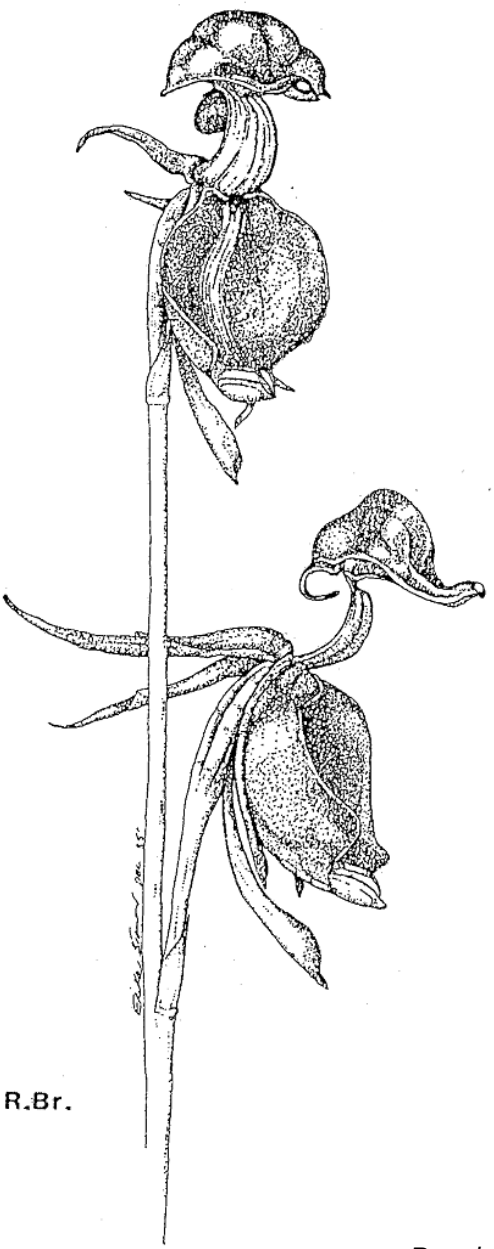
NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY

of

SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

JOURNAL



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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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NOSSA INC. JOURNAL Vol. 11, No. 4. May 1987

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NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 26 May, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.
St Mathews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington.

SPEAKER
Mr R Holiday, Landscape Planner, will speak on "Landscaping With Native Plants" and regarding the "Dry Land Botanic Park at Pt Augusta."

LAST MEETING

Our 10th Anniversary meeting certainly proved to be a popular occasion with many of our foundation members present, including some we had not seen for a while. It was good to see them again and catch up on gossip. The main item of the evening was a slide program recalling some of the Society's early field trips and efforts towards conservation, including seed-sowing at Watiparinga Reserve, Eden Hills. A number of notable identities were recognised such as our well-known Roy Hargreaves the instigator of the establishment of our society. The official proceedings of the evening were wound up with a gift of a large seedling of *Dendrobium* x *delicatum* to each person present, with the proviso that the plant be brought in each year if requested, to compare the progress of the plants and to see who can flower their plant first. Two Members claimed to already have a spike on their plant so it will be interesting to see what happens in Spring.

HELP TABLE

A pot fairly crammed with left over leafless *Dendrobium* canes after repotting processes had resulted in numerous kei-keis. Advise was sought regarding the most optimal way of growing the kei-keis. It was recommended that all kei-keis should be removed immediately and be separately potted else they would probably deteriorate during the coming winter.

An incorrectly labelled *Pterostylis* was identified as what is known as the 'Queensland form' of *P. revoluta*, a smaller form than the better known Victorian form of the species.

What steps should be taken to aid the recovery of a leafless *Cymbidium canaliculatum*? It was recommended that all dead roots be removed and that the bulbs be repotted and be kept almost dry until new growth appears (hopefully!) and then water lightly.

WANTED

A "Show Marshall", male or female, is needed to coordinate our own Spring Show in September and our participation as a society in the Royal Show and S.G.A.P show. This is a most important function that will guarantee involvement with members; a satisfying job for someone with a little time to spare. Please see our Secretary for details.

PLANTS ON DISPLAY / APRIL MEETING

TERRESTRIALS
Eriochilus dilatatus, Pterostylis abrupta, P.aestiva, P. fischii, P. x *furcillata, P. obtusa, P. ophioglossa, P. parviflora, P. pedoglossa, P. reflexa, P.scabra* var. *robusta, P. truncata* (including a white form)

EPIPHYTES
Dendrobium cucumerinum x *D. mortii, D.* Ellen, *D*. Hilda Poxon, *D*. Kuringai, *D. smilliae, D.* x *superbiens, Liparis reflexa.*

Plant commentary was provided by Les Nesbitt on epiphytes and by Bob Bates on terrestrials.

