

Native Orchid Society
of
South Australia Inc.



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

P.O Box 565,
UNLEY S.A 5061

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.

Except with the documented official representation from the Management Committee of the native orchid society of South Australia, no person is authorised to represent the society on any matter.

All native orchids are protected plants in the wild. Their collection without written Government permit is illegal.

PATRON: Mr T.R.N. Lothian

PRESIDENT:
Mr G. Carne
Telephone: 332 7730

SECRETARY:
Mr R. Bates
Telephone: 289 2836

VICE-PRESIDENT:
Mr R. Edge

TREASURER:
Mr R. T. Robjohns

COMMITTEE:
Mr W. G. Dear
Mr J. Peace
Mr W. Walloscheck
Mrs K. Possingham
Mr R. Hargreaves
(Special Appointment)

LIFE MEMBERS:
Mr R. Hargreaves
Mr R. T. Robjohns
Mr L. Nesbitt
Mr D. Wells

REGISTRAR OF JUDGES:

Mr L. Nesbitt

EDITOR:

Mr G. Carne
118 Hewitt Avenue
Toorak Gardens S.A. 5065
Telephone 332 7730

TUBERBANK CO-ORDINATOR:

Mr P. Matthews
Telephone: 261 2359

Views and opinions expressed by the authors of articles within this Journal do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the NOSSA Management Committee.

COPYRIGHT: The NOSSA Management Committee condones the reprint of any article within this Journal, provided acknowledgement is given to the source and author.

Price: 60 cents



NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

APRIL 1992

VOL. 16, NO. 3

JOURNAL

APRIL MEETING

Tuesday, 28th April, 1992, 8.00 P.M.; at St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. Mr. David Cartwright, a Quarantine Pathologist from the Northfield Research Centre will talk on plant quarantine. Hall opens at 7.00 PM.

NEW MEMBERS GROUP

To be held at the home of Noel Oliver, 8 Ross Street, Torrensville (please note Ross Street off Marion Road) at 2.00 PM, Saturday, 2nd May. Enquiries Jan and Graham Burford ph 453 085. * Please wear nametags.

DIARY DATES

MAY 6 1992: NOSSA Annual Dinner to be held at Walker's Arms Hotel - 7.00 PM. Cost \$16.50 (\$6.50 deposit to be made at April NOSSA General Meeting). A super smorgasbord all you can eat and more! Great company and we guarantee you will have a fantastic time. Every year the attendance gets larger. Don't miss this one

September 19th and 20th, 1992: Our Annual Spring Show. Only 5 months away!

Page	Contents	Author
22	Plants Benched Marc: Meeting	
22	March 1992 Annual General Meeting New Committee	G. Carne
23	Life Membership Presentations	G. Carne
26	Flasking of <i>Diuris fragrantissima</i>	L. Nesbitt
27	<i>Cymbidium suave</i>	R. Rob Johns
28	New Members Group First Meeting 1992	G. Burford
28	The Fungus <i>Phytophthora</i>	
29	Letter to the Editor	R. Job
30	S.A.'s Rarest Orchids # 20 - <i>Caladenia argocalla</i>	R. Bates
30	S.A.'s Rarest Orchids # 21 - <i>Caladenia colorata</i>	R. Bates

PLANTS BENCHED AT MARCH MEETING

Terrestrials: *Eriochilus cucullatus* (2 specimens), *Pterostylis rogersii* x *Pterostylis baptistii*.

Epiphytes: *Dendrobium mortii*, *Sarcochilus* Pink Heart x *S. fitzgeraldii*.

Kevin Western provided the plant commentary for the epiphytes; Bob Bates provided the commentary for the terrestrials. As there were only a few plants benched, there was no popular vote. Lets see if we can get a large number of plants for the April Meeting.

