

Vanda luzonica

Vanda luzonica was described by Loher in 1915. It is endemic to Luzon on Mount Pinatubo where nearly all of the populations of the species were destroyed in the volcanic eruption. *Vanda luzonica* survives in a small population and in cultivation although many cultivated plants of *V. luzonica* are in fact hybrids making the species preservation *ex situ* perilous. In 1927, just over a decade after it was described, the hybrid between it and *V. suavis*, *V. Boschii*, had already bloomed and been registered. The superficial similarities between the two species have led to many plants of the hybrid being identified as superior varieties of each species. As such, the hybrids have received awards recognition as both *V. luzonica* and *V. suavis*. The accurate American Orchid Society awards to *V. luzonica* are 'November' JC, 'Caribe' AM, 'York' AM, 'Mary Motes' CCM, 'Shannon Hughes' HCC, 'Kinzies' AM. Incorrectly attributed to *V. luzonica* are 'Lone Star' AM, 'Kathy' FCC, 'Evelyn' AM, 'Fuchs' HCC. These are all *V. Boschii*. See *V. suavis* (page 196) for the awarded clones of *V. Boschii* attributed



Vanda luzonica's brilliant color has been inherited by modern pink hybrids. Photo: Alan Hoffman



Vanda luzonica produces long multiflowered scapes. Photo: Greg Allikas

to that species. *Vanda luzonica* is extremely dominant for its cerise pink color and is a principal source of the intense pinks of modern standard vandas.

The citation of *V. luzonica* Loher ex Rolfe is a bit dubious in its accuracy. Rolfe states that he has been aware of the species for a while: “We have known this species for years, but are unaware that any description has been published” (1915, p. 137). Loher sent dried specimens, drawings and a photograph to Kew in 1906. Neither Loher’s contribution of specimens, drawings and a photograph nor Rolfe’s notes constitute valid publication.

Vanda luzonica Loher ex Rolfe, *Orchid Rev.* 23: 137 (1915)

Etymology: for Luzon the island to which it is endemic.

Description

Robust epiphyte. Stems to 1 meter or longer. Leaves, strap-shaped, keeled dorsally, arching, praemorse at the apex, to 40 cm long by 3 cm broad. Inflorescences horizontal to laxly arching, to 40 cm long, equal to or slightly longer than the leaves.



Many cultivated plants of *Vanda luzonica* are in fact the hybrid, *Vanda Boschii*, as is 'Evelyn' AM/ AOS.

Photo: Alan Hoffman

Left. *Vanda luzonica* occurs in pale, nearly white forms.

Photo: Greg Allikas

Flowers 10–16, to 6.6 cm in diameter, without fragrance, the sepals and petals white with sparse magenta markings on the blade, with a transverse band of magenta at the bases of the tepals, and broad bands of magenta distally on the tepals with any color between appearing as stripes, never spots. Dorsal sepal spatulate with an obovate blade 3.1–3.5 cm long by 2.2–3.1 cm broad. Petals spatulate, clawed, tilted at a 45-degree angle, blade obovate 3.0–3.4 cm long by 2.0 cm broad. Lateral sepals obovate 2.9–3.3 cm long by 2.4–3.3 cm broad. The lip deltoid, rolled at the edges, bright magenta-cerise, 2.3–2.8 cm long by 1.9–2.1 cm broad, lightest at base and darkest at the tip, three-lobed, the lateral lobes erect, rectangular, obtuse. Column with a pair of swollen knobs at the base.

Distribution: endemic to the Philippines at 500 m or more.

Flowers: November to April in nature.

Conservation status: endangered.