

NATIVE ORCHID
SOCIETY
of
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



*Caleana
major*

-- APR 1979

THE
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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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NEXT MEETING

When: Tuesday, 24 April, 1979, at 8.00 p.m.

Where: Assembly Hall, Goodwood Boys High School, Hardy Street, Goodwood.

Why: Our guest speaker will be Mr Colin Jennings, Past President of the Orchid Club of S.A. His subject is "Orchids of the Milne Bay area of New Guinea". Mr Jennings spent two years as a teacher in new Guinea and with the aid of his students studied the orchids native to the area.

Don't forget those plants for the plant display.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

1. Peter Hornsby was elected President by ballot.

The new committee for 1979-80 is:

President	Peter Hornsby
Vice President	Jim Simmons
Secretary	Roy Hargreaves
Treasurer	Ron Robjohns
Committee	Audrey Howe (two year term) Kevin Western (two year term) George Nieuwenhoven (one year term) Reg Shooter (one year term)

2. Auditor for the coming year is Mr Keith Yates.

3. Subscriptions were not changed.

LAST MEETING

Attendance 51

The orchids of Sydney were featured on slides shown by Les Nesbitt. Sydney has more than a dozen Orchid Societies and native orchid growers can be found in all of them. There are some excellent collections of native orchids in Sydney where conditions are close to ideal for the cool growing epiphytic types. Magnificent specimen plants of Dendrobium speciosum, D. kinqianum, D. x delicatum, D. x gracilimum, D. Bardo Rose, D. falcorostrum, etc., can be seen at the spring shows.

Raffle prizes were Pterostylis revoluta, Dendrobium monophyllum, D. falcorostrum and D. gracilicaule.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due
(from 1 April, 1979).

Member \$4.00
Family \$6.00

Pay the Treasurer at the next meeting or post to the Secretary:

R. Hargreaves
1 Halmon Avenue
EVERARD PARK. SA 5035

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs L. Barton, Wauchope, N.S.W. Mr B.S. Tinning, College Park.
Mrs A.C. Smith, Broken Hill, N.S.W. Mr R.F. Lynch, Hove.

POPULAR VOTE

Terrestrial: First - Pterostylis revoluta grown by Les Nesbitt. Three large green flowers on plants in a 7" plastic pot.
Second - Malaxis latifolia grown by Tom Burian in a heated glasshouse in a potting mix of sawdust-based humus.

Epiphyte: First - A long arching raceme of lovely pink and white flowers took the honours for Jim Simmons. The orchid was Den. phalaenopsis var schroederianum x Den. williamsianum.
Second - Brian Lehmann's plant of Dendrobium Virginia Jupp had thick cylindrical leaves and short racemes of large white flowers.

WANTED!

Calling all members who bought the D. Ellen seedlings last November! Can you please bring them to the next meeting for comparison.

TRADING TABLE

Plants are required for the Trading Table. Not only orchids. The donors receive 75% of the price and the club 25%.

PLANTS ON DISPLAY — 27.3.79

"J.W."

The tide has now turned and we can look forward to increasing numbers of plants on display as the year progresses. Going out in style, Les Nesbitt ended his two years as President by being speaker for the evening and also giving an enthusiastic commentary on the terrestrials on display. In the future we wish him a happy Presidential retirement, and look forward instead, at least for the time being, to reading his comments on the plants, as he is taking on the task of writing this column during the absence of Kevin Western.

Les pointed out one of the features of the *Pterostylis* on show; all those in flower, or nearly so, being species where only the non-flowering plants have rosettes. The larger examples flower and carry only a few small leaflets on an otherwise bare stem coming straight out of the ground. Such species included two pots of *P. revoluta*, the Autumn Greenhood from the eastern states, one of which won first prize for Les in the Popular Vote. The second such species was *P. fishii* in bud. Les obtained tubers for both of these from the tuber bank of ANOS, Victoria, with *P. revoluta* flowering for the first time after three years since the tubers were obtained. Without doubt, they were fine specimens and worth the wait. Another flowering species was *P. pulchella*, a beautiful "red" flowered greenhood (in fact its name is from the Latin for "very pretty") endemic on the tablelands of eastern New South Wales. Lastly we saw *P. acuminata*, one of the more conventional "rosette" types in bud.