POPULAR VOTE

TERRESTRIAL	*Pterostylis abrupta*	Grown by L and K Nesbitt
EPIPHYTE	*Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon	Grown by Les Burgess.

JUDGING

A new aspect of the monthly proceedings is the judging of the best species and hybrid epiphytic and terrestrial orchid. No prizes will be awarded. Members who do not wish to have their plants judged may place an adhesive label, available from the Display Marshall, to signify desire for non-participation.

Results from our April meeting are as follows:-

Epiphyte species -	*Dendrobium smilliae*	Reg Shooter
Epiphyte hybrid -	*Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon	Les Burgess
Terrestrial species -	*Pterostylis abrupta*	L and K Nesbitt
Terrestrial hybrid -	*Pterostylis* x *furcillata*	L and K Nesbitt

PROPOSED PLANT HOUSE VISIT

It is proposed to have a Glasshouse/Shadehouse visit on a weekend prior to the commencement of Spring Shows, to view collections and cultural conditions of some of our successful members. This type of occasion provides a valuable learning experience, particularly for newer members, and a chance to see how and what others are growing. To enable planning, an indication of numbers of people wishing to participate, would be appreciated at the next meeting. (Please note that it will be necessary to limit the numbers to about 30 people.)

NEDOS has invited NOSSA members to join them in displaying orchids at their Winter Show on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th of July at St

Phillips Hall, Broadview. Setting up will be on Thursday 16th. See any committee person for details.

TIMELY TIPS

For those who own a glasshouse. Shadec1oth or paint, but not both, should be removed to provide more light during the winter months. Watch out for the seasonal pests such as slugs and snails in the shadehouse and check that pots are not located under drip sources else much soil may be lost during prolonged or heavy rains exposing more delicate root or tuber material and potentiating rotting processes.

PLANT QUARANTINE by David Cartwright, Quarantine Plant Pathologist.
(The script from David's talk at the March 87 meeting)

To many people, Plant Quarantine may be likened to any other Bureaucratic impediment to private enterprise. I hope to demonstrate that this is in fact not the case but that there is a biological basis to the restrictions imposed. The role of Australia's Plant Quarantine service is to screen imports to prevent the introduction of new and exotic insect pests and plant diseases.

Plant Quarantine is involved with the "Risk" Business. Its charter is to ascertain the levels of risk associated with a wide range of imports and, based on that assessment, to apply suitable treatments to minimise the risks involved.

The types of commodities involved range from the high risk types such as soil, plants, untreated timber and some seeds through to such items as household effects and processed goods.

Plant Quarantine is administered Australia wide by the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service in Canberra under the Quarantine Act of 1908. The actual day to day work however, is done by people employed by the various State Departments of Agriculture and Primary Industries in each respective State.

We have inspectors employed at International Airports, at major ports, at mail exchanges, container depots and Plant Quarantine Stations throughout each State.

As you can imagine the quantities of material entering Australia are quite enormous and with relatively few resources, Plant Quarantine must rely on a 'Risk Assessment' to pinpoint the 'high risk' items.

As an example I have some figures from the 1984 yearbook:

International Flights into Australia	10,794
Passengers	2,409,519
Air Freight	87,593 tonnes
Mail	6,945 tonnes
Ships	5,895
General Cargo	31,421,000 tonnes

-obviously a tremendous amount of material to screen.

If Quarantine was to operate on a "No Risk" basis we would prohibit all imports. Australia is however a signatory to the International

Plant Protection Convention which means we must justify any of our restrictions on purely biological grounds and that they are not imposed as trade barriers. Obviously this is often a difficult proposition with various grower groups lobbying the Government for protection.

Looking through some of the types of "Risky" imports, SOIL probably tops the list. It is capable of harbouring a wide range of insect pests - their eggs and larvae, soil-borne plant diseases, weed seeds and even the dreaded Foot and Mouth Virus. Generally, soil imports are only approved for processing or testing and then only after they have been heat treated.

