

38. PAPHIOPEDILUM VILLOSUM

Thomas Lobb discovered *P. villosum* in 1853 growing at 1300–1600 m in the mountains near Moulmein in south-east Burma. It was introduced into cultivation by Messrs. Veitch & Sons in the same year. It is distributed from north-east India, northern and eastern Burma, Indochina and southern China. This widespread distribution may be linked to its usually epiphytic habit. Bänziger (1996), who has also found it growing as a lithophyte, provides a detailed account of its ecology and pollination biology in northern Thailand. He studied two populations in the Doi Inthanond National Park: one a population of 43 mature plants on the south flank between 1540 and 1790 m elevation; the other of 66 clumps on the north-east flank between 1270 and 1570 m. The preferred host trees were *Eugenia angkae*, *Podocarpus neriifolius*, *Nyssa javanica* and *Quercus rex*, but host preference was not marked. One tree, a large *Eugenia angkae*, 45 m high and 6 m in girth, was host to 30 clumps.

It is a widespread and variable species in which three varieties can be recognised. The typical variety ranges from north-east India, northern Burma, and south-west Yunnan to northern Thailand. The Burmese var. *boxallii* was discovered in 1877 by William Boxall, collecting orchids for Messrs. Hugh Low & Co., probably from the Tongku District of Burma. It differs from the typical variety in the colouring of its flowers, in particular it has a heavily spotted dorsal sepal. The synsepal is also more acuminate and the petals purple-marked. The



Fig. 74 (above) & 75 (opposite). *Paphiopedilum villosum* var. *villosum* growing epiphytically in northern Thailand. (Photo.: H. Bänziger)