

MEMBERS NIGHT: FEBRUARY 'SHOW AND TELL'

Members unable to attend our February 1st meeting missed a number of treats.

Firstly, a number of *Paphiopedilum* species purchased on behalf of the Society were presented on that night. Brendan Sayers our Chairman and Marie Hourigan had taken these “babies in flasks” under their wings and brought them on since April 2015 to a stage when they could be grown by members. The little plants were purchased at the European Orchid Show and Conference in London and now had reached “toddler” stage.

Brendan gave a visual presentation on each of the species, best growing conditions, etc. There are a total of 25 plants, five each of the following: *Paphiopedilum lawrenceanum*, *P. wardii* var *alba*, *P. Senne Calle*, *P. gratixianum*, *P. mastersianum*. Each member present was asked to choose a plant. Some members got two!

I chose *Paphiopedilum gratixianum* – not the easiest to grow, I believe. It currently resides in a little sphagnum moss, in a tiny terracotta pot, in a sealed freezer bag and gets a few drops of tepid water when it appears to be drying out. It has joined the rest of my collection on a north-facing window.

According to Alec Pridgeon (*The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Orchids*, 1972) the genus *Paphiopedilum* comprises about 60 species growing from Southern India to New Guinea and the Philippines. The lateral sepals are fused into a synsepal, which is usually small and more or less hidden behind the pouch-like lip. The dorsal sepal is large and showy.

Most species are solitary flowered but several bear multiple flowers either concurrently or successively. *Paphiopedilum* species do not have pseudobulbs and prefer moisture-retaining epiphytic compost and medium light levels. As Brendan also explained, mottled-leaved species require warm temperatures; plain-leaved species usually prefer intermediate or cold temperatures.

Paphiopedilum gratixianum may be found growing on mossy granite in the cloud forest in Laos and Vietnam at elevations of 910m to 1900m. Conditions in winter have high humidity and drizzle. Heavy rains occur in summer. Spring is the hottest season. My plant when ready should be grown on in moderately bright light and intermediate temps in medium sized bark and perlite. To induce blooming, water and temps should be reduced for 4-6 weeks in early winter. I may expect a single 8cm flower.

Other treats also followed. Mark Garvey has decided to “downsize” his collection and very generously donated a huge number of excellent plants to our usual raffle. This led to a “monster” raffle of very well grown plants. I won nothing but have my *Paphiopedilum* to look forward to?? ■

MARY BRADSHAW

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Subsequent to the publication of Alex Pridgeon's book in 1972, the list of accepted *Paphiopedilum* species has grown to 96, with several others waiting to be approved.