

## *Cymbidium sanderae* Sander ex Rolfe

On page 18 of Orchid Digest volume 74, January, February, March - 2010, there were pictures of 3 cymbidiums from Vietnam: *Cymbidium schroederi*, *Cymbidium erythrostylum*, and *Cymbidium sanderae* that were very briefly described:

- \* *Cymbidium schroederi*, still quite rare in cultivation partly due to its very range in south-central Vietnam.
- \* *Cymbidium erythrostylum* is an unusual yet extremely beautiful species from Vietnam.
- \* *Cymbidium sanderae*, endemic to Vietnam, has long been incorrectly considered to be a variety of *Cym. parishii*.



- *Cym. schroederi*, a plant which was only seen from a photo that Dr. Leonid Averyanov gave me in 1998.
- The same year I bought 2 small *Cymbidium erythrostylum*: one from a nursery at Solana Beach and another from Andy's Orchids. They bloomed in a few years then became smaller and smaller and died because the hot and dry weather of Placentia, California.
- I do not pay any attention to *Cym. sanderae* because scientists have mistakenly classed this species as a variation of *Cym. parishii* which are found in Burma as mentioned in The Internet Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia.

According to Gunnar Seidenfaden, this is an endemic species of Vietnam.



*Cym. parishii* var. *sanderae*  
 Ảnh: Orchid hunter.com



*Cym. parishii*  
 Ảnh: orchidspecies.com

Above, pictures shows differences in shape and in color of the 2 species: *Cymbidium parishii* var. *sanderae* reported by Rachenback in 1874 and *Cymbidium parishii* by Rolfe in 1904. Until 1988, 84 years later, Phillip Cribb and Du Puy found out the differences. Page 339 of “*The Orchids of Indochina*” Gunnar Seidenfaden stated:

“*The story behind this taxon is given by Du Puy & Cribb (1988). Besides the type of specimen from Langbian, sent to Sander by Micholitz, Sander received a further consignment sent from Langbian; when flowers were produced only 2-3 from this shipment proved to have the dark spotted lips of the type, the others were inferior forms without spotted lips, these were called var. ballianum.*”

The picture of the *Cymbidium sanderae* in Orchid Digest reminds me of the one which is in bloom in the front of my house. It was raining and I have to wait for the rain to cease and quickly carry the heavy pot inside. The rain in Southern California has been lingering for almost a week made the pot quite heavy for an old man like me to take care of. The plant is still watery but it cannot be mistaken. This is a *Cymbidium sanderae*, an endemic orchid species of Viet Nam, my faraway home country.

Twelve years ago, my late wife bought this plant at a Santa Barbara nursery in California. It had a tag with the name *Cymbidium parishii*. The grower used bamboo sticks to hold inflorescences in the upward position which made the plant look less vibrant and less natural. The price of the *Cymbidium parishii* was more expensive compared to Cym. Red Beauty or Cym. Ruby Eyes. When we got home, my wife removed the bamboo sticks out and let the inflorescences lovely arch down along with the falling leaves.

The *Cymbidium parishii* continued to bloom as the years went by. In 2002, my wife passed away after suffering from a continuous series of chemotherapy and radiology treatments. During this difficult period of my life, my orchid collection was neglected and many species had died under the severe attacks of Boiduvale scales except this cymbidium.



According to The Orchid Hunter, besides the difference in color on the lip, the raceme of *Cym. sanderae* grows from the base of the bulbs and *Cym. parishii* grows between the leaves. My plant has three inflorescences: two between the leaves and one from the base. When I sniffed the flowers closely, I did not smell any scent at all as it was described to have.

I am not sure that my plant is a *Cymdidium sandrae* or not. I am waiting to hear from my friends in Da Lat (the nearest city of Langbiang mountain), and from Duy Van Nong at the Highland's Intitute of Biology.

I placed the Cymbidium pot in front of the altar and lit an insense for my beloved wife, hoping she can see her favorite flowers.



Placentia 2010  
Dang Bui