MARCH 1992 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

At the NOSSA Annual General Meeting held in March, all Offices of the Committee were declared vacant. Nominations for all positions had been received and all positions were consequently filled. Positions which will be held effective immediately are :

President: Gerry Carne
 Vice President: Bob Edge
 Secretary: Bob Bates
 Treasurer: Ron Robjohns

Committee Members are elected to serve a two year term. Those members entering into their second year were Bill Dear and Lorraine Woodcock. Lorraine resigned her position in order that she could fully dedicate herself to the Society's conservation initiatives, leaving her position vacant. The newly elected Committee comprises Wally Walloscheck entering his 3rd term, John Peace entering his second term and Karen Possingham entering her first term..

At the first meeting of the newly elected Committee, the following appointments were made:

Registrar of Judges: Les Nesbitt
 Conservation Officer: Karen Possingham
 Trading Table Convenor: John Peace
 Spring Show Co-ordinator: Bill Dear
 Librarian: Wally Walloscheck
 Tuber Bank Co-ordinator: Philip Matthews
 Journal Editor: Position Remains vacant

Karen Possingham has already made considerable progress in setting up a sub-committee to formulate and implement Conservation initiatives. We look forward to Karen's enthusiasm and direction and will be continually updated with respect to conservation matters both at our monthly meetings and through this Journal. Its still not too late to express an interest in being involved with this very important element of NOSSA.

Bill Dear will be seeking members to work on a sub-committee which will work together to ensure that this years Spring Show (its only 5 months away) will be our best and most complete show ever. Anyone interested in assisting Bill should see him or one of our other Committee Members as soon as possible. Lets make this a fun group as well as a very progressive group! As someone once said

"many hands make light work" and I don't think that someone was an electrician.

Gerry Carne has agreed to act as Editor of the Journal for 1992 until someone else is found to assume the position. Again it is essential that a sub-committee be formed with several volunteers. The biggest need at the moment lies in the areas of typing (any one wish to do some word processing for us?) and illustration. Anyone interested in assisting, please contact a Committee Member.

From the above you can see that NOSSA has an efficient, dedicated and hard working Committee. It must be pointed out, however, that NOSSA cannot achieve all of its ambitions without member support. Three sub-committees have been initiated and it is hoped that members who do not desire a full Committee position will be prepared to participate on a sub-committee.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATIONS

Since the inception of the Native Orchid Society of South Australia in March 1977, six Life Memberships have been awarded for outstanding service and contribution to the Society; the six awarded members being Mr. Roy Hargreaves, Mr. Les Nesbitt, Mr. Ron Robjohns, Mr. Jim Simmons, Mr. Harold Goldsack and Mr. Don Wells. At the 1992 Annual General Meeting held in March, the 15th anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Society, Life Membership Badges were presented by Mr. Bob Bates, the President of the Society, to the six members so honoured. Although all six recipients have held their Life Membership for some time, no visible recognition of their status had previously been awarded.

As two of the recipients, Mr. Harold Goldsack and Mr. Jim Simmons are now deceased, their badges were presented to their wives.

Life Membership is a highly prestigious honour, awarded to only a very few. The NOSSA Constitution stipulates that the Society shall have not more than five Life Members at any time (we currently have four). As indicated above, only six such awards have been made over the fifteen years that NOSSA has been active. It must be said too, that NOSSA is a highly regarded and well known Society, not only in South Australia but on a National level and this places considerable impact on the status of Life Member.

The Committee and Members of NOSSA extend not so much our congratulations but rather our sincere and considerable thanks to the six Life Members for their hard work, diligence and dedication in making NOSSA the Society it is today. And of course thanks must be given to the wives of the recipients who have supported their husbands in their interest in Native Orchids and whom in many cases have become active themselves in the Society.

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia owes its foundation primarily to two of our Life Members: Roy Hargreaves and Les Nesbitt. Both saw a need in South Australia for a group to be available to be called upon to rescue native orchids from natural sites about to be developed, to grow native orchid species and to promote the need to conserve and protect South Australia's native

orchid species. A native orchid study group had earlier been formed but the group was short lived. Details of the actual formation and early history of NOSSA are outlined in NOSSA Journals, Volumes 11 Number 2 (March 1987) and Number 3 (April 1987).

