

SAXIFLORA

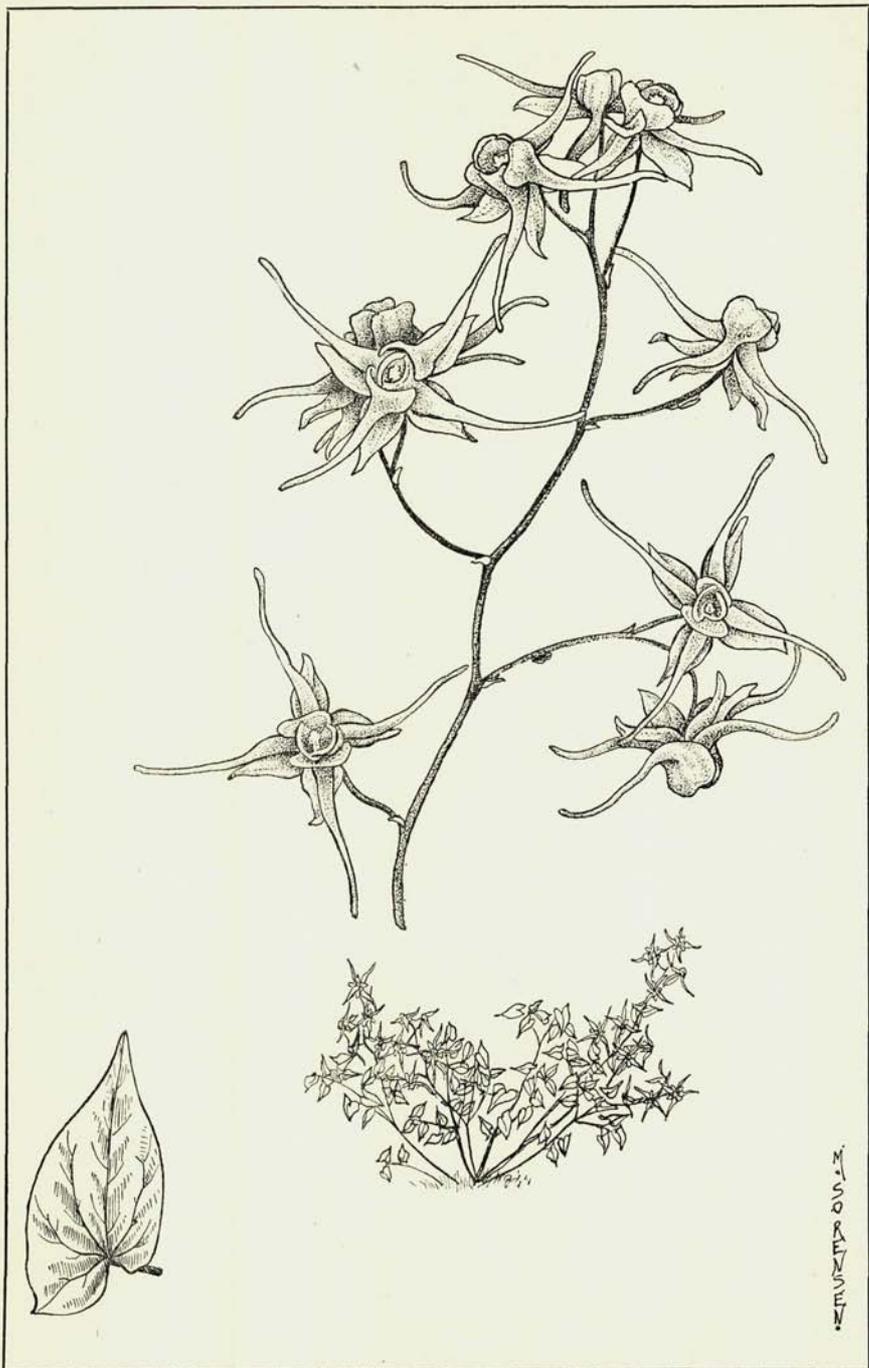
PLATE 3

Epimedium macranthum
(Berberidaceae)

