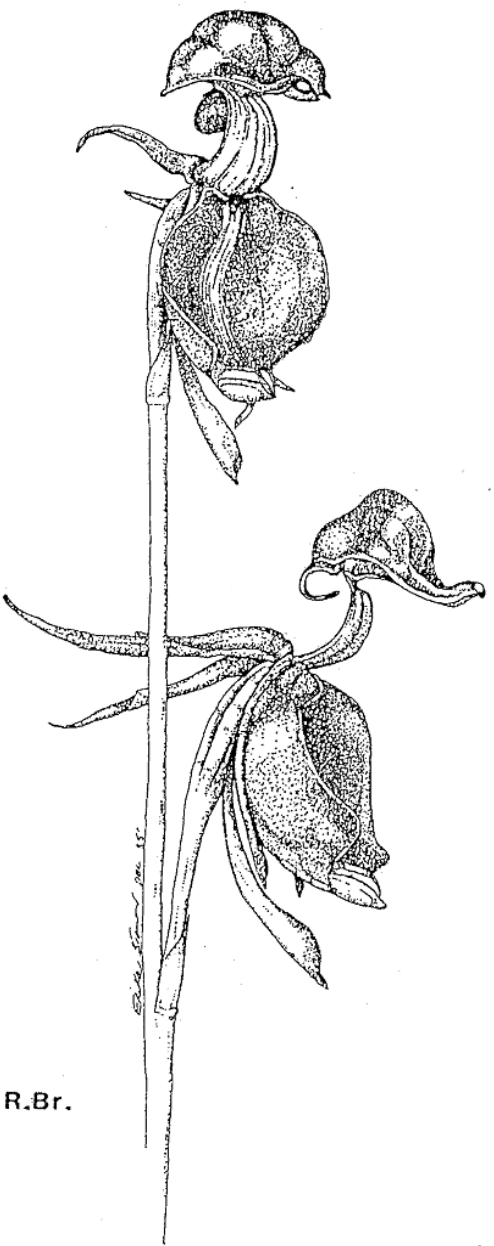
NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY

of

SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

JOURNAL



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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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THE NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA PROMOTES THE CONSERVATION OF NATIVE ORCHIDS THROUGH CULTIVATION OF NATIVE ORCHIDS, THROUGH PRESERVATION OF NATURALLY-OCCURRING ORCHID PLANTS AND NATURAL HABITAT.

ALL NATIVE ORCHIDS ARE PROTECTED PLANTS IN THE WILD; THEIR COLLECTION WITHOUT WRITTEN GOVERNMENT PERMIT IS ILLEGAL.

NOSSA JOURNAL Vol. 11, No. 5. June 1987

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 23 June, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.
St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington.

SPEAKER

Mr Les Nesbitt will speak on the 'Basics of Terrestrial Orchid Growing'.

LAST MEETING

Mr Ray Holliday spoke on landscape design in general. His talk was illustrated with slides and by simultaneous use of two projectors, Ray showed that good and bad design is not entirely in the eyes of the beholder but that certain rules apply. He then proceeded to demonstrate numerous examples of good and bad design side-by-side, many of them quite amusing. It seems some street-scape planners in certain council areas, which shall remain nameless, have a lot to learn. The particular example cited being that of a twisting footpath along a straight road. Someone had decreed that "bends are in" - but for what reason?

Quite a few of Ray's illustrations 'covered 'The Paddocks' area near Bridge Rd, Pooraka. Although Ray was not impressed with the entrance to the Park which was originally created as a means of collecting and dispersing storm-water, he gave full marks to the concept and design of the Park and showed us many of the tranquil places to be found there, an impressive Park, created by man, yet originally designed for practical purposes. Thank you Ray for a humorous and enlightening presentation which should improve our appreciation of natural and man-made landscapes.

LIAISON OFFICER

Mr Gordon Brooks has been appointed as the Liaison officer between the Australian Native Orchid Society (A.N.O.S.) and N.O.S.S.A.

SHADEHOUSE/GLASSHOUSE VISIT

The big day will be Saturday 22 August. We will be visiting the collections of Gordon Brooks -an epiphyte grower with shadehouse and cold glasshouse culture, Les and Kay Nesbitt's collection at home - fine terrestrials and a diverse selection of epiphytes including a glasshouse, and George Nieuwenhoven's cool and warm glass -house containing native and exotic orchids plus a shadehouse crammed with terrestrials. Further details regarding time and order of visits will be published in the July Journal. A limit of 30 participants will apply. See Roy Hargreaves at forthcoming meetings to register your name and for further details.

