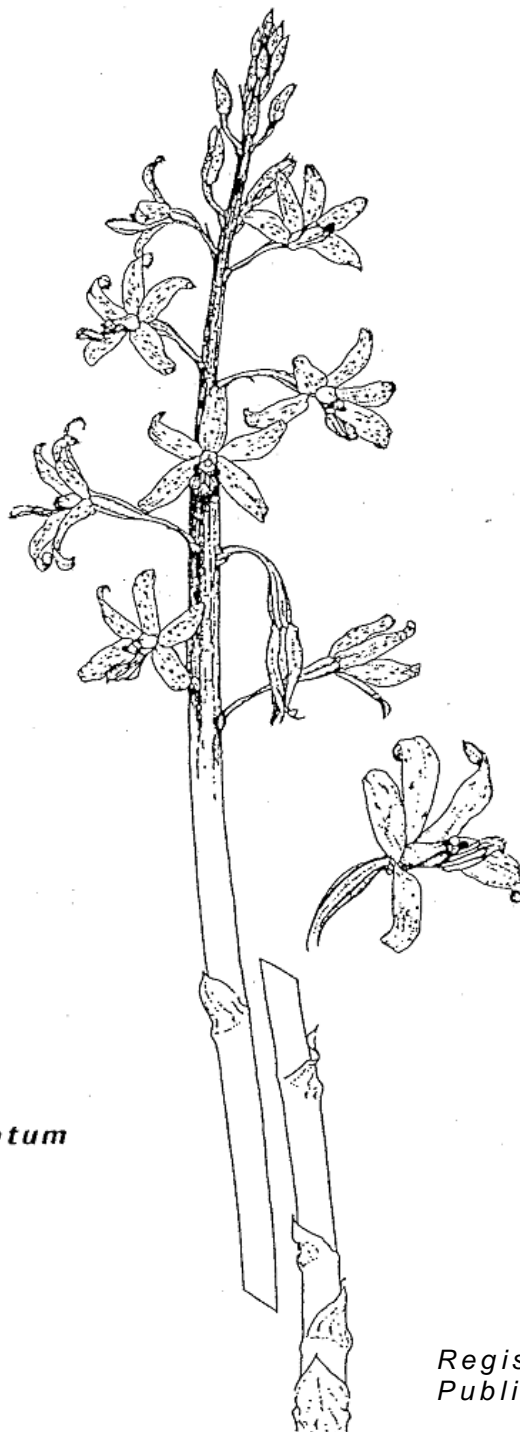


NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY  
of  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.  
JOURNAL



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## **NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.**

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.

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#### NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 28 June at 8.00 P.M. St. Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington

#### Speaker

Keith Northcote will speak on 'Australian Soils'. Dr. Northcote, now retired, specialised in soils while with CSIRO. This is sure to be a most interesting and informative talk presented by a very good speaker.

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#### FIELD TRIP NOTICE

Sunday July 10th, whole day. Winter survey Scott Creek Conservation Park. Meet at Mt. Lofty Railway Station at 9 A.M. or at Mackereth Historic Cottage (in the park) at 9:30. Bring a picnic lunch and be prepared for damp conditions as this is one of the wettest places in South Australia!

Saturday July 23rd, half day only - Hale Conservation Park. Meet in Williamstown at 12:30. We will hike into the rugged and scenic centre of the park.

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#### NEW MEMBERS

The Committee and the Society take pleasure in welcoming as new members Marilyn Plant from Glynde, Peter Eygelshoven from North Narraben, and John Hunwick from Eden Hills.

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#### MAY MEETING

Bob Bates, Paul Reece and Bob Markwick presented a most informative and enjoyable talk on the orchids of the Adelaide Hills. As would be expected from the three speakers, the presentation was supported by many excellent slides.

