***Bulbophyllum falcatum*** (Lindley) Reichenbach f.

[SECTION Megaclinium Summerh. 1935.](http://www.orchidspecies.com/sestochilos.htm)

In this section the pseudobulbs each have two leaves, only rarely one or three leaves, and a

peduncle bearing a ﬂattened rachis. There is a single row of small ﬂowers on either side of this

rachis and they open successively. In 1824, John Lindley established the genus Megaclinium to

describe this very unusual group of African orchids. Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach, whose

father is also well known in botanical circles, considered Megaclinium a section of the genus

Bullvop/ayllum in 1861, but some taxonomists of the time, including Ernst Pﬁtzer and Friedrich

W. L. Kraenzlin, agreed with Lindley that it should have its generic status maintained. Today

most taxonomists agree with Reichenbach. The distribution of this section is limited to lowland

forests that are rarely as high as 1400 m above sea level in Africa and the adjacent islands. There

have been more than 40 species described with these characteristics. Unfortunately, many of

them are seldom seen in cultivation although they are all well worth growing if they can be

obtained.

Named for its sickle-shaped leaf.

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**Synonyms**

*Bulbophyllum arnoldianum* (De Wild.) De Wild. 1921

*Bulbophyllum bakossorum* Schltr. 1905

*Bulbophyllum brixhei* De Wild. 1916

*Bulbophyllum bufo* (Lindl.) Rchb.f. 1861

*Bulbophyllum dahlemense* Schltr. 1919

*Bulbophyllum deistelianum* (Kraenzl.) Schltr. 1905

*Bulbophyllum falcatum* var. bufo (Lindl.) Govaerts 1996

*Bulbophyllum falcatum* var. velutinum (Lindl.) J.J.Verm. 1992

*Bulbophyllum fractiflexum* Kraenzl. 1912

*Bulbophyllum hemirhachis* Pfitzer 1908

*Bulbophyllum kewense* Schltr. 1914

*Bulbophyllum lanuriense* De Wild. 1921

*Bulbophyllum leptorrhachis* Schlechter 1905

*Bulbophyllum longibulbum* Schltr. 1905

*Bulbophyllum lubiense* De Wild. 1921

*Bulbophyllum melanorrhachis* (Rchb.f.) Rchb.f. 1875

*Bulbophyllum millenii* (Rolfe) Schltr. 1905

*Bulbophyllum minutum* (Rolfe) Engl. 1908

*Bulbophyllum minutum* var. purpureum (De Wild.) De Wild. 1921

*Bulbophyllum oxyodon* Rchb.f 1888

*Bulbophyllum rhizophorae* Lindl. 1861

*Bulbophyllum seretii* De Wild. 1916

*Bulbophyllum simonii* Summerh. 1935

*Bulbophyllum solheidii* De Wild. 1916

*Bulbophyllum ugandae* (Rolfe) De Wild. 1921

*Bulbophyllum velutinum* (Lindl.) Rchb.f. 1861

*Megaclinium arnoldianum* De Wild. 1905

*Megaclinium angustum* Rolfe 1922

*Megaclinium brixhei* De Wild. 1916

*Megaclinium bufo* Lindl.1841

*Megaclinium deistelianum* Kraenzl. 1902

*Megaclinium endotrachys* Kraenzel 1905

*Megaclinium falcatum* Lindley 1826

*Megaclinium gentilii* De Wild. 1902

*Megaclinium hemirhachis* Pfitzer 1908

*Megaclinium lanuriense* De Wild. 1921

*Megaclinium lasianthum* Kraenzl. 1912

*Megaclinium melanorrhachis* Rchb.f. 1875

*Megaclinium millenii* Rolfe 1897

*Megaclinium minutum* Rolfe 1893

*Megaclinium minutum* var. purpureum De Wild. 1911

*Megaclinium oxyodon* Rchb. f. 1888

*Megaclinium seretii* De Wild. 1916

*Megaclinium solheidii* De Wild. 1916

*Megaclinium ugandae* Rolfe 1913

*Megaclinium velutinum* Lindl. 1847

*Phyllorchis bufo* (Lindl.) Kuntze 1891

*Phyllorchis falcata* (Lindl.) Kuntze 1891

*Phyllorchis rhizophorae* (Lindl.) Kuntze 1891

*Phyllorchis velutina* (Lindl.) Kuntze 1891