NEXT FIELD TRIP

To Warren Conservation Park on Sunday June 31 (afternoon only). Meet outside Nesbitt's Native Orchid Nursery, Kersbrook at 12.15 p.m. Umbrella and gum boots are usually needed at this time of year.

R.S. ROGERS HOUSE

A 'Care Group' to look after the R.S. Rogers House in the Botanic Gardens has been formed. The group will take care of weeding, watering, pollinating, seed collection and repotting of tubers. Thank you to those who volunteered.

Heard on the Grape Vine

Our hard-working Roy Hargreaves has taken a budding orchid group under his wing, providing them with cultural know-how for native terrestrial orchids and supplying them with - what else - *Pterostylis curta* tubers. Where do you think this group could be? Port Fairey, Victoria. A.N.O.S. Vic eat your heart out. Good work Roy.

HELP TABLE

A plant of *Pterostylis* x *toveyana* and a leaf of silver beet were displayed, each obviously parasitised. The orchid had been grown near the beet which was significantly affected by Rust and which was also thought to be affecting the orchid. However popular opinion pointed to spider mites as having damaged the orchid, not Rust.

PLANTS ON DISPLAY / MAY MEETING

TERRESTRIALS
Acianthus exsertus (both normal and green forms), *Pterostylis* aff. *alata, P. baptistii, P. fischii, P. longipetala, P. obtusa, P. ophioglossa* ssp. *fusca, P. pulchella, P. vitata* (both common and green forms) and *P.* x *toveyana.*

EPIPHYTES
Bulbophyllum macphersonii, Dendrobium bigibbum var. *bigibbum. D. rigidum, D.* Hilda Poxon, *D.* Ku-Ring-Gai, *D.* Star Of Gold, *Oberonia palmicola.*

Plant Commentary was provided by Reg Shooter on epiphytes and by George Nieuwenhoven on terrestrials.

POPULAR VOTE

TERRESTRIAL	*Acianthus exsertus*	grown by W Walloscheck
EPIPHYTE	*Dendrobium* Ku-Ring-Gai	grown by L and R Moore

JUDGING

EPIPHYTE SPECIES	*Bulbophyllum macphersonii*	grown by E Viskic.
EPIPHYTE HYBRID	*Dendrobium* Ku-Ring-Gai	grown by L & R Moore.
TERRESTRIAL SPECIES	*Pterostylis pulchella*	grown by L & K Nesbitt
TERRESTRIAL HYBRID	*Pterostylis* X *toveyana*	grown by W Wal1oscheck

TIMELY TIPS by George Nieuwenhoven

If, after the recent generous rainfall, disease is apparent in your terrestrial collection, do not despair but take action quickly.

Remove any affected pots immediately, placing them under a roofed area such as an unheated glasshouse or under the house eaves. Let the pots and, in particular, the plants dry out. *Pterostylis* will sometimes have a wet darkening leaf-rot present. Remove any apparently diseased sections and try spraying with a fungicide. Pots should subsequently be watered carefully making sure that the foliage remains dry. Such pots will have to be nursed until dormancy occurs when tubers should be removed and placed in new soil in a new or sterilised pot, making sure the old soil is discarded.

Check your collection frequently for signs of trouble. *Thelymitra* will occasionally rot off at the base. A limp leaf tugged gently reveals a plant that has parted from the tuber through rot caused by a wet potting mix. Nothing can be done to save it. Always use soil or mixes with reasonable drainage.

Any plants affected by virus must be destroyed or it may rapidly spread to other plants. Good hygiene should be practised at all times.

Glasshouses should have a fan continuously circulating air else fungal diseases are liable to set in.

CONSERVATION NEWS

The Flinders Ranges National Park has been enlarged following the inclusion of the old Wilpena Station property which contains large populations of *Caladenia toxochila* and *Pterostylis boormanii.*

A large colony of 'Cinnamon Bells' (*Gastrodia*) was located last year in the Filsel Hill - Carey Gully Conservation Park only 20 minutes drive from Adelaide.

Piggotts Range scrub near Clarendon has been converted into an archery course. Many of the populations of rare orchids have been bulldozed. Entry is now restricted.