Bob Bates opened the presentation with a few introductory remarks about the many environments which constitute the Adelaide Hills. Bob commented that there are 110 recorded orchid species (including those which have not yet officially been assigned a specific name), with an additional 20 recorded natural hybrids and 50 distinct colour variations, for a sum total of 180 different orchid species / varieties in the Adelaide Hills. Bob believes that an additional 10 orchid species would have become extinct in the Adelaide Hills before they were collected and described.

Paul Reece presented in seasonal sequence a representative 30 of the more common orchids to be found in the Adelaide Hills, describing their habitat and pointing out their most distinguishing features.

Bob Bates then talked about those orchids which are rare in the Adelaide Hills today, and surmised about those orchids which may have once been abundant but which became extinct as their natural habitats were disturbed or even destroyed by the plough and by the introduction of hooved animals.

Bob Markwick completed the evening with 25 slides of putative natural hybrids found in the Adelaide Hills, pointing out those features which are characteristic of each parent. In several cases parentage can only be guessed.

In all we were shown 74 of the nearly 200 orchid forms which can be found in the Adelaide Hills. We were shown how to identify them and when and in which habitat to look for them. We are very fortunate to live in such close proximity to an area which is so very rich in orchids.

Many thanks to each of the three speakers for an excellent presentation.

#### PLANTS ON DISPLAY

##### Terrestrials

*Acianthus exsertus*, *Caladenia alba*, *C. carnea*, *Chiloglottis reflexa*, *Corybas pruinosus*, *Prasophyllum striatum*, *Pterostylis abrupta*, *P. aff. alata*, *P. baptistii*, *P. dolichochila*, *P. fischii*, *P. longipetala*, *P. parviflora*, *P. pedoglossa*, *P. pulchella*, *P. reflexa*, *P. robusta*, *P. russellii*, *P. x toveyana*, *P. vittata* W.A. green form), *P. aff. vittata* S.A. dark form).

##### Epiphytes

*Dendrobium bigibbum*, *D. falcorostrum*, *D. Hilda Poxon*, *D. Jomag x bigibbum (alba)*, *D. Minnie*, *D. tetragonum x D. kingianum* - Ellen.

#### POPULAR VOTE

TERRESTRIALS: *Pterostylis robusta*, grown by George Nieuwenhoven

EPIPHYTES: *Dendrobium Minnie*, grown by George Nieuwenhoven

#### COMMENTATORS CHOICE

EPIPHYTE SPECIES: *Dendrobium bigibbum*, grown by George Nieuwenhoven

EPIPHYTE HYBRID: *Dendrobium Minnie*, grown by George Nieuwenhoven

TERRESTRIAL SPECIES: *Pterostylis robusta*, grown by George Nieuwenhoven

TERRESTRIAL HYBRID: *Pterostylis* x *toveyana* (a natural hybrid), grown by Les Nesbitt

#### PLANT COMMENTARY

The plant commentary for the epiphytes was given by Russel Job. Ted Chance provided the commentary for the terrestrials.

Plant Commentary For The Epiphytic Orchids, May Meeting      by Russel Job

About half of the epiphytes benched were of tropical North Australasian origin. The rest were mainly *Dendrobium tetragonum* hybrids. A pot of *D. falcorostrum* with an out of season flower spike was a delight. Several pots of *D. Hilda Poxon* = *D. speciosum* x *D. tetragonum* showed some of the variations of bulb growth and red spots on the yellow tepals that characterise this hybrid. Some plants will happily flower themselves to death while unable to initiate new growths, especially in old divisions. Other siblings can grow like mad and never flower. In the latest 'Sanders List of Orchid Hybrids' there are 10 listed progeny of *D. Hilda Poxon*. Both pod parent and pollinia parent crosses are registered. Some plants seem to be sterile.

