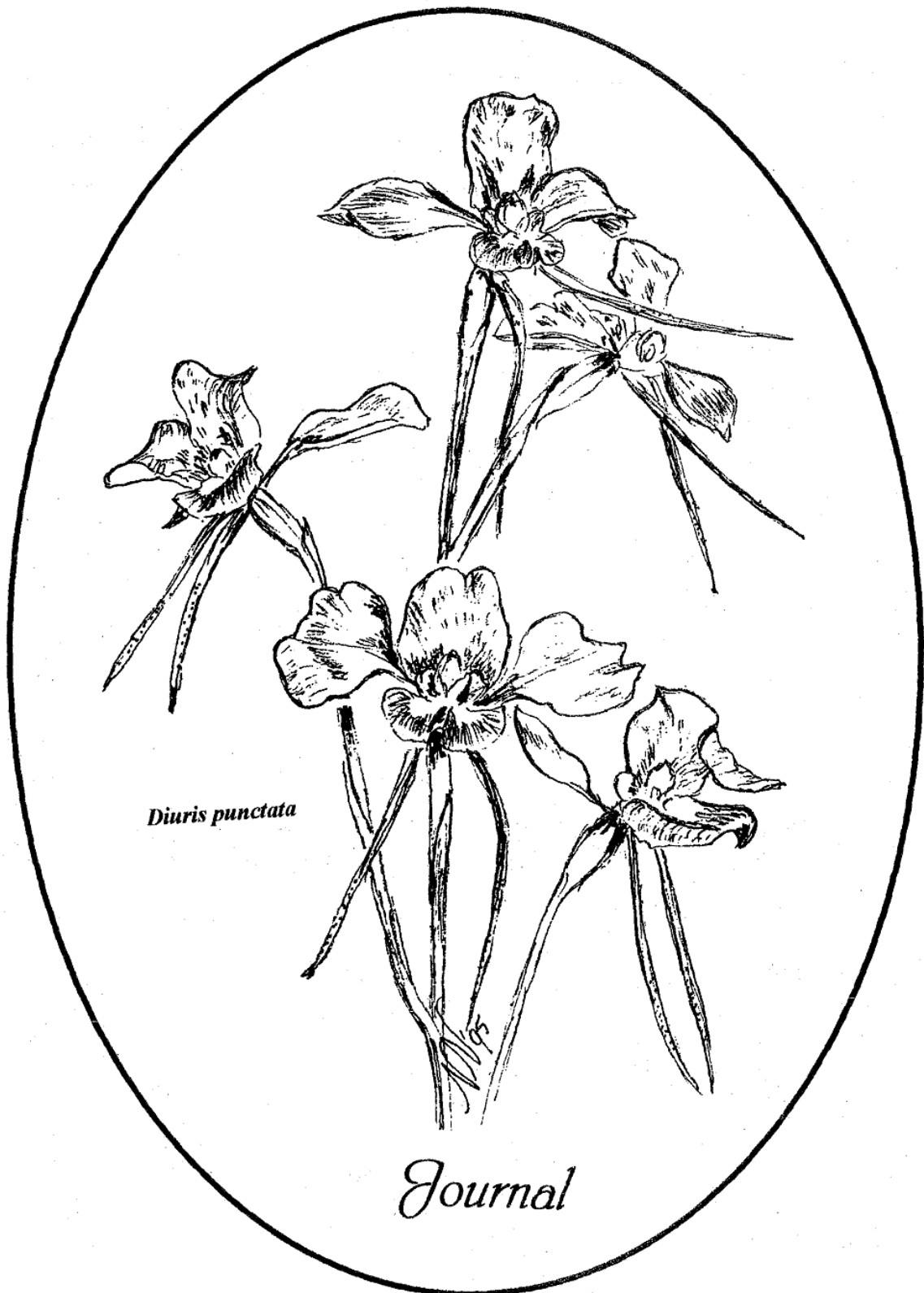


Native Orchid Society  
of  
South Australia Inc.