Pseudobulbs to 7 x 2 cm, 2-leaved, set up to 5 cm apart on the rhizome. Leaves lanceolate, to ca. 16 cm long. Inﬂorescence 3-40 cm long, several to many-ﬂowered. Rachis swollen or ﬂattened, sometimes markedly so, sometimes hardly at all. Flowers distichous, greenish marked with brown, purple, yellow, or purple and yellow; dorsal sepal ca. 9 mm long.

Var. bufo (Lindley) I. I. Vermeulen (syn. Bulbophyllum bufo Lindley) has a rachis 30 cm long or more, with greenish-brown ﬂowers opening over a long period. Epiphytic in lowland and sub-montane forest, to 1800 m (6000 ft.) West and Central Africa

Mini flowers on the side of a pea pod, needs to be magnified to truly enjoy, blooms in winter till spring on a 6 1/4" [to 16 cm] long, spicate inflorescence with a very flattened, strongly undulate, rachis with short-stalked flowers horizontally aligned on either side and comes from central to west Africa in lowland and sub-montane forests where it is a hot growing, bifoliate epiphyte or occasional lithophyte at altitudes below 1800 meters with broadly to narrowly ovoid, 2 to 4 angled pseudobulbs carrying 2 apical, lanceolate or linear leaves.

**Habitat**

Tropical West Africa. Plants are reported in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Cameroon, as well as the Congo, Uganda, and Principe Island. Few details pertaining to habitat are available, but several collections have been reported in mountain regions at 1000-3000 ft. (300-910 m). In Cameroon, plants were collected near the coast on Mt. Cameroon, but habitat elevation was not given. -- Source: Charles Baker

**Ecology**

Ecology and History: Molecular clock evidence reveals Bulbophyllum arose on the

supercontinent Gondwana before it fractured into Asia, Africa, Australia, and North

and South America. The resulting worldwide distribution is therefore explained not by

dispersal but by what is called vicariancé: the land moved, rather than the plants. Most

Bulbophyllum species are adapted to one of two types of fly pollination. Myophily is

the attraction of fruit ﬂies and hover flies to nectar and pollen or fragrance. Fragrances

may serve as precursors of sexual hormones, or to generate scents that deter predators.

Sapromyophily involves luring carrion flies to flowers that mimic egg-laying sites like

rotting carcasses and decaying vegetation. Such flowers exude rank odors that have

been described variously as “all the foul smells imaginable including some new ones”

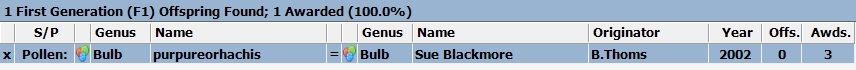
(van der Pijl and Dodson 1966), or more succinctly, like “a herd of dead elephants”

(Pridgeon 2006: 42). In both groups the hinged lip traps the pollinator against the

column. Some Brazilian species even require a wind gust to trigger the lip, offering

ﬂies nectar as a delaying tactic to extend their visit until the wind cooperates.

**F-1 Hybrids**

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*Bulbophyllum falcatum* has been hybridized only 1 time in a primary cross with *Bulbophylum purpureorhachi* in 2002*.* The offspring, Bulbophyllum Sue Blackmore, has 3 cultural awards.



Bulbophyllum Sue Blackmore ‘A-doribil’ CCE/AOS

**Awards**

Like many of the Bulbophyllums, most of *B. falcatum* awards are cultural. Of its 35 American Orchid Society awards, only 4 are for flower quality including 3 AM and 1 HCC.

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