The inaugural meeting of the Society was held in the Assembly Hall, Goodwood Boys High School on the 22 March, 1977. Forty eight persons were present of whom 44 became foundation members (we now have nearly 300 members). Les Nesbitt was elected the Society's first President, Roy Hargreaves the Society's first secretary and Ron Robjohns the Society's first Treasurer. Jim Simmons, Harold Goldsack and Don Wells were Foundation Members.

ROY HARGREAVES

One of the two real founders of NOSSA, served as its first Secretary (a position he held for six years) and has been a Committee Member since 1977; actively involved with the NOSSA Journal since our very first Journal 15 years ago; continues to be involved as an up-front participant in all of NOSSA's activities - bar none; a keen conservationist; a public relations officer, ambassador and liason person with numerous groups including SGAP, OCSA, Parks and Wildlife, the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Black Hill Flora Research Centre, various journalists and broadcasters and perhaps most importantly, with primary and secondary school children; an initiator of the R. S. Rogers Orchid House at the Botanic Gardens (which now contains more than 200 Australian terrestrial orchid species) and is now overseeing its removal to the Black Hill Research Centre; an organizer of the Society's Annual Spring Show since its inception in 1981 and of numerous other shows and displays in South Australia in which NOSSA participates; involved in numerous orchid rescues; the Roy Hargreaves Trophy is awarded annually for the best terrestrial species or hybrid displayed at our Spring Show.

LES NESBITT

A founder of NOSSA and the Society's first President; A Committee Member since 1977; Editor of the NOSSA Journal in its earlier years and a frequent contributor of scientific articles to the Journal; Registrar of Judges for the Society and one of Australia's most respected judges of native orchids; a frequent speaker at NOSSA meetings; A much awarded grower of Australian terrestrials, not only in South Australia but also Nationally; Les and his wife Kay together established and run a Native Orchid nursery at Kersbrook S.A. which has become the largest and most important nursery of its type in Australia (Nurseries of this type are extremely important if we are to discourage people from digging up orchids from their natural habitat, and in addition, allows that certain rare and endangered species might be maintained); Les's knowledge of the cultivation of Australia's terrestrial orchids is recognized Internationally - in 1987 invited to address the registrants at the 12th World Orchid Conference in Japan; Australia's foremost hybridizer of terrestrial orchids; currently involved in the flasking of native orchid seed (of particular note is his successful flasking of *Diuris fragrantissima* (refer to Article this volume of the NOSSA Journal)).

RON ROBJOHNS

A Foundation Member and elected Treasurer at inaugural meeting of Society in 1977, a position he continues to hold today. Elected President of Society in 1988-89; A quiet and modest achiever involved in all of NOSSA's activities, often as an organiser and initiator; drafted the Society's Constitution and By-Laws and formulated the Society's Conservation Policy; maintains register of members and updates address schedules for Journals; participated in several rescues of orchid tubers from sites destined for development or clearing; has assisted in collating and dispatching of Journal since commencement - Ron was the principal operator of the duplicator (gestetner) which copied the Journals until 1985; a frequent contributor of articles for the Journal; a primary organiser of and exhibitor at all of NOSSA's Spring Shows and other NOSSA supported shows and displays; a much awarded grower of Australian native orchids, in particular epiphytes.

JIM SIMMONS

A Foundation Member and NOSSA's first Librarian, initiating what has become a large and comprehensive Library today; a Member of the Australian Orchid Foundation; an instigator of and driving force behind the translation into English of important orchid classic volumes including Schlechter's "The Orchids of German New Guinea" (Jim's wife Nan undertook the typing of the translation); one of the initiator's of the R.S. Rogers Orchid House at the Adelaide Botanical Gardens; liked to grow hot house epiphytes (referred to growers of terrestrial orchids as 'dirt farmers') - an exhibitor and many times award winner at NOSSA Spring Shows; keen to provide other NOSSA members with plants from his own collection when requested; during his business travels was able to obtain items such as projector and lights for NOSSA; a much missed member!

