

# The Paphinia Book



Rudolf Jenny  
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*The Paphinia Book*, by Rudolf Jenny. Printed for the author by Imprenta Mariscal, Quito, Ecuador, 2018. Volume in large octavo (22.0 × 27.4 cm; 8.7 × 29.1 in.), 231 pages, hundreds of color photographs, color and black and white illustrations. Hardbound, with dust jacket. Available directly from the author's website [Orchilibra.com](http://Orchilibra.com) (shop) for \$110 plus shipping.

I MUST CONFESS I have a weakness for orchid monographs. I like the idea of having a book to browse, among whose pages I will eventually find the correct name for an orchid flower that I turn in my hands. Paraphrasing Henry Oakeley's introduction to his first *Guide to Lycaste and Anguloa*, it is nice to know that the species you are trying to identify is either there or is a new thing. I also have a fondness for the books illustrated with prodigality, with a profusion of color pages, because to the pleasure of knowledge they add amazement and admiration for the bizarre diversity of natural beauty.

Now, one can imagine how to put together a "book" on a large orchid genus, with the over 100 species of *Cattleya* (*sensu lato*), the 100 or so species of *Paphiopedilum*, the 70 species of *Vanda*, the 60 taxa included in *Cymbidium*, the 50 species of *Phalaenopsis*, and also on the 40 or so taxa accepted for *Phragmipedium*. In fact, these genera have been monographed several times. An orchidologist, however, has only few chances to see a richly illustrated monograph, shaped like a book, on small genera of 10 or 15 species.

With his *Paphinia Book*, Rudolf Jenny succeeded in bringing together both aspects of a useful and pleasant lecture, creating a real book of 230 pages on an orchid genus of just a few more than a dozen species. If only for this reason, his work deserves wide praise.

Of course, this is not the only reason to review and praise Jenny's monograph on *Paphinia*. This solid book takes advantage of the author's recognized photographic skills, as well as of his passion for the historical aspects of orchidology, supported by a legendary personal library. Under the General chapter, not only is the history of *Paphinia* accompanied by excellent images of old book pages, herbaria specimens and portraits of the relevant figures in the discovery of this orchid genus, but virtually all the accepted species are illustrated with ancient plates and botanical drawings, which add a touch of historical "scent" to the modern photographs, and considerably broaden the reader's appreciation of the natural variation of individual species. Just to give you a few examples, *Paphinia cristata* is illustrated with 11 plates (plus four pictures), taken from journals such as the *Botanical Register*, *The Botanist*, *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, *Flore des Series* and *Lindenia*, books such as *Icones Plantarum Tropicarum*, Warner and Williams' *Orchid Album* and *Venezuelan Orchid Illustrated*,

and unpublished illustrations from Reichenbach's and Senghas' herbaria, and John Day's Scrap Book. Six published historical illustrations, plus four sketches and a specimen reproduced from different herbaria, accompany the three color pictures of *Paphinia grandiflora* (and its synonym, *Paphinia grandis*). Ten color photographs illustrate the variability of the Ecuadorian *Paphinia herrerae*. *Paphinia rugosa* and its variety *kalbreyeri* have the record of illustrations, with seven unpublished and one published illustration spanning from 1877 to 1892 (mostly full page), and 12 color photographs!

For all the treated species, the original illustrations (when existing) and the protologues of the single species (together with those of the synonymized taxa) are also reproduced at the original size, and so can be easily consulted. Photographs of the flower and the habit (in most cases), and macrophotographs of the lip, mostly taken by the author in his private plant collection, are presented for each taxon in a way that facilitates species comparison. I particularly like this style of monograph, which presents the author's conclusions together with most of the material that supports the taxonomic decisions. It is a transparent style that allows the reader to form his or her own idea about the identity and circumscription of the species, and to understand the taxonomic approach adopted by the author. Finally, when available, photographs of the habitats are also shown under the specific treatments, together with images of the original collectors and the botanists who described the species, to underline the human history behind the nomenclatural history of orchids.

The monograph recognizes 15 species of *Paphinia*, plus one variety and one form. Thirteen other *Paphinia* names, both at the specific or varietal rank, are reduced under the synonymy of the 17 accepted taxa (including the subspecific taxa).

Chapters on morphology (including general, sepals and petals, column, pollinaria and anther, lip, lip-callus, lip appendices, in this order), a species checklist, distribution, and habitat precede the systematic treatment, arranged in alphabetical order by species. Particularly worthy of mention is an extensive chapter on the pollination biology of *Paphinia* (pp. 198–213), written by Heiko Hentrich, a worldwide recognized expert in the reproductive biology of the Stanhopeinae. A deep discussion on *Paphinia* pollination mechanism and on floral scent (with

a lot of personal observations by the author himself and other experts, such as Günter Gerlach), make this chapter a very useful addition to the scientific literature about the pollination syndrome by male euglossine bees. Chapters on *Paphinia* hybridization (lavishly illustrated), the etymology of all the species, a selection of useful literature and the index of names conclude the book.

*The Paphinia Book* surely represents an authoritative monograph of the genus. From a taxonomic point of view, I just want to address a few points that could be improved. First of all, the treatment lacks a taxonomic key to the species, which would have rendered it much easier for the reader finding a particular taxon without the necessity of browsing through the entire book, looking at the iconographic material. Secondly, some species have not been explicitly typified, as should be expected by a monographic work. So, for example, *Paphinia grandiflora* should have been formally lectotypified (and its synonyms *Pna. grandis* and *Pna. nutans* should have been typified as well), and *Paphinia posadarum* should have perhaps deserved to be neotypified, as according to the author both the holotype and the isotype are apparently missing from their respective herbaria. Finally, the author accepts and maintains in his treatment both the subspecific ranks of *varietas* and *formae* (i.e., *Paphinia neudeckeri* f. *mocoensis* [R.Jenny] O.Gruss and *P. cristata* f. *modiglianiana* [Rchb.f.] O.Gruss, versus *Paphinia levyae* var. *angustisegmenta* Garay), without explaining his criteria about the meaning of the taxonomic categories utilized in the book. One would have preferred to have, also in this particular case, a final word about the systematic ranking of the concerned taxa.

I want to recommend this beautiful monograph not only to insiders, who will certainly use it for their botanical activities, but also to the many fans of this magnificent group of plants and to the simple lovers of natural beauty, because in the pages of this book they will certainly find a variety of things on which to feast their eyes.

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