enfield. He named it in honour of Lady Hooker, the wife of Sir William, then Director of Kew. Reichenbach graphically described it as having 'Flowers of *Cypripedium hirsutissimum* and leaves of *Phalaenopsis schillerianum* [sic], or nearly so'. J.D. Hooker in the account that follows the description compares it with *P. javanicum*, *P. barbatum* and *P. purpuratum*. However, it is now considered most closely allied to the widespread *P. bullenianum* with which it shares boldly marked leaves and a similar flower. It can easily be distinguished from the latter though by its broader pubescent petals, well spotted in the basal half, and its large subcircular staminode.

For many years, *P. hookerae* was considered to be one of the rarest and most prized of all the species. Following Low's collection, Messrs. Veitch introduced it from southern Sarawak in 1865 where it grows on limestone at 300–450 m altitude. Following these importations of the nineteenth century, it was even considered by some to be extinct. However, a plant imported from Sarawak in late 1972 by a Japanese grower, Fuminasa Sugiyama, which flowered in the collection of George Kennedy in 1975, proved to be of *P. hookerae*. Shortly afterwards a Japanese engineer, Hali Handoyo, discovered it in western Kalimantan. Fowlie



Fig. 88. *Paphiopedilum hookerae* var. *hookerae*, close-up of flower in cultivation. (Photo.: P. Cribb)