



St. Augustine Orchid Society

[www.staugorchidsociety.org](http://www.staugorchidsociety.org)

## Varieties of Paphiopedilums

by Sue Bottom, sbottom15@hotmail.com

There are many varieties of paphiopedilums you may choose to grow. Many paphs are good choices for indoor orchid growers, others like brighter light. Here is a sampler of the different types with brief cultural requirements.

**Barbatum Section** – This section includes the maudiae-type paphiopedilums. The leaves are mottled, the flowers are borne singly or in pairs, the plant usually blooms once a year and flowers can last several months. This section contains the species *appletonianum*, *barbatum*, *callosum*, *lawrenceanum*, *mastersianum*, *sukhakulii*, *superbiens*, *venustum*, *viniferum* and *wolterianum*. These paphiopedilums are mostly warm growing terrestrial orchids rooted in leaf litter or humus in shaded forest habitats in various parts of the monsoon belt. These plants prefer shady conditions (500 to 1500 ft-candles) and are more tolerant of warm conditions than the green strap leaf paphs.



*Paph. barbatum*

Photo courtesy of Phil Nelson, MD, Selby



*Paph. lawrenceanum*

Photo courtesy of Phil Nelson, MD, Selby



*Paph. sukhakulii*

Photo courtesy of Lynn O'Shaughnessy

**Insigne Section.** The Insigne section paphs have green, strap shaped leaves. They bear one and sometimes two rounded flowers of heavy waxy substance and usually flower once a year in the winter. The section contains the species *barbigerum*, *boxalii*, *charlesworthii*, *coccineum*, *druryi*, *exul*, *fairrieanum*, *gratrixianum*, *helenae*, *henryanum*, *hermannii*, *hirsutissimum*, *insigne*, *spicerianum* and *trigrinum*. Although from the monsoon belt, most are cool growing, occurring at high elevations where winter temperatures drop to near freezing. They are considered to be somewhat difficult to grow, requiring bright light and cool autumn nights.



*Paph. barbigerum*

Photo courtesy of Terry Bottom



*Paph. insigne*

Photo courtesy of John Varigos



*Paph. spicerianum*

Photo courtesy of Dr. Tom Ott



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**Parvisepalum Section.** The Parvisepalum section paphs from China and Vietnam have tessellated thin leaves, large, brilliantly colored, scented flowers on tall stems with enlarged and inflated pouches. The section contains the species *armeniicum*, *delenatii*, *emersonii*, *hangianum*, *jackii*, *malipoense*, *micranthum* and *vietnamense*. These plants grow in lime-rich loam or sand, or humus-filled crevices in limestone rocks in sheltered lees mostly shaded from direct sunlight. A cool, dry winter and calcium supplements are essential for blooming the following summer. They prefer buoyant and constant air movement, a cool dryish winter and a drop in evening temperatures.



*Paph. armeniicum*

Photo courtesy of Lynn O'Shaughnessy



*Paph. delenatii*

Photo courtesy of Fred Clarke



*Paph. micranthum*

Photo courtesy of Brett Francis

**Brachypetalum Section.** These paphs have tessellated and succulent leaves whose undersides usually have dark purple markings. The flowers have wide petals and a broad dorsal sepal and a short stem bearing 1 to 4 oval flowers. The section contains the species *bellatulum*, *concolor*, *godefroyae*, *xgreyi*, *niveum* and *thaiantum*. These plants grow in lime-rich loam or sand, or in humus-filled crevices in limestone rocks in sheltered lees mostly shaded from direct sunlight. A cool, dry winter and calcium supplements are essential for blooming the following summer. They can be grown outside in temperate climates, prefer buoyant and constant air movement and a drop in evening temperatures.



*Paph. bellatulum*

Photo courtesy of Dr. Tom Ott



*Paph. concolor*

Photo courtesy of Lynn O'Shaughnessy



*Paph. niveum*

Photo courtesy of Lois Cinert



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**Multiflorals.** Multifloral paphs include those from the section **Cochlopetalum** that flower sequentially from the same inflorescence stem producing flowers in succession (*glaucophyllum*, *liemianum*, *moquetteanum*, *primulinum*, *victoria-mariae* and *victoria-regina* (*syn. chamberlainianum*), **Coryopetalum** whose flowers have dark longitudinal stripes with 2 to 14 flowers open simultaneously and ribbonlike petals (*adductum*, *gigantifolium*, *intaniae*, *kolopakingii*, *oii*, *philippinense*, *platyphyllum*, *praestans* (*syn. glanduliferum*), *randsii*, *rothschildianum*, *sanderianum*, *stonei* and *supardii*), and **Pardalopetalum** whose flowers can be more colorful than Coryopedilums but the dorsal sepal is not obviously striped (*dianthum*, *haynaldianum*, *lowii*, *lynniae*, *parishii* and *richardianum*). These large multifloral paphs grow in only partially shaded situations and are tolerant of higher light intensities than are the mottled leaved species. The majority occupy habitats which are exposed to wind currents and, if these habitats are elevated, to considerable drops in night time temperatures, especially during the cool season. They can tolerate an intermediate temperature, higher light and drier conditions. These plants are intermediate to warm growers that require a 6 to 8 weeks cool period (50 to 60F) to initiate flower spikes and a significant nighttime temperature drop. They enjoy a bright light (2000 to 3000 ft-candles), buoyant air movement and benefit from calcium supplements.



*Paph. primulinum*

Photo courtesy of Lynn O'Shaughnessy



*Paph. rothschildianum*

Photo courtesy of John Varigos



*Paph. parishii*

Photo courtesy of John Varigos

One of the best online source of information for paphiopedilums we have found is the website [www.ladyslipper.com](http://www.ladyslipper.com), by Bob and Lynn Wellenstein of Antec Laboratories, that has many detailed culture articles in the reading room.

Citations: The section description and species are from Harold Koopowitz's *Tropical Slipper Orchids*; the natural habitat description is from Philip F. Wright (previously of the Orchid House, University of Waterloo, Canada); photos from OrchidWiz.