A very pale plant of *D. tetragonum* x *D. kingianum* = *D. Ellen* had a lovely yellow colouration. Line breeding of *D. kingianum* has yielded yellow varieties (Ken Russell of Dungog, N.S.W.) and there are red-less flowers of *D. tetragonum* also. Two plants of *D. bigibbum* contrasted in that one displayed white hairs on the labellum. This tropical species needs a bright, warm, dry winter. A hybrid of *D. Janag* x *D. bigibbum* (*alba*) showed promise of many more flowers, smallish with mauve centres and greenish tips. *D. Janag* is a New Guinea Latourea Section hybrid of *D. johnsoniae* x *D. terrestre*, which is a subalpine terrestrial. The hope of the breeder was for cold tolerance. It looks like the winner of the hereditary stakes in this sibling is the *D. johnsoniae* x warmth requirement.

The other New Guinea - Cape York hybrid benched was *D. Minnie*. Thirty miniature 'antelope' flowers stood out from an 80 mm growth. A taxonomist's nightmare, the parents are known to be *D. carronii* and *D. trilamellatum*. They are described under various synonyms including 'pink canaliculatum' or 'semifuscum' or 'the spring flowering johannis'. The recent 'Australian Native Orchid Hybrid Guide' has transferred all *D. johannis* registrations to *D. semifuscum*. This is disastrous because there are many genuine autumn flowered *D. johannis* plants involved in breeding.

Also, Cribb has recently (and ruefully) found the Queensland *D. semifuscum* to be the same as J.J. Smith's type of *D. trilamellatum*. *D. Minnie* is a wonderful parent and *D. Fire Imp* was a spectacular display at Orchids Australia 1986. A crossing of *D. Minnie* and *D. Milroy*, it had large flowers and many of them per spike.

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Although given only short notice, Ted Chance agreed to give the plant commentary for the terrestrials. As is normal for this time of year, the 'Greenhoods' were the most common plants benched with 15 species of *Pterostylis* represented. The autumn flowering cauline species were dominant here as would be expected. A well grown pot of *P. robusta* proved to be the popular favourite of the evening - well done George! A very tall *P. abrupta*, previously classified as *P. decurva*, was on display and although beyond its prime, the remaining flowers showed excellent colour and form. *P. x toveyana*, a natural cross between *P. concinna* and *P. alata*, was the only terrestrial hybrid benched at the May meeting.

Non cauline species included *P. parviflora* and *P. vittata*. Of the latter both the South Australia dark form and the Western Australia green form were represented.

*Caladenia alba* and *C. carnea* proved to be the first of the caladenias for the year, both blooming unusually early. Single representatives of *Acianthus*, *Chiloglottis*, *Corybas* and *Prasophyllum* were also present, indicating that we are now entering Winter, a prolific orchid season.

As Ted commented, the more we know about our native terrestrials, the less likely that we will inadvertently tramp on them in the bush.

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HERBERT EDWARD FOOTE (12/4/1910-7/8/1987)

It is with sorrow we report the passing of Herb Foote, a well known Western Australian Orchid identity. Herb was perhaps best known as the founder of the Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group (W.A.N.O.S.C.), N.O.S.S.A.'s sister society. The first meeting of the society was held at Herb's home "Foothills" on March 29th 1974, and Herb was president of the Society for many years.

Born in Perth in 1910, Herb's father was coachman for the governor of the time. Herb trained as a photographic engraver and worked for the printers Gibbneys. Herb engraved the blocks for books such as Emily Pelloe's "Western Australian Orchids" and Rica Erickson's "Orchids of the West". Herb joined the Orchid Society of Western Australia in 1958, was secretary for a time, president in 1967-1969 and led the O.S.W.A. at the World Orchid Conference in Sydney, when the Society won a Gold Medallion for best Interstate Display. Herb was a life member of both O.S.W.A. and W.A.N.O.S.C.

Herb was a keen orchid photographer and his photographs were used in the booklet "Orchids of Western Australia" (1969) which he wrote together with Alex George.

