



# The Orchid Review

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## SCHOMBURGKIA SUPERBIENS.



IT has long been recognised that the fine old *Lælia superbians*, Lindl., is not a typical *Lælia*. Warner many years ago remarked: "There are no other *Lælias* like this in growth, but the *Schomburgkias*, another family of Orchids, are often sold for it" (*Sel. Orch.*, i. t. 20). And later, Messrs. Veitch added: "As a species, in its botanical aspect, *Lælia superbians* stands on the very verge of the genus, approaching so closely the *Schomburgkias*, of which it has now altogether the habit, that its systematic position would seem to be rather with them than with the *Lælias*" (*Man. Orch.*, ii. p. 82). Two fine examples are blooming at Kew, and careful comparison leaves no doubt that the species belongs to *Schomburgkia*, the fusiform, two-leaved pseudobulbs, the long scapes with numerous elongate bracts, and the details of the flowers, with the numerous undulate keels on the disc of the lip, being all in agreement. The species was originally discovered in Guatemala by Mr. G. Ure Skinner, being first seen in 1839, planted in front of some Indian settlements, but a year later was found wild some twenty leagues north of the city of Guatemala. Here it exists in enormous quantities, the finest specimens growing out of the rocks, where it is sheltered from the north wind, some of the spikes being twelve feet long and bearing upwards of twenty light purple flowers. Owing to this character it has been called the Wand of St. Joseph. It was introduced in 1842 by Hartweg, who sent plants to the Horticultural Society of London, and flowered for the first time in cultivation in this country in February, 1844, in the collection of Mrs. Wray, of Oakfield, near Cheltenham. It is a noble species, but a little too large for many ordinary houses.

### OTHER SCHOMBURGKIAS.

There are some nine other species of *Schomburgkia* having fusiform, two-leaved pseudobulbs, long unbranched scapes, with elongated bracts and the flowers aggregated near the apex in somewhat elongated heads, and rather narrow segments with numerous keels on the disc of the rather small lip. These are the original *S. crispa*, Lindl., and *S. marginata*, Lindl., from British Guiana; *S. rosea*, Lindl., and *S. Lueddemannii*, Prill., from Venezuela; *S. undulata*, Lindl., *S. Wallisii*, Rchb. f., and *S.*



splendida, Schlechter, from Columbia; *S. Weberbaueriana*, Kränzal., from Peru: and *S. Lyonsii*, Lindl., from Jamaica, and they form a very homogeneous group.

Another group of species which have been referred to *Schomburgkia* is really quite distinct, and of these *S. tibicinis*, Batem., may be considered as the type. These have conical, hollow pseudobulbs, tapering upwards, with three or four short, broad leaves at the apex, branched panicles of flowers, short bracts, the side lobes of the lip broad and ample, and the front lobe smaller and without keels. The hollow pseudobulbs have the peculiarity of forming a nidus for ants, which find an entrance by a small hole at the base.

#### SCHOMBURGKIA TIBICINIS.

The original *S. tibicinis* is a native of Honduras, where it is said to exist in great abundance, and where it was discovered by Mr. G. Ure Skinner, whose attention, as we learn from Bateman, "was attracted at a considerable distance by a cluster of its lofty flower-spikes, which, when in full bloom, and in the dense masses that the plant produces in a wild state, must be very conspicuous. On the occasion in question, its original discoverer was not permitted to obtain quiet possession of his prize, as swarms of fiery ants, to which the hollow stems afford a snug retreat, issued forth in thousands to repel the spoiler, and inflicted pangs which none but the most ardent naturalist would have braved." He further adds: "In such request are these vegetable trumpets among the wild urchins of Honduras, that the plant yielding them is called 'the trumpet plant'—an epithet that has suggested the specific name" (*Batem. Orch. Mex. & Guat.*, t. 30).

Lindley afterwards added: "This noble plant is the cow's-horn Orchis of Honduras. Its pseudobulbs, between one and two feet long, are quite hollow, and as smooth inside as the chamber of a bamboo; at their base there is always a small hole, which leads to the interior, and furnishes access to the colonies of ants, which are constantly found inhabiting the plant" (*Bot. Reg.*, 1844, sub. t. 23).