HAROLD GOLDSACK

A man dedicated to native orchids from a very early age, became friends with R. S. Rogers and found many orchid species which were new to Rogers - with the passing of Dr. Rogers in 1942, Harold became the foremost authority on South Australian native orchids, corresponding regularly with W. H. Nicholls, A. W. Dockrill and other leading orchid experts in Australia; put together an extensive collection of pressed orchids which he donated to the Adelaide Herbarium in 1978 (such collections are invaluable in that they provide a record of the orchids that were established in South Australia in earlier years); wrote many articles on South Australia's orchids and was also noted for his photographs, drawings and paintings of native orchids (we were fortunate in being able to see some of Harold's paintings at our March meeting); a Member of the Royal Society of South Australia; cultivated many Australian orchids and responsible for *Pterostylis* Cutie, the first man-induced terrestrial hybrid; his main interest was to enthuse others to see the beauty and importance of our native orchids; *Prasophyllum goldsackii* is named in Harold's honour; a much missed member!

-----Page 8-----

DON WELLS

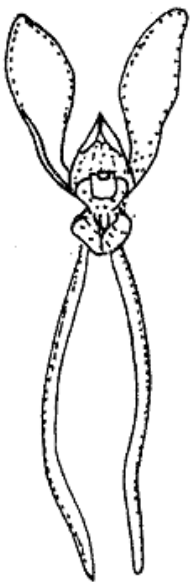
A Foundation Member; tuber bank convenor from inception in 1979 to 1985; involved in Journal publication in early years; often called on for plant commentaries at meetings; habitual exhibitor and award winner at Spring Show and other NOSSA participated shows such as the Adelaide Royal Show and SGAP; promotes an enthusiasm for the conservation and growing of native orchids through presentations to various Groups (and any willing listeners); founder (along with his wife Bub) of the MOP (Midweek Observation

and Pleasure Group) in 1979 which amongst other things was involved in numerous orchid rescues; founder of the New Members Group which has rejuvenated NOSSA and provided the Society with a renewed enthusiasm.

CONSERVATION PROJECT

DIURIS FRAGRANTISSIMA FLASKING by Les Nesbitt

Until recently *Diuris fragrantissima* was called *Diuris alboviolacea*. It has white flowers covered with purple blotches. Some 10 years ago, N.O.S.S.A. was given a flask of this very rare orchid. At that time it was known to grow in only 3 small areas in Victoria to the west of Melbourne, two of them on railway property. Although they were fenced off, these sites were very vulnerable as subsequent events have shown.



The flask was planted out by Dr. Warcup onto solid mix in sterile containers. Later the small, dormant tubers were distributed amongst the terrestrial growers in the Society. A show of hands at the February 1992 N.O.S.S.A. meeting indicated that four plants were still surviving from the original flask. I have two plants which have always been poor growers, never multiplying and struggling to produce 2 or 3 flowers a year. I have tried the tuber removal method several times without success.

Several ANOS - Victoria Group members have plants from another 10 year old flask. Plants have been seen at Victorian meetings with 10 - 14 flowers. A painting by Helene Wild of these attractive flowers was on display at their last Spring Show.

Last year I flaked two seed pods produced by crossing my two plants. The seedlings grew successfully in flask and have made small tubers. I have donated a flask to NOSSA. The seedlings will be planted out singly in May and if they prosper will be distributed amongst NOSSA's terrestrial growers in Spring. In this way some plants have a chance of survival so that the cycle may be repeated again in the future.

Diuris fragrantissima is mentioned in the December ANOS - Victoria Group Bulletin and I quote "*Diuris fragrantissima* seems all but extinct in its natural environment and while there were good tuberoids distributed from seed raised within the Society, only a few are now being displayed. Some years ago four or five pots would be seen at the November meeting - tonight there were only two."

I have offered a second flask to ANOS - Victoria as I also am a member there. If this project is successful, then NOSSA should extend the work to some of South Australia's rare and endangered species.

CYMBIDIUM SUAVE (R. Brown)

by R. T. Robjohns

Cymbidium suave is an epiphyte of the open hardwood forests of the eastern states and has a range from south east New South Wales to as far north as the Endeavour River in the south east of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland; occasionally it is also found on the fringe of rain forests.