Herb was well known for his hospitality and hundreds of visitors to Perth received the grand tour of his exciting garden which included native epiphytes grown naturally in trees along a small creek.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS - N.O.S.S.A. DIARY

Shadehouse and Glasshouse Visit: SATURDAY AUGUST 27

This years visit to member's shadehouses and glasshouses will be held on Saturday August 27th. Wally and Shirley Walloscheck of Cherry Gardens, Margaret and Oliver Fuller of Linden Park and Geof and Pauline Edwards of Bellevue Heights have kindly invited us to their places this year. This is an excellent way to see some outstanding collections and to find out first hand how some of our more knowledgeable and successful growers look after their award winning plants. We are limited to 30 participants so please leave your name, address and phone number at our June Meeting.

Those unable to attend the June Meeting but wishing to participate on August 27 should contact Roy Hargreaves 293-2471. Those who sign up but are then later unable to participate on the day should contact Roy before the event in order that others may be able to attend.

Mid-Year Dinner - FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

This is the get together many of us have been talking about for some time now, so mark it in your Diary. Arrangements have been made for a N.O.S.S.A. dinner to be held at the Walker's Arms Hotel, 36 Northeast Road Walkerville. This will be a Smorgasbord with a cost of \$17.00 per person. In order to ensure the booking, a 10.00 deposit is required. Our president, Ron Robjohns will take names and collect money at the June Meeting. This is a popular venue and therefore a deposit must be paid one month in advance.

N.O.S.S.A. Spring Show - SEPTEMBER 17 AND 18

The N.O.S.S.A. Spring Show will be held on the 17th and 18th of September. Members who do not normally exhibit plants at our shows should now commit themselves to do so this year as many of our regular exhibitors will be in Sydney for the Australian Orchid Conference. Even a pot or two will help. All Members are encouraged to do what they can in order to make the show a success. Also needed are plants for the Sales Table. Any contributions? Margaret Fuller will be asking for assistance, particularly for the evening of Friday September 16 and the morning of Saturday September 17. Margaret's phone number is 794416.

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LOST ORCHID HABITATS OF THE ADELAIDE HILLS by R. Bates

Very little of the Adelaide Hills is covered by natural vegetation. Less than 25% of the environment could be regarded as relatively unmodified. The native vegetation which does remain is in no way representative of the original cover. What is left is largely scrub which the early settlers considered too rough or too poor to be worth clearing!

Before settlement much of the hills was covered with an open woodland of well spaced trees with native grasses and rounded bushes, the whole kept trimmed by mobs of kangaroos, wallabies and pademelons with groups of emu; all of them roaming free. The creeks were free of blackberry and gorse and platypus swam in the more permanent pools. On the rich soil flats seasonal waterholes were covered in waterfowl. All of this was prime orchid habitat. We can only guess at what orchid species were common then but there are a few clues. We can look at relict patches of woodland such as that found in parts of Belair National Park. What incredibly rich orchid

locations there are, even after years of disturbance: stands of *Diuris lanceolata*, *D. maculata*, *D. longifolia* and their hybrids, masses of the sun orchids *Thelymitra nuda*, *T. antennifera*, *T. rubra* and *T. luteocilium*, a wide variety of *Prasophyllums* - *P. fitzgeraldii*, *P. pruinsum*, *P. pallidum* and *P. patens* and we could go on and on. Another clue lies in the early collections at the State Herbarium (although there were practically no collections in the first 50 years). There were many collections made of the large white spider orchid *Caladenia patersonii* and red forms similar to it. These must have been very susceptible to disturbance as they are all but extinct in the Hills now. There are even collections of what appear to be undescribed taxa of *Caladenia* and *Prasophyllum* which no longer occur in the hills (or anywhere else).

Early reports tell of fern gullies in the Adelaide Hills. Tree ferns were supposedly dug up and transplanted into Adelaide gardens where they soon perished. One can only guess at what orchids grew with them: no collections of the tree ferns exist and certainly none of the tiny orchids which may have grown on the rich moist slopes with them. Probably *Pterostylis furcata* and possibly *Chiloglottis gunnii* grew in the Piccadilly Valley.