WANTED! From the members: items of news on conservation. you,

CULTURAL ADVICE

(1) To those persons present at the April 87 NOSSA meeting who obtained seed of *Caladenia latifolia*. The seed was collected from a a plant known to produce viable seed. To germinate this seed simply sprinkle it around the bases of, ideally, established plants of *C. latifolia* or around the bases of other established *Caladenia* species, adding a little finely chopped bracken fern or sheoak needles if no litter is already present. Avoid excessive watering which will float the seed away. Then and wait and hope.

(2) To anyone who received a plant of *Dendrobium* X *delicatum*, and who is not familiar with their cultural requirements, simply read the following article by Gordon Brooks.

DENDROBIUMS - A CULTURAL METHOD by Gordon Brooks

The majority of the Australian dendrobiums occur in regions which experience wetter summers and warmer, relatively drier winters than we enjoy in Adelaide. I experienced problems with my dendrobiums which grew vigorously during spring and summer then deteriorated during the winter months due to a severe loss of roots. Consequently the plants lacked vigour and were very reluctant to reward me with flowers. This was most apparent with *Dendrobium kingianum* which very rarely flowered.

My plants are grown in a shadehouse constructed from 50% knitted shadecloth covering both walls and roof, a second layer of 50% is placed over the roof from November to March otherwise the new growths experience leaf burn.

As I had no control over the amount of rain which entered the pots during the winter I suspected that my original potting medium retained too much moisture. The following medium has produced far better growth and flowering, so it has been adopted for my entire collection of dendrobiums.

All components of the medium are screened to a consistent size range, as this allows the most rapid drainage after watering and lets a maximum volume of air to enter the rootzone. For pots to 75mm the particle size of the medium is between 5mm and 10mm and for pots to 200mm the range is 10mm to 20mm.

I use the following components, all measured by volume-

4 parts	Radiata pine bark
2 parts	Dolomite (blue metal)
1 part	Charcoal
some	Chopped bracken frond

Particles of a blocky shape are far superior as they do not pack as closely as platey particles. I have found that the inclusion of the chopped bracken frond improves the medium, however do not add too much as it fills the spaces between the individual particles. I use squat terracotta pots which are filled to at least a third of their depth with lumps of polystyrene foam, care must be taken that the drainage hole remains unobstructed. Plants grown in this manner retain the roots during winter with no sign of rotting and flower much more freely than previously.

Daily watering during summer becomes necessary when the plants become well established, some watering is required during winter if.

rain doesn't fall for a week or more. As it is difficult to keep the plants too wet during summer they can be hosed down to increase the humidity. The free watering schedule also allows more effective flushing of salts left from fertilizer residues and the mains water that I use on my plants.

Two or three times during the growing season I broadcast Top Brand blood and bone over the dry plants and immediately water. Weekly I apply a thorough drenching with a soluble fertilizer mix comprising half strength Top Soluble with added iron chelates, magnesium sulphate, sugar and acidified with hydrochloric acid to a ph of 5.5 to enable more effective uptake of nutrients. The sugar feeds the mycorrhizal fungi which are associated with most established plants and appears to contribute to their health.

When repotting, the root-ball may be left intact if the medium is sound, a thorough hosing out of any fines being beneficial, the small amount of disturbance to the roots doesn't interrupt the flowering cycle as much. I don't allow ferns or mosses to remain in the pot as they reduce the airspaces and increase the water retained in the medium.

I have recently purchased a cold glasshouse in which I have used the same medium, the only change being more frequent watering during winter. The plants are thriving in this medium so I intend to continue its use as the chore of extra watering is preferable to worrying about the moisture status of water retentive media.

GROWING *DENDROBIUM* HILDA POXON by Les Burgess

The way I grow my plant of Hilda Poxon is to place it on the highest bench of my shade house exposed to all the extremes of weather. I have found that whenever the plant has been taken inside out of the rain or for shows it has shown signs of distress. Possibly the suddenness of the change or lack of air movement is responsible. The plant is now only in a seven-inch pot and has only just been repotted. The mixture used is mainly pine bark with some added isolite and peat moss. I fertilise with Blood and Bone at this time of year and that lasts until about September when I fertilise using the same formula as the cymbidiums receive. Watering is similar also. In my opinion, for growing all orchids the same code applies - lots of tender loving care and the plants respond accordingly.

GROWING *Dendrobium smilliae* F.Muell (syn *D. ophioglossum* Rchb. f.)
by Reg Shooter.

