

Vanda foetida

Vanda foetida, endemic to Sumatra, was described by J. J. Smith in 1906. The creamy white flowers carried on a short, few flowered inflorescence are typically lightly suffused with rosy red but in some varieties they can be overall rose. An early hybrid *Pvnda*. Petamboran showed promise in producing concolor flowers of exceptional depth of color. The short claw to the broad petals may also prove valuable in hybridization. No modern hybrids have been recorded. *Vanda foetida* is still quite rare in cultivation.



Some forms of *V. foetida* are nearly solid rose.

Photo: Neo Tuan Hong

Vanda foetida J.J.Sm., Icon. Bogor.: t. 221 (1906).

Etymology: the specific epithet refers to the unpleasant fragrance of the flowers which smell like creosote.

Description;

Stems erect, about 80 cm tall by 1.2 cm in diameter. Leaves strap-shaped, emerging at an acute angle to the stem, curving higher up, tough and fleshy, shiny grey-green, about 27 x 3.4 cm, the apex deeply divided into three equal teeth. Inflorescences erect, much shorter than the leaves, with only two or three flowers placed some distance apart, the peduncle about 8 cm long. Flowers opening widely, fleshy, and smelling of creosote, about 5.5 cm broad; sepals nearly orbicular from



V. foetida's lip is distinctly colored and shaped.

Photo: Oliver Sparrow

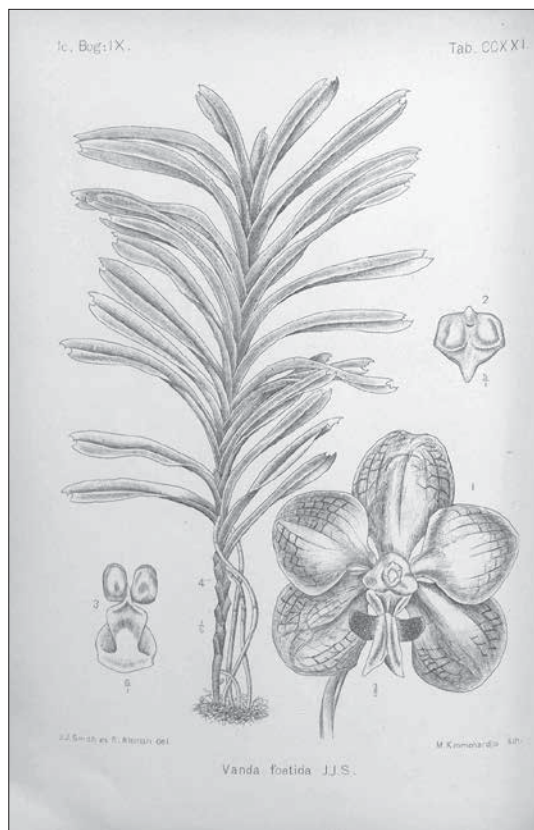
a very short claw, the upper margins incurved, with about 11 main veins, mostly pale lilac-rose with faint reticulation, whitish near the base with a purple line in the center, about 2.8 cm long, the dorsal 2.4 cm broad, the laterals 3 cm; petals nearly the same as the sepals but a little oblique, about 2.75 cm long by 2.7 cm broad; lip small, spurred, trilobed, thickly fleshy, 2.7 cm long, the spur facing backwards and laterally flattened, obtuse, white, 7.5 mm long, the side lobes vertical, their upper margins diverging, square but with rounded corners, pale yellow, 5 mm long by 5.7 mm broad, the disc yellowish white with six brownish longitudinal lines, the mid-lobe divided into four lobules, 2 cm long by 1.5 cm broad basally but only 8 mm broad apically, the basal lobules rounded, reddish with paler margins, the apical lobules triangular and more or less acute, diverging a little, 5 mm long; column short, thick and fleshy, mostly white with some orange-brown near the base, 7 mm long by 12 mm broad.

Distribution:

Only known from a collection from near Palembang in South Sumatra. Endemic.

Notes:

J.J. Smith thought that it is close to *V. tricolor* Lindl., but differs in the grey-green leaves which are less curved, the few-flowered inflorescence (but this was from plants cultivated in Bogor Botanical Garden only), the sepals and petals being less undulate and a different colour. However the most noticeable character which differentiates this species from other vandas is the remarkable odour of creosote.



J. J. Smith's drawing from his type description.