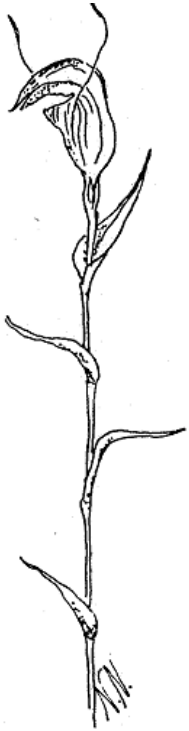
Another habitat which disappeared quickly was the black soil bog. These were areas of permanently damp fertile soils covered with short-cropped grasses and herbs and shaded by tall gum trees. Most of the plants which grew around these bogs are now extinct. A few of the prettier and more unusual ones were collected (these include *Viola betonicifolia* (a native violet), *Euphrasia scabra* and *E. paludosa* (yellow & purple eyebrights), *Oreomyrrhis* and the moonwort *Botrychium*) before they disappeared beneath the plough but the orchids of this habitat are not known.

Another rich orchid habitat was the sandy swamp margin. There were large areas of heathland and swamp thicket in sandy country around Mt Compass and Myponga. There are still tiny vestiges such as the one hectare area at Glen Shera which contains *Calochilus paludosus* and *Thelymitra merranae* and until four years ago an undescribed blue *Thelymitra*. An area at Nangkita of about 100 square metres still contains *Prasophyllum archeri* and *Thelymitra holmesii*. There were once thousands of hectares of such country. Surely not less than half a dozen orchid species became extinct with the clearing of these swampy sand heaths

Other lost habitats include open grassland (Mt Barker district), red sand dunes (Normanville), tall open forest (Bridgewater, Mt Crawford), river flats with billabongs (Onkaparinga Valley), the 'Reedbeds' (west of Adelaide) and native pine forest on sand and cracking clays (Tea Tree Gully). Some of the readers may still remember the wealth of orchids to be found in this latter habitat! The list could easily be extended to cover other rarer or more specific habitats but the point has been made. Some of the orchids of the Adelaide area have already become extinct and many more cannot be saved because their habitat is gone.

ARTISTS WANTED: Your Journal is looking for members with artistic talents who would be willing to contribute original black ink drawings of native orchids, caricatures of some of our members and speakers, appropriate cartoons, etc, for Journal submission. See Gerry Carne if you might be interested (or call 332-7730)

MAY FIELD TRIP - *PTEROSTYLIS OBTUSA* SPECIAL by Rosemary Taplin



Sixteen N.O.S.S.A. members and friends met at Myponga in fine, cool weather and continued on to Hindmarsh Falls for lunch, before beginning a search for the rare Blunt-tongued green-hood *Pterostylis obtusa*. Our leader, Bob Bates, told us that this area had been the only known site until a much larger population had recently been discovered (by himself) in the Hindmarsh Valley Reservoir Reserve.

After searching in the grass and rock fern area above the falls, we were unable to find any plants of *Pterostylis obtusa*, although there were many Mosquito orchids *Acianthus exsertus*. The fertile loam also supported plants of the endangered green *Correa calycina*, restricted to the Hindmarsh Falls and Hindmarsh Valley Reservoir areas, and the uncommon lilac pea-flowered *Indigofera australis*. The absence of *Pterostylis obtusa* was probably caused by weed infestation and foot traffic on the track to the top of the falls through the centre of the former colony.

Recent rains resulted in quite a spectacular flow of water over the falls, with flattened vegetation evidence of even heavier flows. The rare Annual fern *Anogramma leptophylla*, the Necklace fern *Asplenium flabellifolium*, and the vulnerable Tender brake fern *Pteris tremula*, were pointed out to us, growing between rocky ledges.

