

## **Third Annual Orchid Show Shines a Spotlight on Slipper Orchids**

**February 26–March 27, 2005**

An exotic escapade through the galleries of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory during *The Orchid Show* at The New York Botanical Garden is bound to whet visitors' appetites for all things orchid. Therefore, be sure to plan a stop at the Thekla E. Johnson Rotunda in the Garden's Mertz Library Building, where tropical slipper orchids, often called the most coveted of all orchid plants, are the star attraction.

These captivating beauties come in a wide range of colors, sizes, and forms, all sporting the pouchy lip reminiscent of fine ballroom slippers. Some slipper orchids also have long side petals; in a few these stretch to several feet. Varieties of slipper orchids have hairs, spots, or bumpy growths that many people find intriguing.

In keeping with the Old and New World orchid adventures visitors experience in the Conservatory exhibition, dozens of specimens of two genera of tropical orchids will be displayed in the terrarium housed in the rotunda; *Paphiopedilum*, which are Old World natives and *Phragmipedium*, which are found in New World rain forests.

The unique beauty of slipper orchids has made them targets for unscrupulous plant collectors for well over a century. Today international laws restrict their removal from the wild. However, if one wants to legally bring home some of the intrigue of this captivating plant by purchasing a specimen from the Shop in the Garden, orchid expert Darrin Duling, the Garden's curator of glasshouse collections offers these tips for successful growing of slipper orchids:

1. ***Paphiopedilum***—These long-lasting Asian beauties will thrive when placed directly in an eastern window or about ten-feet away from a southern- or western-facing window. Some will even grow and flower in the shady conditions of a northern window. In general, specimens with mottled foliage are more shade-loving than the solid green-leafed varieties. They like warm to intermediate temperatures and watering once a week with a half-strength fertilizer.
2. ***Phragmipedium***—The American slipper orchids that, unlike most orchids, love wet conditions, are happy when grown in pots of pure sphagnum moss set in a saucer full of water. When given this amount of moisture, they will thrive in bright, indirect sunlight found in a filtered southern- or western-facing window or about five to ten feet away from a window in this exposure. Full sun in an eastern window is ideal. They like intermediate to cool temperatures.

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*There are some photography restrictions in The Orchid Show. Please call 718.817.8700 or visit [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org) to learn where photography is permitted in the Conservatory or how to purchase a Tuesday Morning Photography Ticket.*

*The Orchid Show is sponsored by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation*

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**The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road in the Bronx. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and on Monday holidays, from 10 a.m.–6p.m. April through October, and 10 a.m.–5 p.m. November through March. The best way to enjoy *The Orchid* Show is with the *Garden Passport*, a combination ticket that includes grounds admission, the Conservatory, Tram Tour, and Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, and costs \$15 for adults, \$13 for students and seniors, \$5 for children 2–12. For information call (718) 817-8700 or visit our Web site at [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org).**

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**Images available**