#### THE GENUS MYRMECOPHILA.

*S. tibicinis* is quite typical of the remaining species, which we propose to separate under the generic name of MYRMECOPHILA (literally, ant-loving), in reference to their remarkable character, whose utility has been graphically described by Rodway. "What," he asks, "shall we say to the construction of a home for ants, so that its tender aërial roots may be protected from cockroaches and other pests? This many species have accomplished, and now do it so thoroughly as to derive considerable benefit from the contrivance. Perhaps the most perfect of these homes are those provided by *Schomburgkia* and *Diacrium bicornutum*. In them we have a hollow pseudobulb, into which the ants either find a doorway ready made,



or are offered inducements to make one for themselves. The result is a perfectly dry, hollow chamber, on splitting which the tiers of cells and galleries are seen ranged from top to bottom."

The following are the species :—

**MYRMECOPHILA TIBICINIS.** *Schomburgkia tibicinis*, *Batem. Orch. Mex & Guat.*, t. 30.—Native of Honduras and Guatemala.

**M. GALEOTTIANA**, A. Rich. in *Ann. Sc. Nat.*, ser. iii. iii. p. 23. *S. tibicinis* var. *grandiflora*, *Lindl. Bot. Reg.*, 1831, t. 30. *S. Brysiana*, *Lem. Jard. Fleur.*, i. Misc. pp. 53, 54, with fig.—Native of S. Mexico.

**M. THOMSONIANA.** *Schomburgkia Thomsoniana*, *Rchb. f. in Gard. Chron.*, 1887, ii. p. 38; *Bot. Mag.*, t. 7815.—Native of the Camyan Islands, West Indies.

**M. CHIONODORA.** *Schomburgkia chionodora*, *Rchb. in f. in Gard. Chron.*, 1886, i. p. 73.—Native of Central America. Flowers white, but the variety *Kimballiana*, *Rchb. f. in Gard. Chron.*, 1888, i. p. 136, has purple flowers.

**M. LEPIDISSIMA**, *Schomburgkia lepidissima*, *Rchb. f. in Gard. Chron.* 1889, i. p. 72.—Habitat not recorded.

**M. HUMBOLDTII.** *Schomburgkia Humboldtii*, *Rchb. Xen. Orch.*, i. p. 240; *Will. Orch. Alb.*, xi. t. 507.—Native of Venezuela.

**M. SANDERIANA.** *Schomburgkia Sanderiana*, *Rolfe*, in *Gard. Chron.*, 1891, i. p. 202; *Reichenbachia*, ser. 2, 11, p. 23, to. 59.—Habitat not recorded.

One other *Schomburgkia* has been described, namely, *S. campechana*, *Kränzl. (Gard. Chron.*, 1903, ii. p. 381), which was said to be intermediate between *S. undulata* and *S. Thomsoniana*, and was consequently suggested to be a natural hybrid between the two. This we regard as impossible, for the two grow very far apart. It was described from only a few flowers that were obtained by a Bremen Captain who was on his way to Laguna de Terminos, on the South side of the Bay of Campeche, on which course he would pass near the Caymans. There is no record as to where he collected the few flowers obtained, but from the description we suspect that it would have been better described as a form of *S. Thomsoniana*. R. A. ROLFE.

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**EULOPHIELLA ROLFEI.**—At the R.H.S. meeting held on February 27th last a First-class Certificate was awarded to a striking hybrid *Eulophiella* exhibited by Messrs. Charlesworth & Co., Haywards Heath. It is one of the first batch of seedlings mentioned at page 166 of our last volume, as follows: "In the Warm house we were much interested to see a number of seedling *Eulophiellas* in thriving condition. Those from *E. Elisabethæ* × *Peetersiana* were four or five years old, and of considerable size, while a later batch was from the reverse cross. Their flowering will be awaited with interest, for the two parents are very distinct, both in habit and colour, and *E. Peetersiana*, though very handsome, as regards size is rather