

VINICOLOR PAPHS
by Tony Paroubek

1983 marked the beginning of a new era for Paphiopedilum growers and breeders. For the first time, vinicolor paphs were offered to the general public. A few years earlier two paph callosums flowered out from a large importation. They were deep purple, their petals heavily encrusted with black warts. The plants were named 'Jac' and 'Sparkling Burgundy.' Immediately breeders began using these clones to remake many callosum hybrids; Maudiae, Goulterianum and so on. As these hybrids began to flower, it became apparent that 'Jac' and 'Sparkling Burgundy' did not impart vinicolor genes to their offspring in the same way. Hybrids made with 'Sparkling Burgundy' have given us the intense dark purple flowers, known as vinicolor. Hybrids made with 'Jac' have given us what is known today as the flame vinicolor, characterized by a splash of dark red on the outer half of the dorsal sepal with normal coloring in the center. The flame hybrids also exhibit fine spotting over their entire surface. Unfortunately the two callosum clones were not without problems, which can still be seen today. They were substantially smaller sized than a typical callosum, and their dorsal sepals were pinched at the tip.

Today vinicolor breeding is in its fifth generation. Good progress has been made in overcoming the callosum problems. When quality parents are used, the grower can expect a similar number of excellent offspring between vinicolor and coloratum crosses. The very best of today's vinicolors are large with full flat dorsals.

Over the past ten years, many hobbyists have asked about the purple color in the base of the plant, and if it is related to flower color. In my opinion, the answer is yes. I have never seen a vinicolor flower of the 'Sparkling Burgundy' from a plant without some purple in its base. If the purple in the base of the plant is darker, then the purple in the flower will be darker. However, this does not indicate that the entire flower will be purple. When looking at vinicolor seedlings it is very important to know how much purple is in the leaves of the other parent. The more purple in the other parent's leaves, the more purple in the leaves of the vinicolor seedlings. For example, if the other parent has little purple in its leaves, the darkest vinicolor seedlings will have a purple splash only at their leaf base. When a plant such as delenatii (which has lots of purple in its leaves) is crossed with a vinicolor, then the darkest vinicolor plants will be entirely purple!

Please note that this holds true only for 'Sparkling Burgundy' offspring, 'Jac' does not impart purple to offspring leaves. So be careful, and question the seller to be sure of what you are buying.

Note: This article was reprinted from the NJOS Newsletter, March 1993 issue. Tony Paroubek is a member of the North Jersey Orchid Society.