

47. PAPHIOPEDILUM MASTERSIANUM

Paphiopedilum mastersianum is the best known of a group of species from the Moluccas and New Guinea which are distinguished by their mottled leaves, flowers with a small dorsal sepal, petals which lack marginal warts and are shortly ciliate, and a lunate staminode. It is a distinctive species readily recognised by its creamy dorsal sepal with a central yellow to lime-green area, its glossy brownish maroon petals, finely spotted in the basal half and the ovary which is almost villose and covered with multicellular hairs.

Reichenbach described this species as *Cypripedium mastersianum* in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1879 based on material of Sondaic origin (undoubtedly the Moluccas) sent him by Messrs. Veitch. He named it in honour of Dr Maxwell Masters, editor of the *Gardeners' Chronicle*.

It has so far been collected from two of the Moluccan islands namely Ambon and Boeroe (Buru) where it grows at elevations between 900 m and 2000 m on steep slopes in the shade in montane forest. The plants of these islands are poorly known even at the present day and it may well be that its occurrence on other islands of the group has passed undetected.

Its closest relative is *P. papuanum* from neighbouring west New Guinea but that species has more distinctly tessellated leaves, smaller flowers, a distinctly green-veined and smaller dorsal sepal, purple petals with undulate upper margins and a broader staminode with blunt short apical lobes. West New Guinea is, of course, even less well explored than the Moluccas and it is possible that, when further collections are available for study, these differences will prove to be of little taxonomic significance.



Fig. 90. *Paphiopedilum mastersianum*, close-up of flower in cultivation. (Photo.: P. Cribb)