

## NOTES ON ORCHIDS CULTIVATED IN CEYLON

### IPSEA SPECIOSA LINDL. (THE DAFFODIL ORCHID)

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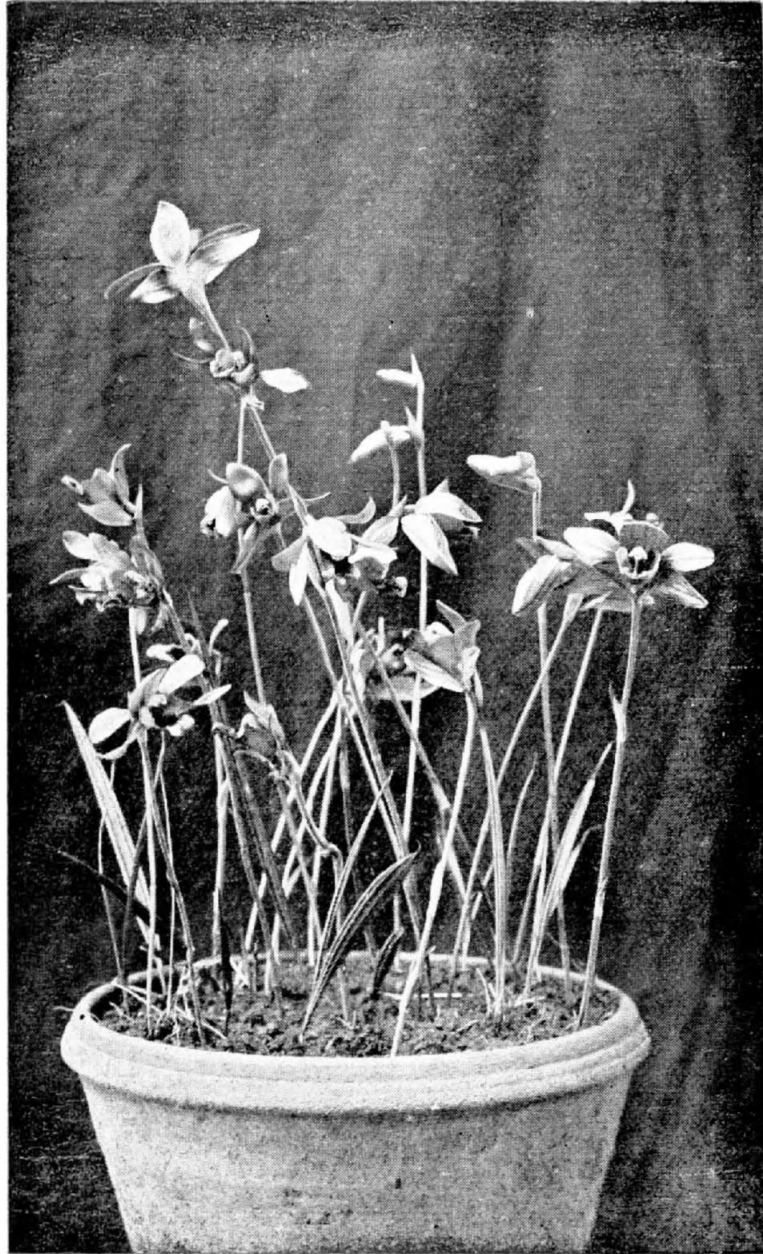
*CURATOR, HENERATGODA BOTANIC GARDENS, GAMPAHA*

**T**HIS is a beautiful deciduous terrestrial orchid belonging to the tribe *Epidendreae* and endemic to Ceylon. It is found on open patanas, exposed slopes and banks amongst long grass at elevations between three to six thousand feet. The fleshy globose tuberous-rooted rhizomes are wrinkled and of a dirty brown colour, usually in small clusters of two or three, each an inch or two in diameter.

The plaited leaves are narrow, lanceolate about ten to sixteen inches long and with three prominent veins. The furry erect flower scape rises from an underground tuber often reaching a height of eighteen inches and carrying one to three blooms.

The fragrant bright yellow flowers are about three inches across and when open will last for over four weeks. The lateral sepals are oblique at the base and adnate to the foot of the column; the lip is three-lobed and the ridges are finely tipped with crimson.

*Culture.*—The best medium in which to grow this orchid is the alluvial soil deposited on river banks mixed with coarse sand; or a mixture of turfy loam, coarse sand and leaf mould with about three inches of drainage material in the bottom of the pot, covered with a layer of leaves. The pot should be filled with the compost to within an inch of the top and tubers placed on the top of the soil and just covered over and the pot then shaken to settle its contents. Special care should be exercised in watering. It requires dry conditions and water should only be given when a dry surface is shown.



*Ipsea speciosa* Lindl.  
(The Daffodil Orchid)

After the flowers have faded, the tubers may be rested in the same pot in a more or less dry state till they again begin to grow. During this period very little moisture will be required at the roots, a slight watering once a week or so will be all that is necessary.

The flowering season varies with the elevation. It is not uncommon to find it in full bloom at Watawala, in a dormant state at Hakgala and in active growth at Diyatalawa at one and the same time.

This orchid usually blooms between September and April. It is an ideal rock garden plant if set out against small weathered boulders or in the wild garden grown in groups or scattered in open places.