**The Genus Cypripedium**

Carl von Linné (Linnaeus 1753)

Type: Cypripedium calceolus

sip-ree-PEE-dee-um

Common Name: Venus’s Slipper Orchid

Etymology: Greek Mythology: named for Aphrodite (Venus)

Greek for slipper or sandal

The genus *Cypripedium* consists of approximately 50 species (that have offspring or awards, there are close to 200 recgnized, in total), all of which are deciduous and require a period of winter dormancy. These are the temperate American or Asian ‘Lady’s Slipper’ orchids related to *Paphiopedilum*.

Characteristics: The staminode is pelate-ovate to trowel shaped; the lateral sepals are united forming the synsepalum

These true lady slippers number about 50 species that are widespread in dry to wet, mid to upper elevation, bogs, marshes and scrub. These uncommon sympodial terrestrials are found from Norway to eastern Russia (Amur to Primorye), Britain to Turkey, and Ukraine to Japan, Korea, Canada and the United States with a few species extending into Mexico and Guatemala, northern Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal to Myanmar but the largest concentration is found throughout China. These erect, showy plants have short to long, often hairy, unbranched stems, each with one to several deciduous, often pleated leaves. These are often prominently veined, smooth textured or covered with soft hairs. The slender, solitary to few-flowered inflorescence has yellow-green, white, deep maroon-purple to pink flowers. The erect dorsal sepal has an entire or wavy margin, the lateral sepals are united forming the synsepalum (that is held behind the lip), and the spreading, narrow petals are more or less twisted. The stalk-less slipper or sac-shaped lip, colored differently from the other segments, has an in-rolled margin and is somewhat grooved along the veins.

NOTE: this genus name was originally used by early authors to include all species of orchids that had a slipper-shaped lip; these included species now considered distinct that are included in *Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedilum* and *Selenipedium*.

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| **Species** | **Season** | **Progeny/**  **Awards** | **Awards** | **Plant size, temp, flr size,** | **Inflr size, #flrs** |
| *acaule* | S & Sum | 4/3 | CBM, HCC, JC | Lg, cold grow, 2” | To 15”, 1 flr |
| *andrewsii* | Spring | 7/2 | CCM, HCC | Nat hyb candidum x pariviflorum |  |
| *arietinum* | Lt Spg, early Summer | 1/1 | CBM | Med, cold, 1” | To 14”, 3-5 nodding |
| *calceous* | S - Sum | 25/3 | 3 CCM | S to M, cold, 2” | To 14”, 1-2 flrs |
| *calcola* | No info | 5/0 |  |  |  |
| *californicum* | Sp thru S | 5/2 | CBM, HCC | Giant, cold, 1 ½” | Long,3-12 |
| *candidum* | Spring | 13/2 | CBR, HCC | Cold, 3 ½”, frag |  |
| *columbianum* |  | 2/0 |  | Cold, nat hybrid | Montanum x calceolus |
| *cordigerum* | Late S- S | 12/2 |  | Sm-med, cold,2½” | To 6”, 1-2 |
| *debile* | Spring | 0/2 | CHM, HCC | Mini, cold, to ¾” | Pendant, 1 flr |
| *fargesii* | Spring | 4/0 |  | Med, cold, 2” | Short, 1 flr |
| *farreri* | Late Spring | 7/1 | CBR | Sm, cold, to 2 ¾” | 1 flr, fragrant |
| *fasciolatum* | Spring | 27/3 | AM, CHM | Med, cold, 6” | 1 flr, rose scent |
| *flavum* |  | 11/1 | CHM | M-L, cool-c, 3 ½” | 2 1’2-9”, 1 flr |
| *formosanum \** | Spring | 8/5 | 2CCM, CBM, AM, HCC | Small, cold, 2 ¾” | 4”, 1 flr |

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| *franchetii* | Spg to Sum | 13/1 | CHM | S-M, cold, 4.8” | 12”, 1 flr |
| *guttatum* | Late S-S | 2/1 | CHM | Mini-s, cold, 2.4” | To 5.2”, 1 flr |
| *henryi* | Spring | 16/4 | CCE, CCM, CHM, CBR | M-L, c-cold, 2 ¾” | Short, 2-4 flrs |
| *himalaicum* | Late S-S | 1/0 |  | Sm, cool-cold, 3” | 8”, 1 flr, fragr |
| *japonicum* | Spring | 2/1 | CHM | S-M, cold, 4” | 3”, 1 flr |
| *kentuckiense* | Spring | 24/11 | 2CCM,3CHM,3AM,HCC, 2JC | Lg, cold, 4 ¾” | 1 flr |
| *lichiangense* | S-S | 4/0 |  | Mini, cold, 2” | Short, 1 flr |
| *macranthos* | Late S-S | 63/4 | 4 CHM | Med, cold, 3” | 1-2 flrs |
| *margaritaceum* | Late Spring | 1/0 |  | Sm, cold, 2” | 1”, 1 waxy flr |
| *micranthum* | S-S | 0/0 |  | Mini-S,cold,1.5” | 2”, 1 flr |
| *parviflorum* | Same as calceous | 55/22 | 5CCM,4CHM,8AM,CBM, CBR,3HCC | S to M, cold, 2” | To 14”, 1-2 flrs |
| *passerinum* | Late S-S | 3/0 |  | Med, cold, 1.2” | 1 flr |
| *plectrochilum* | Spring | 1/1 | CHM | S, cold, 1” | 1 flr |
| *reginae* | Spg thru F | 25/4 | 2CHM, 2AM | M, cold, to 4” | 1-4 flrs |
| *segawai* | Spring | 9/0 |  | Mini, cold, to 2.4” | 1 flr |
| *shanxiense* | S - Summer | 6/0 |  | S, cold, 2.8” | 1-3 flrs |
| *sichuanense* | Spring | 1/0 |  | S, cold, to 1 ¾” | Short, 1 flr |
| *tibeticum* | Late S-S | 38/3 | 2CHM, AM | S, cold, 4” | 1 drooping flr |
| *X ventricosum* | Spring | 8/1 | CHM | S-M, cold, 1.4” | 2 flrs- nat hyb |
| *wardii* | Late S-S | 2/0 |  | Mini-S, cold, ½” | 5-6”, 1-2 flrs |
| *yatabeanum* | Early Summer | 2/0 | Sim to guttatum | S-M, cold, | 1 flr |
| *yunnanense* | Spring | 5/0 |  | S, cold, 2” | 1 flr |

*\* Formosanum* has ,a W. W. Wilson Award for ‘Sycamore Springs’ in 2005

Other Information: There is a neat tale about the slipper. Venus and her lover, Adonis, were out hunting when they were overtaken by a tremendous storm and took shelter. They used this enforced time to their full advantage, leading Venus to mislay her slipper. After the storm had passed, the slipper was found by a mortal, but before he could pick it up the slipper was transformed into a flower whose central petal was shaped like a slipper.

References:

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