Live Plants including cuttings, bulbs, corms and rhizomes would constitute the next highest risk. The risks of insects and their eggs are removed by fumigation, however the plants may be carrying diseases which are not obvious at the time of initial inspection. The use of growth in post-entry Quarantine allows us to examine carefully for these "latent" diseases. The periods in post-entry quarantine vary from a minimum of 3 months for most ornamentals up to 4-5 years for some stone-fruit imports requiring full virus indexing.

Seed imports pose a lower risk as many of the diseases affecting the plants do not carry over in the seed, but, having said that, there are some important exotic diseases which can be introduced via seed. As a result certain seeds are restricted and require various treatments including growth in quarantine. Most flower seeds and many vegetable seeds are not restricted and may be imported subject only to inspection upon arrival.

Cut flower imports are considered to be a fairly low risk and are generally imported with inspection upon arrival for insect pests or other "hitch hikers". Chrysanthemums, carnations, and roses which can be grown from cuttings or buds are treated with Glyphosphate herbicide to devitalize them without affecting quality or shelf life.

Quarantine has mounted various advertising campaigns to get the message across - Harry Butler was used for one such campaign ("Declare it for Australia"). Quarantine also provides displays at Royal Shows, Garden Displays and other venues as well as making its presence felt at all International Airports. Despite this however, some people seem to treat the quarantine restrictions as a game and attempt to get plants and seeds through when they get back from overseas. To provide some examples at Adelaide International Airport in 1983 there were 324 flights with 45,900 passengers and crew. From these there were 1027 Plant Quarantine seizures of undeclared goods as follows:

- 25 persons with soil
- 9 with goods infected by insects
- 40 with bulbs and corms
- 24 with plants/cuttings
- 103kg seed seized
- 17kg raw nuts
- 23kg fresh vegetables
- 65kg fresh fruit

Many people were prosecuted as a result of these seizures with fines around the $500 mark for small quantities of seed (eg one packet of bean/lettuce seed).

Some people have gone to extravagant lengths to smuggle material including a person with a bag of knitted coat hangers each containing vine cuttings. Plants and seed are often hidden in money belts, wallets and handbag linings, and one person taped plants and seeds to wheel arches of an imported vehicle.

Plant Quarantine personnel numbers are small in relation to the numbers of people and the amount of cargo entering Australia and the interception figures are such that a quantity of the material must be entering illegally. It is not surprising therefore that Australian Agriculture is finding and attempting to deal with new pests and diseases which are appearing and threaten our crops.

In this the "Jet Age" the gardens of the world and all their pests and diseases are only hours away.

A series of slides were shown to illustrate some of the serious exotic pests and diseases which threaten Australian crops.

Further information on Plant Quarantine can be obtained from:-

Senior Inspector(Plants),
Godfrey Street,
Port Adelaide,
Phone: 240 9855

Or

Plant Quarantine Station,
Northfield Research Laboratories,
Box 1671, G.P.O.
Adelaide S.A. 5001
Phone: 266 8333

REAL OZZIE BUSH BABIES : BEAUTIFUL AUSTRALIAN BULBOPHYLLUMS

The Genus *Bulbophyllum* has 2000 species growing world wide, with 26 species in Australia, 17 of them tropical. They grow both epiphytic (on trees) and lithophytic (on rocks) with companion plants such as mosses, lichens and ferns to keep the roots and pseudobulbs humid. Some plants run like cords separated by spheres, complete with single leaf and roots. The flowering raceme appears from the base of the pseudobulb. The running rhizomes space the growths and wrap themselves thickly around branches, twisting their way around the twigs and limbs. This festooning, growing net continues to spread over *Ficus* trees, favourite homes of these bush babies of the Border Ranges of New South Wales and Queensland. Other hosts include Hoop Pine, Sheoaks and scaly-barked rainforest trees.

They are a tiny family in flower and leaf size generally, some are barely noticeable botanicals (*Macrouris* Section). The interesting *Cirrhopetalum* Section has an unusual variation in its flowering techniques. The individual flowers arrange themselves in an arc and resemble daisies in their semi-circular formation. The *Ephippum* Section contains *B. masdevalliaceum* which has flowers resembling those of another orchid genus.

A tiny bush baby is surely *B. minutissimum* with spherical 2mm pseudobulbs. Its lance shaped leaves grow among moss on the shady side of sandstone bluffs, and its hairy flowers are purple with translucent spaces. Another miniature form is *B. globuliforme* which also has the single leaf per bulb, neatly creeps over branches in Hoop Pine forests producing white flowers in October and November. Both occur in the Border Ranges of N.S.W. and Queensland. *B. weinthalii* has the largest flower, 20mm across. It flowers singly from new growths in Autumn. The Yellow white or green flowers are spotted with maroon and have a deep purple labellum. Its host can

be Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii* or *Casuarina* species growing in rainforest border areas where air circulation is optimal for its closely fitting pseudobulbs.