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**VOLUME 19 NO. 4**  
**MAY 1995**

# **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.

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# NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY

## OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

### MAY 1995 VOL. 19. NO. 4 JOURNAL

#### MAY MEETING

Tuesday, 23th May 8.00 pm: at St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. The speaker will be Gill Long who will talk about Orchids and Art. Doors to the hall will be open at 7.15 pm for those wishing to borrow books from the library or take in items for the trading table.

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#### DIARY DATES

May 21 Belair Conservation Park monitoring & weeding  
 May 28 Hardys Scrub Excursion  
 Jun 25 *Corybas unguiculatus* special field trip.  
 Aug 20 Barossa Gold fields, Sandy Creek outing.  
 Nov 5 Kuitpo Field Trip, *Monadenia* threat

#### COMMITTEE MEETING

To be held at 7.30 pm Friday May 26

## VALE COLETTE MAKIN

When Colette died peacefully in her sleep on April 9th our club lost a vibrant and much respected lady who was the epitome of a good club member: Willing to share her knowledge and expertise with everyone, she was always the first person to greet new members and made the effort to chat with as many established members as she could at each meeting.

We could always rely on Colette to enthusiastically follow through and complete all tasks allotted her and she usually went that bit further and did that bit more than was expected. At show time Colette gave her support and was full of innovative ideas, many of which are now a permanent feature of our shows.

Approximately 10 years ago Colette returned to Adelaide, the city of her birth, from New Zealand. She joined NOSSA and other orchid clubs participating in all their activities and her diary was always full. Even so there was time for her garden which she had carefully created utilizing every available space and with native orchids cascading from each and every nook, a delight to see.

We will really miss Colette, her help, friendly smile and enthusiasm.

Joan Peace and Thelma O'Neill

## COMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday May 28th Hardy's and Manning Scrubs. Meet 1pm at Blewitt Springs Hall. Orchids to look for include *Acianthus pusillus*, *Leporella fimbriata* and *Pterostylis sanguinea*,

Saturday June 17th *Corybas unguiculatus* Special. For people who especially want to see this rare species Meet 1pm at Kangarilla shop.

Sunday July 16th Hale Conservation Park summit walk and Watts Gully

## 1995 PHOTO COMPETITION

Open to all members, any slides or prints showing native orchids. The theme is "Working Toward the '96 Conference Photo Competition".

Please hand entries to Roger Bidell or Bill Dear before the July meeting.

WANTED Field Trip Leaders: especially in Springtime. Your regular leader (alias Gary Guide) is not available in spring (the best time for orchids). All you need to do is to pick a favourite orchid location or two and put a note in the journal. Short walks or adventures; picnics or barbecues. All volunteers accepted.

N.D. - Don't be disappointed!! Copies of Jeff Jeanes book - The Orchids of Victoria will be available at the next meeting for \$50 which is a saving of \$10.

## ON THE BENCH

Terrestrials: *Acianthus pusillus*, *Eriochilus dilatatus*, *Eriochilus cucullatus* (3), *Eriochilus helenomos*, *Leptoceras menziesii* (leaves), *Pterostylis abrupta*, *Pterostylis aestiva*, *Pterostylis alata*, *Pterostylis coccinea*, *Pterostylis collina*, *Pterostylis X furcillata*, *Pterostylis obtusa*, *Pterostylis ophioglossa* (2), *Pterostylis revoluta*, *Pterostylis sanguinea*, *Pterostylis Sentinel*, *Pterostylis truncata*, *Pterostylis truncata* X *Pterostylis rogersii*, *Spiranthes sinensis*.

Epiphytes: *Bulbophyllum macphersonii*, *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *compactum*, *Dendrobium Mcfarlon* X *tetragonum* X *falcorostrum*, *Dendrobium Sofala Troppo*, *Liparis reflexa*, *Sarcochilus ceciliae*.

Well done growers this was one of our best Autumn displays yet.

George Nieuwenhoven gave the commentary on the Terrestrials

Reg Shooter spoke on the Epiphytes.