Then there were three of the "big" north-eastern terrestrials. Firstly, *Calanthe triplicata*, the same specimen as we saw the previous month though this time the open flowers had progressed slightly higher up the stem. Second choice in the popular vote went to the larger of the two specimens of *Malaxis latifolia* on display. This plant was also seen the previous month, though at that time the flowers, only just on the point of opening, were green. This time they were fully out and had reverted to the "true" tan colouration.

Amongst the locals were two pots of *Eriochilus cucullatus*, one of which had a plant in flower, while the other contained plants still in bud. This is another species to flower on a bare stem, though in this instance the growth of the basal leaf generally develops after the plant has flowered. Another local displayed in bud was a pot of sturdy specimens of *Acianthus exsertus*.

Finally we had a group of the dwarf Prasophyllums, including two pots of *P. nigricans*, one of which contained flowering specimens. These bore the first fruits of our visit to Karoonda last year, so hopefully we can see an increasing number of species from there as the year progresses. To make the comparison, we also had a composite pot of *P. nigricans* in bud, plus *P. rufum* in flower — and to the naked eye, there's not much to choose between them! Much easier to differentiate visually was *P. archeri*, also to be seen in flower. Next we had *P. beaugleholei* from mainly the eastern states, and finally *P. houghtoni* (?) in bud.

The commentary on the epiphytes was given by Jim Simmons, who celebrated his election to Vice-President by saying that the plants on display had led him to conclude that orchid growers had not done much better than dirt farmers this year!

Both commentators this month displayed plants to take first place in the Popular Vote: Jim with his New Guinea hybrid of *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* var *schroederianum* x *D. williamsianum*, with its cascade of beautiful pink flowers. Holttum recorded that *D. phalaenopsis* is found from Queensland through New Guinea to almost as far west as Indonesia (though its presence in Australia is debatable), often very abundantly. He assessed it as one of the best *Dendrobiums*, "with flowers of a good shape, on a graceful spray, and long-lasting. Owing to its broad petals and shapely inflorescence, it has been much used for

Plants on Display (contd.)

hybridising, and is the parent of many beautiful plants". In fact the specimen on display appeared to have taken on all the positive attributes of its former parent, and to owe little to D. williamsianum.

The other New Guinea species to be shown was D. malbrownii, a most unusual and un-orchidlike looking plant, but with delightful little creamy-yellow flowers concealed in its leafy foliage. Then we saw an interesting hybrid, D. Virginia Jupp (D. linguiforme x teretifolium) which took second place in the Popular Vote.* It is easy to see its former parent in the flowers, though those on the hybrid are larger and more robust. On the other hand, the plant itself looks more like a fattened up version of D. beckleri than D. teretifolium! Finally we saw the rare D. stuartii from northern Queensland.

Two further Dendrobiums were shown in bud, including D. biggibum var biggibum. This particular plant was also seen at the previous meeting, with buds on a cane that was dead at its base. Since then, these have flowered, and the whole cane has died and the plant is now carrying buds on growing canes in the more orthodox manner. The other plant on show was another variant, this time subspecies compactum, a small plant still in bud.

Two other genera were represented: Sarcochilus ceciliae, a small plant with two pretty pink flowers (both this and the former will be more rewarding in years to come); and Liparis coeloqenoides, another of the plants also seen last month.

One general feature this month has been the number of instances where the plants have been shown for two months running. In other words, many of the few species presently available in flower, tend to make up for the lack of range by being longer lasting.

*Editors note: D. Virginia Jupp is synonymous with D. x grimesii, the natural hybrid between these same parents.