The plant which I benched as *D. smilliae* at the April meeting seems to have created some interest. Several members disputed the name on the label, expressing the opinion that it was D. *ophioglossum.* This confusion is perfectly understandable as the orchid has been variously known as *D. purpureum* Roxb., *D. capituliforum* Rolf., and *D. ophioglossum* over the years.

The orchid was described by Reichenbach in 1876 as *D. ophioglossum* from a single specimen purported to have been collected from the Cape York area of North Queensland. Some time later in 1879, Reichenbach published an article in which he expressed doubts as to the legitimacy of the species.

Despite several expeditions into the Cape York area in recent

years, many of them led by Dr Peter Laverack of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, no further specimens of the so-called *D. ophioglossum* have been found and at the time of writing, it is not accepted as an Australian Native orchid species. In 1980 Dr Laverack was at Kew and had the opportunity to examine the type specimen of *D. ophioglossum*, the result of that examination leading him to reduce the species to a synonym of *D. smilliae*.

D. smilliae is a tropical orchid extending from its southern extremity of the Burdekin River near Townsville to the top of Cape York Peninsula into New Guinea and the surrounding islands. It is an orchid of the rain forest favouring light open conditions. I have seen them growing on Bloodwood trees on the swampy banks of the Daintree River forming quite large clumps only 12 to 15 feet above the ground.

Being a tropical rainforest orchid, it experiences warm, humid conditions in the summer and dry, warm conditions in the winter, and to successfully grow it here in Adelaide we must try to emulate that environment. That means a glasshouse with heating, able to maintain a minimum of 15 deg C in winter and some means of providing humidity in the summer. I grow my plant in a small pot (4 inch) suspended high up in the glasshouse. It appears to like to dry out between waterings and being suspended does not receive quite as much water as the benched plants. The compost is 3/4 inch fir bark with a few pieces of scoria mixed in, probably any compost will do as long as the golden rule of 'good drainage' is observed.

D. smilliae - does not seem to require a rest period as many other *Dendrobium* species do. It is observed to be in a state of continual growth, as one lead matures and produces flowers, which incidentally last for up to six months, a new lead will commence to form. Heat is provided by an electric fan heater from April to November. In November the heater is replaced by a humidifier which maintains a minimum of 50% humidity. Under these conditions I find *D. smilliae* (syn *D. ophioglossum*) grows and flowers with ease.

The plant was purchased in 1980 having been deflasked in 1979. It flowered for the first time last year, 1986, producing 5 racemes each containing 15-20 flowers. This year there are 12 racemes having a similar number of flowers. It has been in the present pot since 1983 and now requires repotting. This I will do after the flowers have faded, only moving it up to a 5 inch pot where it should remain for a further 2 years.

REFERENCES

Clemesha, S.C. 1978 *Dendrobium johnsoniae* F. Muel and *D. purpureum* Roxb. -- Australian Natives?
Orchadian 6 (2) 34.
Dockrill, A.W. (1969) Australian an Indig., Orchids Vol 1 488, 489
Laverack, P.S. (1980) The True Identity of *Dendrobium ophioglossum* Rchb. f. Orchadian 6 (9) 212, 213.

POPULAR VOTE TERRESTRIAL ORCHID - May 1987 by W Walloscheck:

Acianthus exsertus
The clone involved came from my property in Ironbank. It is situated under a stunted Hi11 Gum on a small mound of my rather poor soil with very little humus and leaf litter. The plants are very small

and have very red stems and flowers in the natural situation.

Previously, cultivated plants from this source increased in size but had green stems blushed with red. The potting medium was rich in humus and retained a great deal of moisture. I did not consider the green stems to be a true colour for the clone so in 1986 I decided to experiment with cultural conditions in an attempt to correct this.

The new potting mix was 75% coarse sand and 25% commercial potting mix. Tubers were placed 25mm from the top of the mix instead of the usual 38mm. Blood and Bone was dusted on the top of the pot at planting time. This medium had improved drainage and placing tubers closer to the surface assured a quicker drying time so the growing conditions would be harder than previous years.

In my opinion, the experiment paid off, resulting in the impressive red stems and flowers as seen at the May meeting.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ref. -- Mass Collecting of Western Australian Orchids

Dear Sir, As a visitor to the "ORCHIDS 86" show, I was horrified by the Perth Orchid Society display of cut native orchids. Thousands of wild orchids including some "Spider Orchids" so rare they have not been named had been picked and jammed together in bunches. That display should never have been accepted, especially as many of the flowers had died even by the first day of the show.