## POPULAR VOTE:

Terrestrials: *Eriochilus dilatatus* grown at the R.S. Rogers House.

Epiphytes: *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *compactum* grown by George Nieuwenhoven.

## COMMENTATORS CHOICE:

Terrestrial Species: *Pterostylis coccinea* grown by Les Nesbitt.

Terrestrial Hybrid: *Pterostylis Sentinel* grown by Les Burgess.

Epiphyte Species: *Dendrobium bigibbum* var. *compactum* grown by George Nieuwenhoven

Epiphyte Hybrid: *Dendrobium Mcfarlon* X *tetragonum* X *falcorostrum* grown by Steve Meszaros.

## OPEN DAY REPORT

by John Peace

The open day for April was at Steve and Betty Meszaros. A rather cool and wet day, fortunately the rain kept away for the Sunday afternoon visit. Steve is one of the quiet achievers at NOSSA, he always seems to have a top plant in flower at most meetings. A look around Steve's shadehouse gave us the secret of his success as a grower, the place was immaculate, not a sign of any leaf spotting, Steve attributes this to the fact that he allows plenty of air movement around his plants, plenty of organic fertiliser, dynamic lifter and blood and bone, the larger plants are hung as high as possible to get maximum light, all his plants are well spaced and not at all over-crowded. He grows his *P. speciosum* particularly well, using old washing machine bowls with lots of drainage holes, puts a large upturned pot in the centre, fills the bowl two thirds full with pieces of polystyrene and uses coarse bark to top up.

As well as Australian natives, Steve also grows several other species including *Cymbidium*. He is a very innovative sort of person. Added onto his shadehouse is an old Hills hoist which he has raised about a metre and covered in shade cloth. Around the base of this he has welded a large steel wheel as a bench top and giving plenty of room for his larger plants. On the western side of this he has made curtains from shade cloth which he can open or close to suit the weather conditions. Steve does not have an over large shadehouse but due to good planning makes the most of the room available. We always manage to learn something at these open day meetings and this visit was no exception. We finished off the day with some of Betty's excellent home cooking.

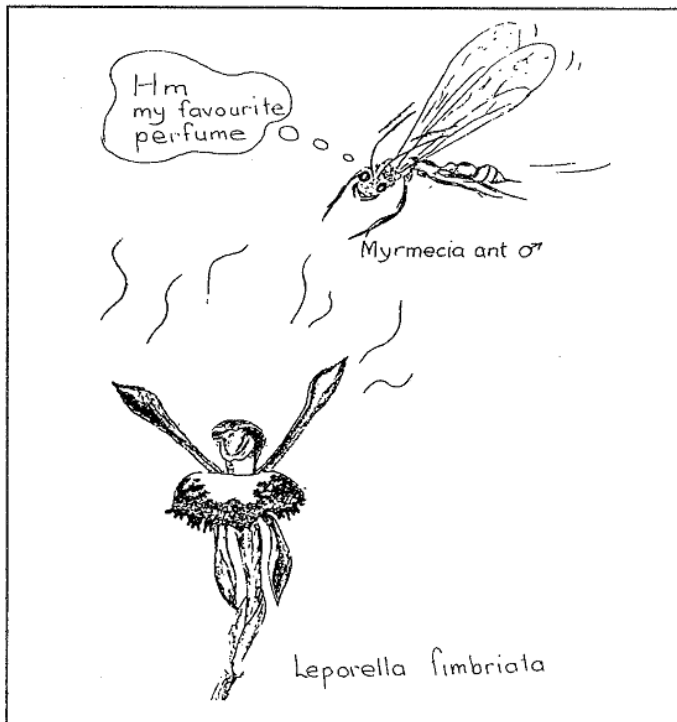
Thank you Steve and Betty for a very pleasant afternoon.