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Epimedium macranthum

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Barrenwort

The epimediums or barrenworts are all excellent garden plants. They revel in a cool, moist soil with partial shade and are seen to good advantage in the rock garden or as groundcovers under trees. Strong plants potted in the fall and plunged in a cold frame until January or February respond to the very gentlest of forcing and are useful for an early display in the alpine house. In New York, the plants are bare of leaves throughout the winter but in less stern climates they may be evergreen or nearly so. Division is the accepted method of propagation and this is successfully carried out in the spring or early fall, the former being, I believe, preferable. I like to set the divisions in small pots of sandy, humusy soil and keep them in a cold frame until they begin to establish themselves.

Perhaps because they are rather slow growing, the epimediums are less often seen in gardens than their merits warrant. Even though they failed to produce flowers, they would yet deserve serious consideration because of their decorative foliage which in the young stage is particularly pleasing.

Most handsome of the genus is *Epimedium macranthum*, a species which has its home in Japan, whence living plants were introduced to European gardens by Dr. Siebold in 1836. Siebold's plants were first flowered in the garden of the University of Ghent, and from this source the species was distributed to England and formed the basis upon which Lindley's Botanical Register, plate 1906, and Maund's, *The Botanist*, plate 90, were made. The Japanese name for this *Epimedium* is "Ikariso," which translated means "Anchor Plant," a designation which is said to have reference to the shape of the leaves. In nature it is somewhat variable in flower color and pure white, pink, and violet forms have been accorded varietal names. Our drawing was made from a plant which shows but little coloring in the flowers. The description which follows is based upon examination of this plant as well as of the specimens in the herbarium of The New York Botanical Garden.

Epimedium macranthum is a low herbaceous perennial with a short creeping woody rhizome from which grow to a height of a foot or eighteen inches the flower-bearing stems. To the non-botanical eye, these stems may appear merely as compound leaves, each with a spray of flowers growing from out of its petiole; but the morphologists tell us that this cannot be, for leaves do not give rise to flowers and this production of flowers is of itself proof that the organ from which they originate is a stem rather than a petiole. Each stem of this *Epimedium* bears a solitary

cauline leaf and a raceme of flowers. The stem-leaf is usually bi-ternate but occasionally is thrice-ternate. Other leaves which arise from the base of the plant are thrice-ternate or less often bi-ternate. The terminal leaflets differ from the lateral leaflets in having distinctly longer petiolules and also in that they are symmetrically cordate-ovate rather than very obliquely ovate. The leaflets (including their petiolules) measure to four and a half inches long by two and a half inches wide but are usually smaller. In the early stages, both petioles and petiolules are furnished with conspicuous short spreading hairs, but these are not always evident on mature leaves late in the season. At each branching point of the leaf a little tuft of short hairs occurs. The flowers of *Epimedium macranthum* appear with the leaves and in New York are at their best in late April and early May. The inflorescence is a six- to twelve-flowered raceme with the flowers carried on ascending, glabrous or sparsely hairy pedicels, the lowermost of which are often compound, bearing two to three flowers. The bracts are minute, scariose and oblong or lanceolate in shape. The flower of *Epimedium* has three whorls of parts outside of the stamens, each whorl consisting normally of four members. The outermost whorl represents the sepals and in the species under notice these are small, purplish and quickly deciduous. The parts forming the second whorl have been known as the inner sepals but actually are petals. In our plant these are spreading or reflexed, ovate-lanceolate and measure from one-third of an inch to half an inch in length. They are white more or less suffused with violet. The parts of the third whorl, which at times have been considered as petals and which, together with the true petals, form the attractive parts of the flower, are really petal-like nectaries. In *Epimedium*, these are spurred and *E. macranthum* is distinguished in that it possesses tapering spurs which are longer proportionately than those of any other member of the genus. The spurs are pure white or violet streaked, spreading and are almost twice as long as their subtending petals. The blade of the nectary is orbicular and to one-third of an inch long. The stamens and style are included. The former are four in number and have bright golden-yellow anthers.

T. H. EVERETT.