Our second stop was at Hindmarsh Valley Reservoir Reserve, where we were met at the gate by the recently flowering Red midge orchid *Prasophyllum rufum*. The area to be explored was again fertile brown loam, extending along a creek with rock fern *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* under open woodland of Blue gum *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and Rough-barked manna gum *E. viminalis* ssp. *cygnetensis*. Almost immediately we excitedly began finding groups of *Pterostylis obtusa* among the ferns.

The plants were from 12 to 25 cms high, with fine narrow stem leaves and no rosettes at the time of flowering. The flowers were green and white, with a fine blunt-tipped, red-brown labellum, and a distinct protruding sinus bulge. They obligingly posed in all angles for the camera buffs among us.

Many colonies of up to 100 plants were spread along the creek for almost a kilometre, extending up the hillsides until the poorer soils. Again, some of the uncommon plants of rich soils, the golden everlasting daisy *Helichrysum bracteatum* and the large golden pea-flowered *Goodia lotifolia* were present.

Wanting to see some animals, the children present were pleased when Bob did the clever trick of lifting a rock to reveal a gecko waiting to be discovered! We were also told that the small tunnels through the bracken were evidence of the Yellow-Footed marsupial mouse *Antechinus flavipes*, and I was lucky enough to see one dart into a hole in the ground.

The orchid hunting also resulted in our finding leaves of *P. nana* and *P. nutans*, and *Cyrtostylis reniformis*, *Caladenia menziesii*, and *Thelymitra* species, as well as the rewarding find of hundreds of the plants of the object of the trip. Many thanks to Bob for a most enjoyable field trip.

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#### TERRESTRIAL ORCHID CALENDAR: JUNE - JULY by Sandy Phillips

Average temperature in the Adelaide Hills at this time of year is about 9°C with frequent frosts. Orchids now in flower really like it cold! There are many greenhoods blooming: these include the long lasting *Pterostylis vittata*, the tall green *P. longifolia*, the chunky *P. robusta*, the tiny *P. nana* and the slender *P. alata*. The mosquito orchids *Acianthus exsertus* are starting to fade but their allies *Cyrtostylis robusta* are just opening. The helmet orchids *Corybas diemenicus* are also just beginning to bloom. All these species are common in the Hills but with luck you may be able to find the rare *Corybas unguiculatus* in sandy places or if you go to Monarto South, the mallee shell orchid *Pterostylis dolichochila* or perhaps one of the unnamed relatives of *Pterostylis nana*.

In cultivation a wide range of *Pterostylis* will be in flower, cauline species like *P. russellii*, small rosetted species like *P. concinna* or the first of the common hybrids such as *P. Nodding Grace*. As many as 5 different mosquito orchids may be seen in some collections and if you are lucky, early *Caladenia* and *Diuris* from Queensland such as *C. alba* or *D. abbreviata*.

There is plenty of work to be done in the orchid house: removing tiny weeds as they appear (some growers use tweezers), moonlighting with a torch to catch slugs, checking pots for signs of disease, cutting off affected leaves or quarantining pots with damping off or orange rust. If plants seem to be rotting below ground it may be best to tip out surviving plants, wash thoroughly and repot in fresh soil. Keep a careful watch for aphids - if you let them live now they will be hard to get rid of in Spring! Watch also for 'rain splash'. Deep holes in the surface mix mean large drops are splashing out the soil. If you can't stop the splash then shift the pot.

Many growers are now roofing part of their terrestrial orchid house. Any plants from northern latitudes should really be kept under shelter, as should dryland species and any that have suffered previously from leaf die-back. Now is the best time to fertilise spring flowered *Diuris* and *Pterostylis*; well rotted cow manure soaked in a bucket and the liquid strained off is my favourite! Do not fertilise winter flowering species now or the stems will become soft and easily damaged and beware of feeding *Caladenia*, *Thelymitra*, 'rufa group' *Pterostylis* or any of the other delicate groups unless you have a 'tamed' pot (some growers have clones, especially of hybrid *Caladenia* and *Thelymitra* which seem to have dispensed with any mycorrhizal relationships: these are often said to be tamed).