FIELD TRIP

Saturday, 28 April, 1979

KANGARILLA AND HINDMARSH FALLS

Please note there is a slight change of venue compared with the previous notice. The trip has been revised to include local spots near Kangarilla and gradually working our way out towards Hindmarsh Falls.

It is an all-day trip and the meeting point is at the road junction in Kangarilla (where you turn left in Kangarilla, going from Clarendon to Meadows via Kangarilla) at 10.30 a.m.

WAITIPARINGA (SEED SOWING) SATURDAY, 12 May

There will be an outing to Waitiparinga (a National Trust Reserve) on Saturday, 12 May. Meet at the bottom end of Gloucester Avenue, Belair, at 1.30 p.m. We will be sowing seed.

NEW ZEALAND ORCHIDS — CORYBAS

Jim Forrest

(Continued from last month's Journal.)

Where do they grow? (contd.)

In Taranki the roads are narrow and I discovered that what makes it possible for the Corybas to grow are the sheep trucks. As they go through the cuttings periodically they scrape the sides, ipening up bare patches where the next year will be C. macrantha. Down in the South Island I found Corybas growing in the moss on old stumps of Pinus radiata, so these exotic species have not been fatal for all our orchids.

How I grow Corybas

The basic requirements are a well-drained open compost and freedom from draughts or strong light. When I first started growing I took a lot of care on preparation of containers and composts, but now I just don't have the time and use mixes that would have horrified me once. These days, instead of clay pots, I use icecream tubs (2 litre) or even larger plastic containers. Drainage is provided by drilling a lot of holes in the bottom. This is covered with such materials as old tree fern fronds, bracken, half rotted leaves or similar. Coarse pumice sand and half rotted leaf mould are used to fill the container. I've also use shingle, old fern roots, half rotted wood and it doesn't seem to make any difference. Tubers are covered with about 1 cm of mix and topped off with chopped pine needles or small shingle to stop rain-wash. I only repot when they are overcrowded as the plants send out roots very early and these are easily broken.

The tubs are kept in a shadehouse otherwise the blackbirds will tear out the mix. Unfortunately our rain usually comes as torrential downpours, but I try, if possible, to put the orchids out in the rain for a good soaking. This seems to me to do only good as I don't get leaf rot as you sometimes do with overhead watering. The most dangerous time is when they are about to flower as damping off will occur easily then. Another serious pest is greenfly and aphids which are a problem all the year round here. Small attacks I get rid of with Meths or the hose, if all else fails then I spray. Draughts will also inhibit flowering in my experience. I foliar-feed all my orchids, not just Corybas, with dilute solutions about once a fortnight in the growing period. I've used several different concoctions that are on the market and the plants appear to respond as they multiply very freely and flower well.

The Species

C. aconitiflorus — this is the same plant as is found in Australia. My pot came from Australia as I've never found this in New Zealand. It is difficult to grow and seems to be very sensitive to soil moisture fluctuations.

C. unguiculatus — another species I've not found. It is apparently very similar to C. aconitiflorus in habit and growth.

C. oblongus — a much larger plant with long "feelers". The leaf is from 1-5 cm long, ovate and often veined with red. The lip is about 1 cm wide and beautifully fringed. It is widespread at least in the North Island.

C. rivularis — this is the largest and most distinctive species in my experience. A bit like C. oblongus it has a large arrow-shaped leaf. Occasionally 5 cm long and 3 cm wide at the base. The flower has no hairs and the dorsal sepal extends over the lip. Usually found on the floor of the bush.

New Zealand Orchids - Corybas (contd.)

C. macranthus — an easy species to distinguish. It has a large, thick, heart-shaped leaf on a stalk which overtops the flower. The flower is quite large and red purple.

C. orbiculatus — a very common species. Heart-shaped leaf, often covered with red spots. Usually silver underneath. Seems to be the easiest to grow.

C. trilobus — the leaf is the give away. Usually deeply indented at both ends and much wider than it is long. The flower is on a stalk which overtops the leaf. Found on the forest floor it is a widespread species.

There are supposed to be two or three other species but as yet I've never found them so cannot comment.

