

# The Orchid *Vanda tessellata* (Roxb.) Hook.

(*Vanda roxburghii* R. Br.)

*Retta* (Sinhalese), *Arattai* (Tamil). (E. Roberts)

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**T**HIS is a rather common orchid growing on forest trees in the dry regions of Ceylon.

The plant has a stout, simple or branched stem about  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch in diameter and usually 1–2 feet (sometimes 6 feet) long, clinging to the tree trunk by stout, simple and branching roots about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch across.

The leaves are arranged in two rows along the stem with their bases closely overlapping. The stem may be bare of leaves at the base, but higher up it is covered by bases of fallen leaves and ultimately by the leaves.

The leaves are sickle-shaped, thick, 6–8 inches long, broad 'V' shaped in cross-section, each arm of the 'V' being  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, the leaf-tip consisting of 2 unequal, rounded lobes and a short acute interposed one.

The flowers are borne in clusters of 6–10 towards the end of a stout green stalk 6–8 inches long, arising in the angle of a leaf and stem.

The flower is strongly sweet-scented, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, pale buff or grey tessellated with brown lines, with a white margin, and a greyish blue lip dotted with purple.

The colour of the flower varies greatly and some of the different forms (shown in Plate III) have received distinctive names. These are—*forma lutescens* Alston, with the sepals and petals greenish-brown, not tessellated, from Dambulla (fig. 2); *forma rufescens* Alston, with the sepals and petals reddish, from Madu (fig. 3); the yellow form (fig. 1) has been observed at Dambulla. The other 3 forms (figs. 4 to 6) are rather common throughout the dry zone.

The plant flowers usually from March to August.

This species occurs also in India and Burma.

## Departmental Notes

### From the Botanist's Division

The issue by the A. R. O. and the B. & S. A. R. O. of the selections listed below is announced.

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Selection</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Seed available from</i>
<i>Root Crops :</i>			
Cassava	.. MU 22	.. Excellent table variety ; Yield good	Botanist's Station, Katugastota
Do.	.. MU 73	.. High yielding, good-quality, yellow-fleshed table variety	do.
Do.	.. MU 6	.. High-yielding, good-quality, white-fleshed table variety	do.
Do.	.. MU 41	.. One of the highest-yielding of varieties but develops high concentrations of prussic acid ; suitable for starch production	do.
Do.	.. MU 51	.. A dual-purpose variety ..	do.
Do.	.. MU X 4	.. A hybrid combining yield and quality	do.
Do.	.. MU X 8	.. A hybrid combining yield and quality	do.
Do.	.. MU X 21	.. A hybrid combining yield and quality	do.
Sweet Potato	.. IB 15	.. A high-yielding, fine-flavoured, yellow-fleshed variety	do.
Innala	.. CT 2	.. Selection for yield and quality	do.
<i>Legumes :</i>			
Lima Bean	.. X 36—46/1	.. White-seeded, high-yielding, pole variety of hybrid origin	do.
Do.	.. X 36—46/1	.. do. ..	do.
Do.	.. X 36—46/5	.. do. ..	do.
Do.	.. X 36—46/6	.. do. ..	do.
Do.	.. X 36—46/8	.. do. ..	do.
Velvet Bean	.. MP—1	.. Selected for yield and quality	do.
Jack Bean ( <i>Canavalia ensiformis</i> )	.. CE—1	.. High-yielding and of excellent quality	do.
Dhal ( <i>Cajanus cajan</i> )	.. Tur 5	.. Early-flowering and high yielding	Botanist's Station, Katugastota, and Maha Illupa- lama Farm

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Selection</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Seed available from</i>
<i>Cereals :</i>			
Paddy	.. C—12	.. High-yielding and non-lodging; milling quality good, recommended for trial in dry zone in <i>maha</i> , particularly by the North-Central Province; has outyielded <i>Vellai Illankalayan</i> at Maha Illupalama Age : 4-4½ months	Batalagoda Rice Research Station and Maha Illupalama Farm
Do.	.. C—20	.. High-yielding and non-lodging; milling quality good, recommended for trial in dry zone in <i>maha</i> , has consistently and strikingly out-yielded <i>Vellai Illankalayan</i> at Batalagoda Age : 4-4½ months	Batalagoda Rice Research Station and Maha Illupalama Farm
Do.	.. C—104	.. High-yielding and non-lodging; milling quality good, recommended for trial in dry zone in <i>maha</i> , has out-yielded <i>Vellai Illankalayan</i> at Maha Illupalama Age : 4 months	do.
Do.	.. Ptb—16	.. Yield and quality good; recommended for trial in dry zone in <i>maha</i> , has out-yielded all Departmental long-aged pure lines at Polonnaruwa Age : 5½ months	do.
Sorghum	.. San-Pyaung	.. Selection for grain and fodder	Maha Illupalama Farm
Do.	.. Tambagalla	.. Selection for grain	do.
<i>Miscellaneous :</i>			
Tuticorin Chilli	.. CA 200	.. Selection within the H—1 for yield and quality	do.
Deccan Hemp ( <i>Hibiscus cannabinus</i> )	Vizianagram	.. Selection for high-yield of fibre	do.