

TAB. XXVI.

SOBRALIA* DECORA:

PRETTY SOBRALIA.

TRIBUS: EPIDENDREÆ.—LINDLEY.

SOBRALIA, Fl. Peruv. Perianthium maximum, petaloideum, subæquale; sepalis patentibus vel reflexis, petalis erectis. Labellum cucullatum, columnam amplexans, basi angustatum, disco plicato-barbatum, apice bilobum. Columna elongata, marginata, clavata, apicis trifidi lobo medio cucullato antherifero. Stigma marginatum, basi gibbere gemino nectarifero. Anthera terminalis, stipitata, semi-quadrilocuraris. Pollinia farinacea, 4, compressa, posticè cohærentia et contortuplicata, ecaudiculata.—**Herbæ Americanæ æquinoctiales, terrestres, simplices, sæpè triorgyales, foliosissimæ; foliis plicatis; floribus racemosis terminalibus, vel axillaribus, niveis, roseis, sanguineis, violaceisve, sæpius speciocissimis. Omnes fere species loca rupestris, sicca, aprica, calidissima eligunt, dumeta sæpe ampla formantes.—Lindl. Gen. & Spe. Orch. p. 176.**

SOBRALIA decora; radicibus dense fasciculatis, caulibus brevibus plicatis; floribus solitariis cernuis patentibus, sepalis petalisque latioribus brevioribus explanatis, lanceolatis acutis apicibus reflexis, labello obovato crispo medio lamellato marginibus dilatatis crispis.

Habitat in Guatemalâ.—SKINNER.

Description.

ROOTS very numerous, fleshy, bundled together in huge masses. *STEMS* from one to two feet high, leafy, and in part covered, though not thickly, with small hairs. *LEAVES* lanceolate, acuminate, plicated, about six inches long. *FLOWERS* solitary, produced in succession from the swollen extremities of the stems, lasting only a single day. *SEPALS* an inch and a half long, lanceolate, acute, curved backwards, of a faint lilacish white. *PETALS* broader and shorter than the sepals, curved only at the extremities, white fused into rose-colour down their centre. *LIP* cucullate, obovate, curled at the margin, which is also bent outwards,—an inch and a half long, externally of rose-colour, in the inside along the disk prettily streaked with yellow, and provided also with numerous small lamellæ, which traverse it longitudinally. *COLUMN* almost concealed by the lip, an inch long, and at its apex, which is three-cleft, bearing a yellow *ANTHER*.

THE present is the second *Sobralia* that has flowered in European collections, but although a pretty and interesting plant, it is by no means an adequate representative of the splendid genus to which it belongs, containing, as does the latter, several of the most showy plants in the order. It is to be hoped, however, that the flowers of some of these will shortly adorn our stoves, into which two of the very finest, *S. macrantha* and *S. liliastrum*, have already found their way. And fortunately, whatever difficulties may attend the introduction of the species of this lovely genus, none are experienced in their cultivation, as they all appear

* So called by the authors of the *Flora Peruviana*, after Don Francisco Martin Sobral, a botanist of their acquaintance.

quite at home, potted either in peat or sandy loam, or even suspended in the stove with no other aids or appliances than what may be obtained through the medium of the dense masses of fleshy roots, with which, on their importation, they are often found to be well provided.* The specimen from which the plate is taken was hung up in this manner for nearly two years, and not a particle of moss, soil, or covering of any kind was permitted to touch the roots throughout the whole of the time, and yet there was no lack of either shoots or flowers. Subsequent experiments, however, go to prove that although *Sobralias* may be readily cultivated in various ways, yet under no circumstance do they succeed so perfectly as when grown in a house of moderate temperature, and potted in sandy loam,—conditions that might naturally be expected to suit a race of plants that are almost confined to the defiles of the Andes and Cordilleras.

S. decora is a native of Guatemala, from whence it was originally sent to Knypersley by Mr. SKINNER. It blooms in the autumn for weeks together, throwing up a succession of blossoms, each of which lasts only a single day:—a peculiarity that unfortunately characterizes all the species of the genus. In the form of the flower, *S. decora* approaches a Brazilian species (*S. sessilis*) that has recently been figured in the “Botanical Register,” but the colours are different, as are also the habit and aspect of the two plants; *S. decora* being of slender growth, with its leaves and stems of a greenish hue and nearly smooth, while *S. sessilis* has a stout and robust character, and is so thickly covered with dark hairs as to have quite a purplish cast.

The beautiful drawing from which the plate is engraved was most kindly made by Miss EDWARDS, who has been highly successful in her portraiture of the plant.

The Vignette represents a woman of Guatemala attired in one of the most becoming of the many costumes of that country.



“If I had such a tire, this face of mine
Were full as lovely as is this of her's.”

SHAKESPEARE.

* If no plants of *Sobralia* were ever packed with a view to a passage across the seas, except such as have the large masses of roots described above, or in any other than the dry season, we should not have so continually to deplore their death on the voyage.



Wm. Linn. Edwards, del.

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