This kind of display is not uncommon in Western Australia. The Albany Wild Flower Show is a well known example. Local "orchid lovers " spend up to a week before the show scouring the country, collecting large bunches from as many species as possible. As many as 1000 individual flower spikes may then be exhibited.

As each orchid seed capsule may contain a thousand seeds this means that a potential 1,000,000 potential orchid seeds are destroyed annually. It is many years now since this sort of event was allowed in South Australia. (i.e., the old Belair Wild Flower Shows).

Congratulations NOSSA on your support of conservation in South Australia through not exhibiting orchids cut from the bush at your shows.

Signed Ms S. Young.

CULTURAL CERTIFICATE No. 17 :- *Dendrobium falcorostrum* by W. Harris

This plant was Champion Orchid at the Spring Show 1986 and received its cultural certificate then. The plant was grown in a black 25Omm squat, plastic pot in a mix of coarse pine bark, 10mm - 25mm, with a little added charcoal. This mixture drains very rapidly and it is necessary to water frequently during the warmer summer months. Fertilising is rather spasmodic, a match box full of Blood and Bone in September and another during March. Last year the plant was hung high under 50% shade cloth and received all the winter rain which was considerable at Blackwood. It also received high light intensity which resulted in some burning of the leaves but this was compensated by an excellent flowering. The plant was exhibited in

two shows and this has had an effect in that severe leaf drop occurred in late spring but the plant is now making up good new growth.

A TRIP TO OBERONIA'S GARDEN by Edda Viskic

Near Cairns in North Queensland on the Atherton Tableland is a magic waterfall called Millaa Millaa. Fairyland prevails as the rainforest becomes alight with fireflies at dusk. The 3 metre high, slender treeferns growing below and around the wafting spray at the base of the falls are excellent hosts to the minute *Oberonia* species. With fan-like leaves it is perched on the treefern trunk fibre with its roots penetrating the surface layers of lichens, mosses and various creeper roots. Growing just beneath the spray of green foliage from the treefern canopy, it seems to prefer well-shaded, moist gullies with warm to high temperatures in its natural habitat.

There are 4 species of *Oberonia* found in Australia, 2 of them are endemic and all growing in wet, lowland forest.

Oberonia palmicola grows in cloud forests in the Iron and McIlwraith Ranges of Cape York Peninsula, at 1000 metres as well as wet lowland and has the widest distribution of habitats. Discovered in 1948, it has tiny pink red flowers which last several weeks and which open progressively. It needs low to medium light levels and medium to high humidity.

Oberonia muellerіana is common to Australia and New Guinea and grows on the tableland rainforest as well as lowland. It prefers intermediate temperatures and medium to high light levels. It will also grow as a lithophyte on rock piles. Minute brownish orange flowers form a tiny brush like a fox's tail.

Oberonia attenuata is found only in tropical lowland forest and is confined to the Townsville to Cooktown region. It requires high to medium temperatures and constant high humidity.

Oberonia carnosa, first discovered on Cape York in 1975, is the smallest of the Australian species. It has been found in the Iron Range, growing in full sun at Tozers Gap. Also found in the McIlwraith Range, this endemic species has small, succulent leaves and orange flowers. Flowering period is from February to June. Growinq only in lowland forest, it prefers medium to high temperatures and high humidity, never being allowed to completely dry out.

In cultivation, this Indo Asian genus can be mounted on treefern fibre and does better grown near a constant source of humidity. Waterinq could be daily in summer and twice weekly in winter in the Adelaide region. A shaded spot in an intermediate glasshouse environment should provide the flowering results we all like to see.

THE AUSTRALIAN CYMBIDIUMS by Gordon Brooks

There are three species of *Cymbidium* which are native to Australia, they have considerable horticultural merit both as species and as parents of miniature hybrids. They all have arching to pendant racemes bearing many small flowers so make ideal subjects for culture in hanging pots.

Cymbidium canaliculatum

The leaves of this species are grey-green, stiff and channel shaped an adaptation to the drier inland environment that it inhabits. Long arching to pendulous racemes bear numerous flowers of 2 mm diameter, the colour being variable ranging from yellow or green with maroon or brown spots to an all over dark red-brown. The choice dark flowered forms come from the more northern part of its range.