B. macphersonii is a cloud forest bush baby. Its tiny brilliant red flowers balanced delicately on slender stalks above the leaf mat. They are confined to rainforest trees at Mt Paluma near Mt Spec, via Townsville, Queensland. It flowers in Autumn, spreading its wheat like leaves and thin roots vertically along trunks or obliquely along limbs and twigs. Found in the Border Ranges rainforests, at high elevations, are the saronged pseudobulbs. and succulent leaves of *B. aurantiacum* which has attractive, orange tipped flowers less than 5mm across. Its fleshy leaves and thin wiry roots cover rocks and limbs quickly.

One of the largest flowered of the species is *B. elisae.* Its light green, warty pseudobulbs are oblong with a single, dark, green leaf rising from each bulb top. The green flowers are 15mm across and long lateral sepals semi-open on a long raceme. *B. bracteatum* produces a dense crowded mat of wrinkled pseudobulbs. Its minute flowers are slightly fragrant. Found in the Mt Glorious rainforest near Brisbane, it prefers upper sections of trees with broken sunshine.

The largest pseudobulbs are those of *B. baileyi*, which grows only in northern Queensland. One sighting was on a vertical, granite boulder, sprawling near the Crystal Creek waterfall, Mt Spec, near Townsville. The oblong, ovate leaves are thick and leathery, Flowering occurs in late spring to summer producing solitary white or cream flowers with purple spots. It also occurs near the bases of scaly-barked trees in the Mt Tozer rainforest of Iron Range. It was observed growing with three other orchid species of the genus *Dendrobium* on the same tree.

The *Cirrhopetalum* section is represented by *B. gracillimum* and *B. longiflorum* . The latter was previously known as *B. clavigerum*, and is widespread, ranging from Uganda to Fiji, with Cape York as its favoured Australian site. The thick leaves, 15cm in length on wellspaced 4cm long pseudobulbs are resistant to as dry season but prefer areas of high humidity and low air movement. Hence they are found low on trees shaded on forest rocks, in the Iron and McIlwraith Ranges at 200 to 500 metre altitude. Flowering in the wet season, January to March, the six to eight spotted, 4cm, pink blooms are complete with filigree, hairy lures. Arranged in a semi-circular arc, they tremble in the slightest breeze. *B. gracillimum* is vegetatively similar and was discovered in 1974 in the Iron Range. The purple-red blooms are more slender laterally with numerous hairy lures. It is free-flowering with each pseudobulb making several inflorescences, Mt Tozer's windswept summit is its home.

Another bush baby which prefers humid, shady conditions is *B. masdevalliaceum,* which belongs to the *Ephippum* section. Red flowers are produced spasmodically throughout the year. This species was discovered in 1973 at the headwaters of Camisade Creek near the Jardine River preferring to grow at low levels on trees with fibrous bark.

These species are grown in temperate (10 to 30 deg. C) in my Adelaide Hills conservatory. Most have flowered several times and

are slowly growing. Light levels are not as high as in their preferred habitat. They have been mounted on a variety of hosts, from pressed cork slabs, natural cork tree bark, tree fern fibre, paperbark branches and 'gutter guard' rock rafts. Sphagnum was used as backing when the plants were mounted and secured with nylon line or 'pantie hose' strips. They receive daily watering in Summer and a humidifier maintains moist air conditions. They receive foliar fertiliser weekly, weakly. Luckily their preference for shade and their epiphytic culture enables me to grow this varied selection, which I have observed, so beautiful, in the wilds of the Australian bush.

E. Viskic

POPULAR VOTE TERRESTRIAL ORCHID - APRIL By Les Nesbitt

Pterostylis abrupta
My plants came from southern Queensland and were included under the species *Pterostylis decurva*. In 1985 they raised to species status in their own right by D.L. Jones and described as *Pterostylis abrupta* in "The Orchadian", December 1985. I planted 33 large tubers in a 250mm clay pot in January 1987. *P. abrupta* belongs to the cauline group of *Pterostylis*. The tubers produced 32 flowering plants, 3 with 1 flower plus one bud, and the remainder with a single flower. There was only one non-flowering rosette showing that the species is free flowering.