Almost invariably it grows in hollows in the limbs or trunks of trees. The plant can be found anywhere from sea level to over 1200 metres. The favoured hosts are eucalypts, especially the bloodwoods but also the Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and the Forest Oak (*Casuarina torulosa*) in particular.

It has stems, not pseudobulbs, of up to 35 cm. in length which continue to grow for a number of years, becoming thin, woody and covered with the remains of leaf bracts which make them appear broader than they really are. They have 4 to 8 thin slender, usually arching, dark green leaves.

The racemes are 10 to 15 cm long usually with numerous flowers closely packed together and often with indistinct red blotches. The colours are commonly pale green or yellow though sometimes light green, golden green or brownish green. The flowers are about 25 mm in diameter, rather widely opening and quite fragrant.

It can frequently be seen high up in dead trees, remaining so after surrounding areas have been cleared. In hollow trees it develops quite a root system.

Their requirements are high light intensity, high humidity, good drainage and plenty of air movement.

Ideally it should be potted in a hollow log, but as that is not always practical, it is noted



that a piece of piping, either plastic or earthenware about a meter long and around 13 cm in diameter has been used quite successfully as an alternative

The compost must be free draining and long lasting as the plant does not like being disturbed. A coarse mix of seasoned bark, hardwood chips, scoria, charcoal and the decayed heartwood of eucalypts will give you the long lasting, free draining compost required. The plant should be kept moist, not wet. Over-watering is a common cause of their demise in cultivation.

Should you purchase a plant from a licensed nursery remember that big is not always best as the roots have usually been drastically reduced in collection, often with fatal results.

References: Jones, D. L. 1988 - 'Native Orchids of Australia'
Dockrill, A. W. 1969 - 'Australian Indigenous Orchids'

NEW MEMBERS GROUP - FIRST MEETING FOR 1992

by Graham Burford

From the outset the "New Members Group" would hope that the name would not deter any "old Members from attending any of the meetings that interest them. Indeed we would welcome their experience and support, and visits to other Member's places can be of great interest to all.

After the first general meeting when members were down, it was pleasing to have twelve at the Group's first meeting for 1992, held at Jan and Graham Burford's. Discussion followed about our unusually mild summer and members reported that some terrestrials were showing much earlier than usual. Jan found that some of her plants in their summer resting location on the shaded side of the house, were well up and growing at a slanted angle as they searched for the light. From the following orchids - *Diuris brevifolia*, *Pterostylis curta*, *Pterostylis pedunculata*, *Pterostylis x ingens*, *Pterostylis toveyana*, *Pterostylis nana* and *Pterostylis* Nodding Grace,- members had a choice of repotting orchids that were well and truly up and growing, and experienced the care needed in not damaging the new growth. Roy Hargreaves mentioned that *Diuris brevifolia* was not plentiful and took one pot for the collection at Black Hill.

The usual inspection of the hosts' garden followed and afternoon tea and a chat about the program for the year completed the first meeting.

THE FUNGUS PHYTOPHTHORA

The following is extracted from Australian Plants No. 122 issue of Volume 15 published by The Society for Growing Australian Plants:

Australian Plants - The Bad News

by the Editor

The Australian national estate is headed for disaster. Specifically, I am referring to the natural Australian flora but

all creatures, birds, animals, lesser forms of life so vital to the chain of life, and even man, depend upon it. There is a fungus spreading through our soils, slowly devouring the root systems of a significant range of plants, and destroying them.

This is not being melodramatic. This is not a science fiction story about the dreaded alien, out of sight beneath our feet. This is not panic mongering, after all who will get upset about a killer of life they cannot see. But this is a major problem, the devouring fungus is out of sight and its work is slow but death is certain.

On page 243 I examine this problem of the deadly fungus, *Phytophthora*. Alarmingly, frantic studies by competent scientists, as contained in a detailed report, have failed to find even a glimmer of hope for the containing, let alone elimination, of this alien fungus. Even more alarming is the apparent unwillingness of governments to attack the deadly fungus on a disaster plan basis being satisfied with "window dressing" by the work of a few scientists, severely under-funded.