## LAST MONTHS SPEAKER

by David Hirst

Neil Nicolson, volunteer in the Arachnid Section, Division of Natural Science, South Australian Museum, spoke about his work as a volunteer within the Museum. Neil explained his reasons for becoming a volunteer which included a curiosity for a little known group of animals and the problems associated with putting a name to photographs he had taken of spiders. Slides were shown of the work environment and of spiders and their close relatives. Many of the slides shown were of local species which may be encountered around the house or in the garden. All are valued predators which help to reduce the number of insect pests. Reasons for providing full collection details with each specimen, including latitude and longitude if possible, were explained. This avoids confusion with other localities which may have the same name. Some live specimens, including a red-back and a white-tailed spider, were placed on display (in jars) for those who wanted a closer look after the talk. Judging by the questions which followed, keen interest in the subject matter had prevailed even though it was not directly concerned with orchids.

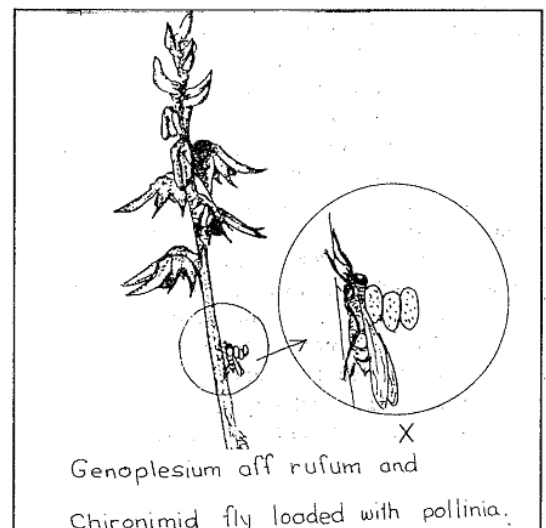
## FIELD TRIP REPORT - AUTUMN ORCHIDS OF THE SOUTHERN SANDPLAINS by Gary Guide



Fifteen members met at the Tooperang Hall on the cool, damp morning of April 9th, the area having received about 15 mm of rain in the preceding week; the highest weekly rainfall for 6 months!

A quick search around the Hall itself did not reveal any orchids although pink Oxalis flowers dotted the ground. We travelled to Scott Conservation Park and drove down a sandy track before reaching private property which was lightly sheep grazed. The vegetation here was more open than the dense *Eucalyptus baxteri* woodland in the park and orchids were plentiful. The Autumn flowered species seen all prefer light sandy soils, no doubt it is easier for their flower spikes to push through dry sand than dry clay! There was a profusion of *Eriochilus*, *Leporella* and two species of *Genoplesium*; often all four could be found within a few centimetres of each other. The *Eriochilus* and *Leporella* were flowering without any leaves and there were hundreds of flowers scattered over about 1500 square metres. All flowers had only recently opened so were in peak condition, some with drops of water on them, and this was ideal for

the photographers. There were many nests of the fierce *Myrmecia* (jumper ants) around and the photographers were careful not to get too close! It is the winged males of *Myrmecia* which are sexually attracted to the *Leporella* flowers and act as pollinators. It seemed too cool for them on the day of our visit. The *Genoplesiums* belonged to the *G. rufum* complex and included the common Adelaide Hills species with dull green and brown flowers as well as a striking species with deep purple flowers having deflexed sepals. After admiring the curious green flowers of the rare *Prostanthera chlorantha* we drove to the south side of the park and walked along a sandy track outside the park. The same orchid species were present. An interesting observation was made here of a *Chironimid* fly pollinator on a flower spike of *Genoplesium*. This fly had pollinia glued to its back which weighed more than the fly itself so that the fly could not fly. It fell off the flower spike, landed upside down and had trouble righting itself. Eventually the determined insect climbed back up the spike and was photographed by those with equipment good enough to pick out this tiny creature.



We drove to the Nangkita gravel reserve for lunch and searched a patch of burnt swamp heath for *Genoplesium ciliatum*. This site has (or had) the last known population of this rare species in the Adelaide Hills but search as we might we could locate none. It seems that the cattle which trample this swamp had finally eliminated the species. Another orchid extinction for the Mount Lofty Ranges!