The plants grew to 460mm in height, with 4 -7 leaves on the stems. The elegant flowers had green stripes on a white background with red-brown flared petals and dark brown extended sepals up to 45mm in length. The plant stems are very slender and recently all of the plants flopped over as a result of a heavy rain storm, ruining the display.

This year the pot was taken into the glasshouse as soon as the buds started to show. This was just as well because there was extremely heavy rain the night before the April NOSSA meeting. I grew this beautiful, early flowering species in my standard mix of soil, sand and peatmoss with a pine needle topping.

TERETE DENDROBIUMS by Gordon Brooks

The terete dendrobiums are a rewarding group of orchids which are mostly very floriferous, but do not enjoy the popularity that they deserve, this is due in part to the belief that the plants have to be mounted. Mounted plants are attractive but are more difficult to maintain because of the low natural humidity during summer, having plenty of hanging plants above the benches helps to maintain a more humid atmosphere but can cause excessive shade on the lower plants. When mounting plants it is important to choose a large mount because most teretes develop an extensive root system, a large slab of cork bark or a 500mm long piece of *Casuarina* or *Melaleuca* limb about 80mm diameter is ideal. I advise against tree fern trunk because it retains too much moisture and inhibits the root growth of the plant leading to disappointing growth and poor flowering. Sphagnum moss is often used on newly mounted plants to maintain moisture at the roots until the plant is established, I sometimes use it but remove it at the start of winter because eventually it makes the root system less vigorous.

Hanging baskets are an attractive alternative, even for the long

trailing types because the medium retains moisture longer than a mount but still allows air circulation around the roots. Shallow baskets with a very coarse medium are to be preferred, the orchid being planted on top of the basket. The compact growing types soon cover most of the surfaces of the basket when they are most attractive while the long-trailing types tend to start new growths at the base to eventually produce a denser specimen.

Standard pots, especially the squat ones, are adequate for some of the terete orchids but I have found that the terracotta saucers are superior, the plants being more vigorous and free flowering. Several holes must be drilled in the saucer and a coarse medium used, a particle size between 10mm and 20mm is probably ideal. Because of the trailing habit most will need to be hung or stood on a pedestal in the growing area.

The species are generally easy to grow and flower, however the hybrids in this group deserve to be more widely grown. The hybrids are usually floriferous and have the bonus of larger flowers than either parent, many of those including *Dendrobium teretifolium* as one parent are more compact than *D. teretifolium* so are better suited to a small growing area.

Most of the teretes prefer a bright aspect but *D. pugioniforme* and *D. tenuissimum* do better in a shadier and more humid part of the shadehouse, both are often found in association with *Sarcichilus falcatus* or *S. olivaceous* in a humid but not wet environment.

A SECOND SPECIES OF HYACINTH ORCHID (*Dipodium*) IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Some twenty years ago well-known Naracoorte naturalist and wild-flower artist Kath Alcock noticed a very distinct form of *Dipodium punctatum* growing near her home. The plant always had green scapes, short spikes and white bell-like flowers with very distinct carmine spots extending to the short, broad labellum. They were quite different from the common form which grew tall, often had purplish scapes, long flower spikes and well spaced, widely opening pink flowers with indistinct spots on the perianth and stripes on the long, narrow labellum. She painted both forms and discussed the matter with many of her visitors, one of whom was Miss D. Hunt, local teacher and botanical collector. Miss Hunt made a collection of both forms at Joanna in 1961 and these were sent to Adelaide to reside at the Waite Herbarium.

In 1986 Kath spoke to me of her belief that the two were possibly different species. Although I had made several summer trips to the South-east, I had seen only the common form which was no different to forms of the species seen in the Mount Lofty Ranges. A few weeks later I was most intrigued when the Miss Hunt collection was sent to the State Herbarium along with another collection made near Mt Gambier by Miss C. Dickson. Together with a Kath Alcock collection, that made 3 collections. This was obviously not a local "sport".

When I received a call from Kath this January to say that both forms of *Dipodium* were in full bloom I went to Naracoorte at once. Many plants of the new form were soon located in the Naracoorte Town Reserve, growing in deep sand under "stringy barks" *Eucalyptus baxteri* with an understorey of bracken fern. Surprisingly the common form of *Dipodium punctatum* was found nearby! We were even

lucky enough to capture native bees on the flowers of the "white bell" form.

By, fitting together all that was known of the new *Dipodium* it was decided that it grew only on a strip of sand-hill (the Naracoorte range) from the North of Naracoorte to the Caroline Forest, a distance of about 100 km, on an old coastline. It can probably be regarded as a relict species or sub-species (at one location a possible hybrid was located).

