

Ladys' Slipper Orchids of India

H.J. Chowdhery

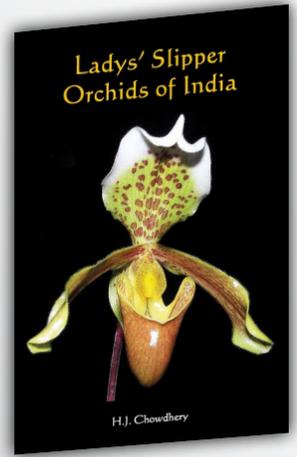
ABOUT THE BOOK

The Lady's Slipper or Slipper Orchids are an extremely well known group of orchids. They are popularly called Lady's slippers because of the presence of a highly modified pouch-like lip or labellum, which looks similar to a lady's slipper. They are highly priced and much sought after in the floriculture industry as potted plants as well as cut flowers due to their enchantingly attractive, colourful blooms and ability to remain fresh for several weeks.

The presently known five lady's slipper orchid genera, which belong to the orchid subfamily Cypripedioideae are widely distributed in the temperate regions of Eurasia and North America, Central America south to Brazil and Bolivia, tropical Asia from India across to Taiwan, south-east Asia from Indo-China across to the Philippines, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. In India, only two genera namely *Cypripedium* and *Paphiopedilum* are found, which are confined to the Himalayan and North-East Indian region except one species of *Paphiopedilum P. druryi*, which is endemic to Western Ghats.

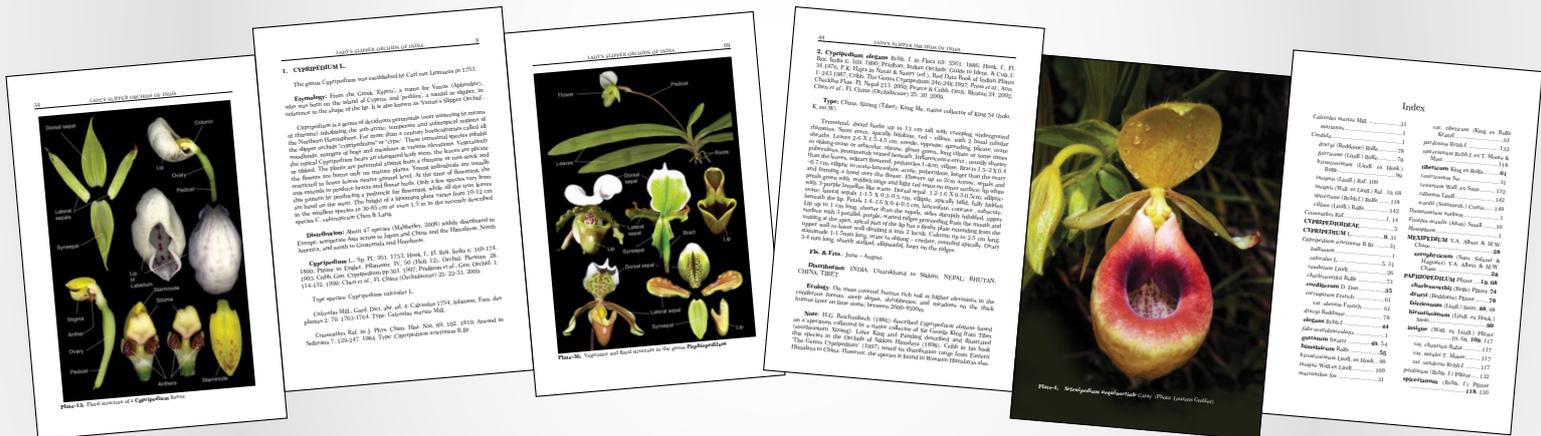
The book is the first ever comprehensive taxonomic treatment of Indian Slipper orchids. In the introductory part of the book, a brief history of lady's slipper orchids, their taxonomy and a glimpse of all the five known genera of this group has been provided. The main part of the text comprises of the detailed taxonomic information on the 14 species of lady's slippers (*Cypripedium*-5 and *Paphiopedilum*-9) reported from India. The descriptions for all the species have been drawn from the live plants along with colour plates made from fresh flowers for the first time for these orchids. In addition, in some cases the interesting history of their discovery and collection (wherever available) has also been appended. This apart, in some of the species, type specimens were wrongly designated and quoted and were followed till date by the orchid taxonomists and monographers. Such wrong treatments have been corrected through lectotypification by designating appropriate Lectotypes.

No other serious reference approaches the depth and authority of this remarkable book. Plant taxonomists, Nature lovers and those who just initiated the study of orchids will appreciate and value this book for identification and taxonomic information with regard to Lady's slipper orchids.



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Year : 2015, Pages : xiii, 164, 100 colored plates, ISBN : 978-81-211-0868-3, Binding : Hard Bound, Size : Royal 8vo, Price : Indian ₹ 3250.00, US \$ 80.00, British £ 55.00, Euro 70.00 (With free postage)

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Lady's slipper, subfamily of five genera of orchids with unusual slipper-shaped flowers. Another is the pink lady's slipper (*C. acaule*), also known as the moccasin flower. Most species have one or two flowers on a stem about 30 to 60 cm (12 to 24 inches) tall.

Lady's slipper orchid (*Cypripedium* species). Grant Heilman/Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. The genus *Mexipedium* consists of a single species, *M. xerophyticum*, endemic to a small region of Oaxaca, Mexico. *Cypripedioideae* is a subfamily of orchids commonly known as lady's slipper orchids, lady slipper orchids or slipper orchids. *Cypripedioideae* includes the genera *Cypripedium*, *Mexipedium*, *Paphiopedilum*, *Phragmipedium* and *Selenipedium*. They are characterised by the slipper-shaped pouches (modified labella) of the flowers – the pouch traps insects so they are forced to climb up past the staminode, behind which they collect or deposit pollinia, thus fertilizing the flower. There are approximately 165