SUTHERLAND SHIRE ORCHID SOCIETY

Novelty Paphiopedilums

Hybrid paphiopedilums are loosely divided into two or three broad categories. There are the large complex hybrids, multi- floral / sequential fowered hybrids and Maudiae type hybrids. Of course to confuse things there are intersectional hybrids, which are produced by crossing plants from two or more of these groups. At times all sorts of terminology are used to describe these plants. Primary Hybrids, Developmental Hybrids, Vini-Colour Type, Maudiae Type, Chinese Primaries.etc and so the list goes on. To me they are basically hybrid Paphiopedilums. Paphiopedilums that are much closer to their original species ancestors than the larger complex paphiopedilums. When looking at the parentage of these plants, many are first/primary hybrids (a cross between two different species) and many more only one or two generations from the species. Many of these have been very attractive and have done a lot to renew interest and popularise paphiopedilum growing worldwide. In fact the greatest number of new plant hybrid registrations in the last ten years have been for phalanopsis and paphiopedilums.

In 1964 when *Paph sukhakulii* was discovered and became readily available a whole new wave of Papiopedilum breeding started. This coupled with the discovery and use in breeding of the dark red Paphiopedilum species *Paph viniferum* , for many years wrongly appearing as the species *Paph callosum* "Jac", created a great resurgence of interest in expanding the range of colours available in the hybrid paphiopedilum world. Everyone wanted a "vini-paph".they were sensational and even today arouse great interest and excitement. Just as the interest was beginning to level out, the "Chinese Paphs" were discovered, and the fever started again. *Paph armeniacum, Paph micranthum and Paph malipoense* were sensational and continue to hold the imagination of paphiopedilum breeders around the world as they are used in breeding worldwide. As I sit at my computer writing this article news of more exciting Paphiopedilum discoveries, such as Paph *hangianum and Paph vietnamense* ensure that the excitement will continue for some time to come.

Growing conditions for this large and varied group of paphiopedilums basically falls into two broad divisions. The vast majority of the plants have mottled leaves. Have you ever wondered why? The mottling is actually a light trapping mechanism the plant uses to extract maximum use of the available light. The light areas acting as prisms to concentrate the light on the greener areas rich in chlorophyll. In other words they like reasonable amounts of shade (I grow mine under 70% shade cloth all year) resulting in a soft filtered light. Watering should produce conditions where the mix is continually damp without being wet and waterlogged. The second group of mottled leafed paphiopedilum hybrids are those bred within or having a large part of the parvisepalum (*Pap armeniacum, Paph micranthum.etc)* or brachypetalum (Paph *bellatulum, Paph concolor etc.)* subgenus in their parentage. This group will happily grow and flower well with even less light and less water. In fact they have a definite growing period (Spring through Summer) and a definite rest period (late Autumn through Winter). During this rest period it is important to hold back on the water and only give them enough to keep he roots viable. For this reason I bench all this group together so their watering can be controlled. So many have been lost by being over watered when they were at rest.

What of the future it is hard to tell for certain, but one thing is for sure there will be worldwide hybridising of the already available and newly discovered Paphiopedilums as they become available.

One only has to look at the impact *Paph sukhakulii* had on paphiopedilum breeding since its discovery in 1964 and all of the subsequent discoveries. Crossings with standard paphiopedilums, intersectional breeding within the subgenus families, multifloral and sequential flowering crosses.let alone standard white and yellow paphiopedilums that rival the colour of *Paph armeniacum* and *Paph niveum "alba"* . The future is exciting, he hybrids are being made and flowering each season.as each year passes we lay down the foundation for the paphiopedilums of the future.

Gary Hart, 2007