PTEROSTYLIS REVOLUTA

Pt. revoluta (Autumn Greenhood) flowers in autumn as the common name suggests, which makes it a very welcome addition to a collection of greenhood species. It has a very large distinctive flower on top of a straight stem about 20 cms tall. The largest of the three flowers which took out the popular vote at the March meeting was 9 cms around the galea and the ventral sepals also measured 9 cms from the base of the flower to the uppermost tips. The flower is green and white with brown markings. The leaves on a flowering plant are very small, hardly more than stem bracts, and increase in size as they ascend the stem.

Plants multiply readily but are rather shy flowering with about 10% of the tubers producing tall flowering plants. The remainder produce rosettes of leaves close to the ground, which to the uninitiated could belong to a different species entirely. Pt. revoluta occurs in Victoria, New South Wales and southern Queensland, where it is often found at flowering time on dry stony ridges. This suggests a well-drained potting mixture with plenty of light and air in the growing season. I use my standard potting mix which gives good results. The plants are treated the same as my other greenhoods except that I do not place them in the shadiest part of the shadehouse.

The species was named by Robert Brown in 1810.

Les Nesbitt



Pterostylis
revoluta

APOLOGY

Peter Hornsby

Caladenia dilatata was illustrated on the cover of the March 1979 Journal, whereas the enclosed article "This Month's Cover" featured Caleana major! I sincerely apologise for this error and suggest the simplest remedy to be to change the title on page 9 of the March 1979 Journal to read: "Next Month's Cover" instead!! Steps will be taken to ensure this does not happen again.

OCCASIONAL NOTES — A VISIT TO THE GRAMPIANS

Peter and Mary Hornsby

While on our way back to Adelaide in mid-September, we took the opportunity of spending a couple of days in the Grampians. We arrived at Dunkeld late in the evening amid high winds and driving rain, strong enough to wake us several times during the night. This did not promise well for the following day, and it was no surprise to find the sealed road under water in places. Even so, we were soon rewarded. At the first piece of wayside scrub we stopped at we found Diuris longifolia and Pterostylis nana. The latter was the most widespread orchid we were to find in the Grampians, the specimens all differing from those found in South Australia by having considerably longer lateral sepals, giving them a more handsome appearance. The Diuris was little taller than the Greenhood, and was obviously not relishing its cold paddle.

Our destination for the day was a spot in the Victoria Range, near Gleniola. As soon as we got away from the cleared land we found orchids, though few species were in flower. We found early Glossodia in flower — a few days of warm sunny weather and many more of the buds would be open. We also found patches of D. longifolia in flower; again small plants, with stems little more than 20 cm high. P. nana were also common, and one circular patch must have been 700 cm in diameter — a glorious mass of flowers. We also found odd specimens of P. longifolia in flower.

Big patches of the basal leaves of Leporella fimbriata occurred at intervals and, looking to the future, the late form of Acianthus reniformis and Lyperanthus nigricans. Another colony orchid we saw was Caladenia menziesii. Beyond these, we found other Caladenias with the flower stems just starting, and dozens of Thelymitra, as well as one Calochilus. Fortunately the flame heath, Astroloma conostephioides, was in flower, adding a splash of scarlet to the otherwise drab scene.

Up to this point we had been enduring the cold, and the approach of thick clouds caused us to seriously consider abandoning the trip, but we decided to shelter under some rocks and see what happened. Firstly it rained, then came the hail, and finally it snowed. Patches of snow and hail remained for most of the afternoon, showing how cold it was. (When we arrived back at our motel, our next-door neighbour's car was covered with a thick layer of snow!) It seemed quite incongruous seeing P. nana flowering alongside a patch of snow, in company with the orange and red "cats-claw" grevillea, G. alpina, and the snow myrtle Calytrix alpestris, but they were in flower all the way up to the top of the ranges. Another genus to be found going up the mountainside was Caladenia, though it was too early in the season for us to be able to identify them. The stringybark, Eucalyptus obliqua, continued throughout the climb, but near the top we passed into a thick scrub of young pines, Callitris rhomboidea and prickly Hakea sp. Our biggest surprise of all was finding four P. longifolia growing in a patch of moss in the bare rock above the trees, on top of the range at an altitude of 750 metres (about 2500 feet) above sea level.

