

## ***BULBOPHYLLUM FLETCHERIANUM***

The Tongue Orchid (*Bulbophyllum fletcherianum*) is a rare orchid native to southern New Guinea, also known as Fletcher's Bulbophyllum or Spies' Bulbophyllum. It prefers sunny rock outcrops or mossy tree branches, but besides being lithophytic or epiphytic, it can also be pseudo-terrestrial. The Tongue Orchid requires high humidity and moist roots.

It is one of the largest species of orchid in the world, with leaves growing to almost 1.8 meters (6 feet), from a pseudobulb. It is allied to other large orchid species such as *B. phalaenopsis* and *B. macrobulbon*.

The flowers are maroon and spike-shaped, and release an over-powering aroma which attracts blowflies and carrion beetles for pollination.

The specimen [left] at the Tropical House, Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens was collected in Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s by a local orchid collector, and is mounted on cork oak. It flowers very infrequently: 1980, 2002 and 2005, 2013. ■