Material was sent to Mr Davis Jones in Queensland who is revising the Australian *Dipodium* species. He confirmed that there are indeed two hyacinth orchids in South Australia and mentioned that *Dipodium punctatum* is really a complex of (at present) 5 known taxa.

I hope to do a more detailed survey in the summer of 1987/88.

R Bates

DO WE REALISE by Roy Hargreaves.

Few members are aware of the time and effort involved in assuring that each copy of our Journal arrives on time per Australia Post. I can recall only twice in ten years, in circumstances beyond our control when the journal arrived late.

The inaugural NOSSA meeting was held March 22nd 1977 and by the following month a four page newsletter, the forerunner of the current Journal format, had been published and distributed. Initially the printing was done using a 'Gestetner' machine kindly made available to NOSSA by the Northern and Eastern Districts Orchid Society. Printing was done at the home of Les (and Kay) Nesbitt our foundation President and Editor.

The South Coast Orchid Club offered NOSSA the use of one of their 'Gestetner' printers which enabled more convenient 'day-time' printing by NOSSA members. In 1978 NOSSA purchased a second hand 'Roneo' printer which printed our journals until December 1985 during which time there were some problems. "When it was good it was very good but when it was not it was most frustrating." Ron Robjohns and Don Wells would arrive at my home equipped with their lunch and often struggle to complete printing before the collating team of 4-6 people arrived to collate, staple, fold, envelope and address each journal for postage. Each page had to be checked for a range of possible problems, removing blank and creased sheets and then re-printed on the reverse side and be checked again to produce some 300 Journals involving 1250 to 1500 sheets. Since its purchase for about $80.00, the 'Roneo' produced over 200,000 printed pages. When quoted over $100.00 for a most necessary cleaning and service several members went to another members home garage/workbench to do the job - at least $100.00 was saved by members time and effort.

For some considerable time other printing options and their relative merits and costs were discussed by the management committee culminating in the contracted use of a company word-processor and collating photocopier, a step which reduced work hours by NOSSA members from 25-30 hours to about 12 hours and improved Journal quality.

Our Editors have been Les Nesbitt, George Nieuwenhoven, Letizia

Gentile and now again George Nieuwenhoven. Our article contributors from within and outside of NOSSA are too numerous to recall. Our typists have worked long hours for a small honorarium. With respect to those who have worked to print, assemble and distribute the Journal, I would be sure to miss some who assisted for 2 years or so if I tried to mention them all. Apart from Don and Ron referred to previously, long time helpers have been Pat Marks, Albie Phillips and Yvonne Burdett (members of the 'team' for at least 8 years), Also there are those who are prepared to chip in at short notice to assist. In short there have been NOSSA members who have been silently and tirelessly working without reward to make our Journal the quality publication we have come to expect. To all those people it is time we said, "Thankyou".

DO WE SCORCH SPECIOSUMS? by Gordon Brooks

We commonly hear statements from other growers that to promote flowering of *D. speciosum* we should put them out in the open, even to the extent of burning the foliage. I don't like the burnt look so wondered if the plants could be enticed to flower but still have a healthy appearance.

I have housed my *Dendrobium speciosum* var. *pedunculatum* plants along the north wall of my Rite-Lite glasshouse for the past twelve months. During winter the plants receive full sunshine while during summer the light level is about 50% of natural daylight. The plants are also much drier during the Winter than if they were housed in a shadehouse.

This seasons growths are well under way and some are already showing the purple pigmentation in the leaves and pseudobulbs that is reported in the wild populations of this variety. Also many of the new growths are showing large buds at the apex between the leaves. Can we expect flowers in spring?

The literature states that *D. speciosum* var. *pedunculatum* has pseudobulbs to 150mm however some of my plants purchased as that variety are now 200mm high, it will be interesting to see these plants in flower to confirm their identity. I suspect incorrect labelling because some plants have flattened, robust pseudobulbs which are strongly curved, but they have the purple pigmentation which is a feature of *D. speciosum* var. *pedunculatum*. I suspect that some of the plants sold as *D. speciosum* var. *pedunculatum* are compact forms of *D. speciosum* var. *speciosum.*

I haven't scorched the leaves but the plants more closely match the botanical description, it will be most interesting to see whether flowers are forthcoming this season. The observations detailed in this article will be followed up with a further article after the flowering season.