Its range extends from the inland side of the ranges of N.S.W. and Queensland across the north of the Northern Territory to northern Western Australia. Occasionally it extends to the coast in N.S.W. and Queensland. The decaying hollows in dead and live trees are the sites habited by this species, the decaying wood supplying the moisture in a very dry environment. The plants may be found in light shade or full sunshine, they can grow to a very large size with numerous backbulbs at the centre.

The plants require moderate to strong sunlight to thrive and flower prolifically, the dark flowered varieties requiring warmer conditions with only moderate humidity levels. The light flowered forms will often do well in the open during winter with only natural rainfall, provided the growing medium is very free-draining, for the dark flowered forms some protection from the rain with little shade is the ideal situation, especially if protection from the cold winds can be provided. I use a coarse (greater than 6mm) mixture of bark, charcoal, blue metal and lumps of decayed wood from the heart of eucalypts, if the medium becomes sodden wash the fine material out of the root-ball then repot in coarse material disturbing the roots as little as possible.

Cymbidium madidum

The large pseudo-bulbs, which can be 25cm tall, bear bright green leaves to 90cm long, the leaves are thin and become decurved as they lengthen. The arching to pendant racemes bear 12 to 70, usual1y well spaced, flowers of 20mm to 30mm diameter. The flowers are apple-green to dark tan coloured with a dark brown patch between the lobes on the labellum. It is usually found growing in hollows in tree limbs but is often found growing in masses of epiphytic ferns, it has been reported as growing in decaying organic matter on sand in coastal dunes of northern N.S.W.

This species occurs in the moister regions from the Clarence River in north-eastern N.S.W. to the tip of Cape York Peninsula. It is found from sea-level to 1,200m in dense shade to open Situations in or near rain-forest.

A vigorous species which will attain a large size growing under the same conditions as exotic cymbidiums. It can be grown in a standard *Cymbidium* mix but may do better in a more open mix as used for dendrobiums, with the addition of chopped bracken or leaves from eucalypts.

Cymbidium suave

An atypical member of the genus *Cymbidium* which produces a woody stem which continues to grow for several years, the stems which

grow to 35cm are covered with the old leaf bases. Up to 15 thin, flexible leaves from 15cm to 45cm top the stems, the pendulous racemes appear from the bottom leaves. The numerous close-packed apple-green flowers of 25mm diameter open in late spring or summer.

C. suave occurs from the south coast of N.S.W. to north Queensland, usually found growing in rotting tree stumps or hollow limbs. It ranges from sea-level to 1,200m growing in the open hardwood forests, occasionally extending to the fringes of rainforest.

It is a difficult species to establish after removal from the bush because the roots are damaged when collected. A coarse mixture of bark, rotted eucalypt and charcoal is recommended, the plant not being disturbed once established. It thrives in the conditions given to exotic cymbidiums, not objecting to a shaded position. If the medium deteriorates the plant must be repotted into fresh medium, the fines being washed from the root-ball. Old hollow logs or terracotta sewer pipes make ideal containers.

HYBRIDS

C. Kuranda
A man-made hybrid between *C. madidum* and *C. suave,* it has large pseudobulbs like *C. madidum*. It is easy to grow, bearing long racemes of yellowish-green flowers in late spring, best cultivated as for *C. madidum*.

C. Little Black Samba

A man-made hybrid between *C. madidum* and *C. canaliculatum*, easier to grow and flower than *C. canaliculatum*, it has pendulous racemes of dark red-brown flowers. Most of the crossings have been made using *C. canaliculatum* 'Sparkesii'. It appreciates the same conditions as *C. canaliculatum* being kept drier during winter.

There have been numerous crosses made with the exotic species and hybrids, the result being some attractive progeny having pendant raceme with miniature flowers. Future breeding with these hybrids should produce some very good flowers of miniature proportions.

NEW MEMBERS

Dept. Arts, Heritage and Environment.

Mrs P. P. Crompton	Mr D. T. Smith
Mr B.J. Fletcher	Mr R. Holliday
Mr R.C. Gardner	Mr D. Cartwright

NOSSA SLIDE LIBRARY

The Society has a growing collection of slides of native orchids and of NOSSA shows and field trips and a folder of prints of South Australian native orchids. These are available on loan to NOSSA members for the purpose of research or to complement talks to be presented by members.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

We currently have no articles for inclusion in the next Journal. Your article, no matter how brief, will be greatly appreciated.