

## STANHOPEA ECORNUTA

K. J. ALEX. SYLVA, F.R.H.S.,

ASSISTANT CURATOR,

HENERATGODA BOTANIC GARDENS

*Stanhopea ecornuta* Lem. belongs to a most beautiful though not very extensive genus of epiphytic Orchids of the Vanda tribe. With the exception of *Stanhopea grandiflora*, which is a native of Trinidad, the majority of these are endemic in South and Central America.

The plants are pseudobulbous with broad shining deep-green membraneous plicate leaves. The flowers are peculiarly formed and of a very complex shape; the labellum and column forming together an exquisite cage-like structure, which narrows downwards and is of a waxy consistency. The flowers are large and beautifully spotted, and exhale a strong aromatic fragrance like that of Vanilla. The sepals, which all point upwards, are ear-like, about two inches long, concave, fleshy, and of a pleasing creamy-white colour.

The plant, owing to its pendulous flower racemes, is best grown in a shallow wooden basket, otherwise, the free development of the raceme is liable to be checked and result in deformed blooms. The rooting compost, as far as possible, should be of a fine character; and should consist of equal parts of broken charcoal, bones, coconut fibre, and sphagnum moss. When in active growth the plant should be given an ample supply of water and placed in a warm position though sheltered from direct sunlight. After the flowers are open the plant may be removed to a cooler position and watering reduced to once or twice a week. The flowers being very sensitive and delicate, care should be taken to avoid wetting them.