**The Genus Paphiopedilum**

**Type:** **Paphiopedilum insigne Pfitz. 1886**

paff-ee-oh-PEH-di-lum (having slipper shaped lip)

Common Name: **Venus slipper – Paphia another name for Aphrodite – refers to the beauty of the flower**

Etymology: Greek *for partition or division and a slipper or shoe. An illusion to the three chamber-like divisions of the ovary and the slipper-shaped lip.*

**Characteristics:**

**lacks psuedobulbs**

**has fan shaped growths giving rise to a stiff and sometimes hairy inflorescence**

**can have 1 or many flowers opening either together or in stages**

**mottled or solid leaves with more than one flower, grow warmer**

**the solid green with only one flower, grows intermediate to cool.**

[**flower parts of Paphiopedilum**](http://orchidspecies.com/orphotdir/paphpart.jpg) **are distinctly different**

This genus of about 125 unique, sympodial terrestrials, lithophytes or semi-epiphytes are widespread in shady, moist mid to upper elevation, montane forests, often found on steep limestone cliffs and grassy slopes from SE Asia and the Pacific Islands out to the Solomon Islands (China, India, Nepal, Myanmar, to Vietnam, Hong Kong, Indonesia to New Guinea and the Philippines.

These popular, colony-forming plants consist of more or less well-developed tufts of ovate or tongue-shaped, distichous (dis-ti-kis), leathery, frequently mottled foliage. Roots thick, often ciliate, spreading from the base of each new growth and supporting the fans of leaves which cover an abbreviated stem. The leaves, two to several, are pale to dark green on the upper surface and often with pale red-purple markings or spots on the underside. The usually solitary to few-flowered, thick-stemmed inflorescence often has a spectacular flower with thick, waxy, either smooth or hairy, petals and sepals. The dominating colors are green, brown, white, yellow and pink, and can also be softly blended or patterned in bold stripes and spots. The large, broad dorsal sepal is colorfully marked with distinctive stripes or spots. Tufts of black hairs sprout from the petal margins in some of the species. The deeply pouched and inflated slipper or urn-shaped lip has incurved side lobes. The flowers have a short, often down curved column.

References:

OrchidWiz Database X5.1

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Barbara McNamee Pg 1 of 6 5/11/19