Wake up Australia, we are under attack. The Federal government is responsible for the defence of our land. We need a crusader to lead this battle with bureaucracy, to initiate a plan for survival.

The following is taken from the Botanic Gardens Adelaide, "Reports for December 1991 - January 1992:

"Thirty -four aggregate soil samples, each representing soil obtained and pooled from 10 pots of terrestrial orchids, and 6 soil samples obtained from the floor of the orchid shadehouse, were tested for *Phytophthora cinnamoni*.

In the 27 aggregate soil samples obtained from potted plants which originated from the Native Orchid Society, *Pythium* spp. were isolated from 4 samples. However, *Phytophthora cinnamoni* which we were specifically concerned with was not detected by this method in any of the soil samples tested.

The collection of native orchids in the R. S. Rogers House has been tested for *Phytophthora* prior to the transfer to Black Hill Flora Centre. Mr. R. Hargreaves has given much time to work conducted in conjunction with Mr. T. C. Lee."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Enid Robertson's letter of last month has a nationalist bias that should not be ignored. Unlike other more parochial clubs NOSSA has an Australasian charter. This includes all orchids south and east from Vogelkop at the equator, New Guinea to Western Australia. From there, east to New Zealand and South Polynesia. There is sound Botanical reason for this Eastern Gondwanan origin standard that all judging should acknowledge. Other plants are not to be judged. People may like to see them, I do.

Russell Job

Caladenia argocalla D. L. Jones

This recently named spider orchid was provisionally known as *Caladenia patersonii* 'white beauty' (argo = white, calla = beauty in Greek). It looks very similar to *C. eminens* of Western Australia but the two may not be closely related as they appear - the leaves look quite different for a start, *C. argocalla* has a much shorter labellum fringe and thicker textured flowers also. The two are examples of what we might call 'look - alike' species.

Before settlement *C. argocalla* was possibly a common orchid of open woodland, especially under sheoaks in fertile soils. This habitat was the first to be cleared or grazed in the Adelaide Hills which was likely to have been the southern limit of the species (which occurred from there north to Peterborough). Now *C. argocalla* is perhaps extinct in the Adelaide area. A few isolated plants were still to be found around the hills near the Barossa Valley. There is a colony near Spring Gully - on a roadside! Consequently, *C. argocalla* is an endangered species, one I do not think can be saved. Certainly cultivation is not really a possibility as it is difficult to keep a pot of these beauties going. Another orchid similar to *C. argocalla* is *C. floribunda* which prefers damp, heathy sites and has a long labellum fringe - plants from boggy heathland near Kaiser Stahl Conservation Park seem to have intermediate features and may represent a hybrid swarm. True, *C. floribunda* is common from Penola across to Anglesea in Victoria and unlike *C. argocalla* needs disturbance (ie fire) to flower well. (See photo Plate 59 - large flower in 'Orchids of South Australia').

Caladenia colorata D. L. Jones

Caladenia colorata is a recently named spider orchid from sandy scrub in 200-300 mm rainfall areas in a belt from near Tarlee in the mid north, through the Barossa Valley, eastern foothills of the Mt. Lofty Ranges, to the Murray Plains and areas of the upper South East at least as far as the Victorian border.

It was previously treated as a form of *Caladenia patersonii* and is probably the closest we have in this State to the true *C. patersonii*. It has previously been referred to as "mallee princess" but it does not grow in prime mallee, only in fringe mallee areas.

It can be recognized from all other South Australian spiders of the *C. patersonii* complex by its small stature, multicoloured flowers with short segments, faint petrochemical odour and short clavate tips to sepals and petals.

It is classified as endangered and there are no plants in National Parks. Twenty years ago I knew of hundreds of colonies, now there are just a handful of plants left.

C. colorata flowers in August/September. There is a photograph of a flower in 'Orchids of South Australia'. (Plate 59 - small flower).