Why not cross some of your better clones: perhaps put pollinia from a large flowered clone onto a particularly vigorous or disease resistant plant. These may be of the same species or of different species, but do keep careful notes and later make sure you harvest the seed before it spreads everywhere!

If your plants are in a glass house you may already have seedlings appearing as a result of seed sown in April; you will now need to keep the surface of these pots uniformly damp.

If you still have pots with no sign of growth, now is the time to tip them out: unfortunately what you are likely to find is plain dirt! with no tubers except perhaps mouldy ones but just maybe the tuber growth has shot to the side of the pot, below the surface. This often happens with white plastic pots; or perhaps the tuber has settled too deep and a long pale growth has coiled up but not reached the surface. Carefully repot in either case with the growth tip just below the soil surface.

Now is also a good time to remove contaminant species. A pot of *Caladenia* for example may have a *Pterostylis* rosette in it. If the soil is friable you should be able to tug the contaminant species out and place it in a pot of its own. This is especially important if you recognise an odd *Pterostylis* plant in a pot of other *Pterostylis* as you may not be able to tell the difference between their tubers at summer repotting time.

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#### EPIPHYTIC ORCHIDS OF FITZROY ISLAND by Edda Viskic

Just a short trip on the fast catamaran across the channel from Cairns in North Queensland, is the beautiful, continental, island paradise known as Fitzroy Island. It was accessible to early settlers as a quarantine station and many Chinese were kept there before being allowed on the mainland gold diggings. The local aborigines used the island as a special hunting and feasting site and used it seasonally. Much of the native flora and fauna have been left in large tracts from the ocean to the summit of the rocky boulders. The coastal tourist resort belt contains exotic trees such as coconut palm, Java almond and Indian mango. The mangroves are old and few near the resort. In this habitat grows the leafless orchid *Chiloschista phyllerhiza*. Each plant grows outward from a central point, sending its flattened greenish roots along the bark in many directions. The small, yellowish flowers arise on a stalk from the centre also. The Indian mango tree, *Mangifera indica*, grows beside the resort outdoor bar and is the host of this tiny orchid. Its trunk and lower limbs are well covered with the telltale roots of the leafless orchids all radiating from their central growing points. It enjoys the humidity of King Creek.

Nearby, in Butterfly Glen, is the start of the south western section of the Boulder Walk which leads over the top of the Island's highest peak. There are many *Zamia* palms at the first level up. They are 3 metres tall and have thick, ancient trunks. *Cycas media* is really a cycad. Birdsnest ferns *Asplenium nidus* grow at all levels from the fallen logs and rocks on the ground level to the tree tops along the track leading into and through the sclerophyll forest. Stringybark gums, wattles and sheoaks line the middle mountain side with pockets of tropical rainforest trees lining the gullies with lianas, wild ginger, palms, strangler figs and ferns. *Dendrobium discolor*, *D. smilliae* and *D. antennatum* with their distinctive, saronged pseudobulbs grow on coarse barked Eucalypts about half way up. *Platynerium* (elkhorn ferns, grow together with them, often on different levels of the same tree).

The basket fern *Drynaria quercifolia* is both lithophytic and epiphytic, as is the orchid *Bulbophyllum baileyi*. In the higher levels of the forest are old, mossy, well furrowed bark of *Casuarina* which are very popular hosts for the locally abundant *B. baileyi*. In forks and hollow limbs, *D. ruppianum* finds its niche, while the tree climbing fern *Pyrrosia confluens* runs all over the hosts. The walk up is richly rewarding with magnificent vistas of the mainland, and the coral sea. The windswept summit of boulders is indeed barren and devoid of any vegetation other than lichens. Perhaps terrestrial orchids also grow in the forest on the north eastern descent which leads to the lighthouse settlement.

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