

32. PAPHIOPEDILUM INSIGNE

Lindley based his original description of his species on a plant forwarded to him from the Liverpool Botanic Garden by William Cattley who had received it from Dr Nathaniel Wallich, under no. 7022 in his herbarium, who had collected it from Sylhet in north-east India.

Paphiopedilum insigne is a variable species particularly in its flower coloration and size. The typical form has an obovate dorsal sepal marked with many small dark brown spots. Of the many named varieties, the most distinctive and popular in cultivation are those in which the purple flushing and spotting are reduced to varying degrees. Var. *sanderianum* has bright canary yellow and white flowers, lacking any purple marking; var. *sanderiae* has flowers with green veins and a very few purple specks on the dorsal sepal but otherwise resembles var. *sanderianum*; var. *bonhoffianum* lacks maroon spots on the dorsal sepal but is otherwise shaded with purplish brown. Var. *chantii* has flowers like the type but less undulate and differently coloured segments, mauve spots on the dorsal sepal and a glossy chestnut-brown lip; var. *maulei* has larger flowers, paler petals and a longer narrower and paler lip. These are, perhaps, best treated as cultivars.

Paphiopedilum insigne 'Harefield Hall' is a well known and vigorous clone in cultivation which has boldly marked flowers almost twice the size of the typical form. Chromosome studies have shown that it is a triploid.

Paphiopedilum insigne has a limited distribution in the State of Meghalaya in north-east India where it grows at between 1000 m and 1500 m altitude. According to U.C. Pradhan (1976a) it usually grows on dolomitic limestone outcrops near waterfalls and in light shade of shrubby vegetation. The original collections by Wallich came from Sylhet while later



Fig. 64 (left) & 65 (right). Two variants of *Paphiopedilum insigne*, flowering in cultivation. (Photos: P. Cribb)