The following day, we made our way slowly through the Ranges via Hall Gap and Zumsteins, before resuming our homeward journey. Our early stops included searches through scrub dotted with patches of pink or white heath, Epairis impressa. All we found was the ubiquitous P. nana, and Thelymitra leaves. Later we moved into stands of big gum trees with an understorey of tea-tree, Leptospermum sp., and here we again found P. nana and P. longifolia, growing on the flat forest floor. Where the floor was banked up at the edge of a drainage ditch we also found P. nutans in flower.

From there we passed through Halls Gap and climbed into the Ranges on the road to Zumsteins. Opposite the track leading to the Balconies, the State

Occasional Notes — A Visit to the Grampians (contd.)

Forestry Commission burned off the area in September 1977 as an experiment in reducing the fire potential. The result was undoubtedly successful — tall trunks, with nothing in between. The early leaves of *Thelymitra* were easy to pick out against the blackened ground, but there were not many of them. We stopped again to go down to look at Mackenzie's Falls. Here, on the north-facing slope, we found *Diuris maculata* in flower, *P. nana* and *P. longifolia*, amid patches of common correa, *C. reflexa*, the emblem of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Our penultimate stop was towards the end of the stringybark stands, north of Zumsteins. Here the trees had been considerably thinned out, leaving big patches of open forest floor where little other than *P. nana* was to be found. Where some of the understorey remained, we found *Glossodia major* and *Caladenia dilatata* in flower, and again *Thelymitra* leaves, with some in bud.

Our final stop was the last patch of uncleared scrub we encountered before rejoining the Western Highway. Here, against a mat of the sedge-like *Lepyrodia muelleri*, we found big handsome specimens of *Glossodia major* flowering in profusion, and again *P. longifolia* and *P. nana*. Strangely, we found no signs of any other species.

In conclusion, our main surprise was the complete failure to locate any *Caladenia deformis*, and our biggest disappointment was finding nothing "different" from what we knew in South Australia. On the other hand, the Victorian Field Naturalists visited the area in late October and noted species of *Caladenia* and *Thelymitra* unfamiliar to us such as *C. augustata*, *C. cucullata* and *C. iridescens* and *T. carnea* (see Vic. Nat., 93, 47-54). On the strength of the combined experiences, the NOSSA field trip to the Grampians is tentatively fixed for the first week in October, 1980 — make a note now in your five-year diaries!

CALANTHE TRIPLICATA

Les Nesbitt

This Australian native terrestrial was known for many years by the name *Calanthe veratrifolia*. It grows in Queensland and New South Wales in dense shade under large rainforest trees in moist shady gullies where very little undergrowth survives. This would indicate the following cultural requirements: compost-rich in leaf mould, heavy shade (say 80%), and high humidity. I have seen plants thriving in garden beds under shady trees in Brisbane.

The plant resembles the Queensland swamp orchid *Phaius tancarvilleae*. Both have large plicate green leaves arising from a rootstock of circular attached corms. The Chinese Ground Orchid, *Bletilla striata*, a common plant in orchid collections here, has a similar rootstock. Roots grow from the upper as well as lower surfaces of the corms. The flower spike appears from the side of the new corms in spring and will grow up to 1.5 metres tall. The white flowers can be up to 30 mm across. Each lip has 3 lobes hence the name *triplicata*. This species flowers at Christmas in Queensland but is usually several weeks later in South Australia.

In Adelaide the plants and flowers are very susceptible to black rot. Buds and flowers bruise and spot easily and should be kept dry. I have tried to grow it twice and each time the leaves gradually went black from the tips until eventually there was nothing left of the plant. Several growers are succeeding with this species so ask their advice if your plants look sickly.