Orchids seen: - Flowers

*Eriochilus cucullatus* (ribbed leaf form), *Genoplesium* aff. *rufum* (1), *G.* aff. *rufum* (2) sandplain form, *Leporella fimbriata*.

Leaves

*Cryptostylis subulata*, *Lyperanthus* (*Burnettia*) *nigricans*,

Seed capsules

*Eriochilus* aff. *cucullatus* (swamp species) *Glossodia*, *Microtis*, *Thelymitra* spp.

#### LEPTOCERAS MENZIESII -- AN UPDATE

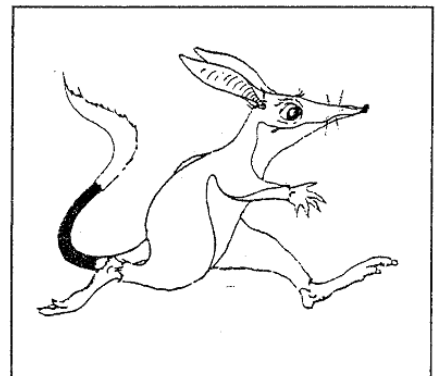
by Les Nesbitt

The banana treated and untreated pots were seen again at the April meeting. There was no activity above ground. No leaves were visible. Both pots required weeding after the good rains in early April. It was necessary to hold the pine needle topping down with one hand, while pulling out some of the larger weeds. It pays to remove weeds while they are very small, weeds are only a problem in Autumn. As George Nieuwenhoven said during the plant commentary "If you want to grow terrestrials you must be prepared to put in the time". I have placed both pots alongside each other in a corner of my shadehouse at Vale Park under 50% shadecloth. They get extra shade from the back fence in winter. A few plants in other pots have appeared so I expect that leaves will show up any day now, certainly before the next meeting.

#### CONSERVATION NEWS

On April 8th your editor visited Scott Creek Conservation Park with Torn Hand, president of the local Friends group. Tubers of the endangered *Caladenia behrii* were planted and sites mapped for weed eradication by Friends members. The Friends, led by Tom have adopted the populations of *Caladenia behrii*, *Caladenia rigida* and *Caladenia gladiolata* at Scott Creek and will hand pollinate flowers and eliminate weeds currently threatening the plants. I then visited Kate Hoskins and with her husband and new baby planted tubers of *Diuris behrii* in a patch of Kangaroo grass on their bushland reserve. Kate is part of the Adopt an Endangered Species program and hand pollinates the *Caladenia behrii* on her reserve. There are plans to re-introduce *C. rigida* and *C. gladiolata* here.

Bilbies. In contrast to the \$10,000 to be spent on Recovery actions for the three endangered *Caladenia* mentioned above over ten years, some \$10 million is spent annually on the bilby. Recently Davenport Downs Station, an area of one hundred square kilometres, in southwest Queensland was bought by the government as a Bilby Conservation Park and will be mesh fenced to keep out feral animals. Closer to home Dr John Walmsley has purchased 80 000 hectares at Scotia in western NSW. This will be mesh fenced and cats, rabbits and foxes eliminated. John is having trouble getting approval for the release of bilbies in this private reserve. Even closer to Adelaide bilbies are to be bred at Monarto Open Range Zoo by the Department of Environment & Natural Resources. Bilbies are presently also being bred at the Western Plains Zoo near Dubbo.



Feral pigs crackdown. Feral pigs will be shot by a crack squad of shooters on the ground and in helicopters under a three- state eradication program which starts next month. The Sporting Shooters Association and the State Government will control the shoot along a 150sq km area of the Murray floodplain, ranging from east of Renmark into New South Wales and Victoria. Parks and waterways including the Murray River National Park, Chowilla Game Reserve, Calperum and Murtho Forest Reserve will be closed during the five-day shoot. (From The Advertiser Friday 21 April 1995)

Deliberate Introduction of Feral Animals. A lot time and money is spent in South Australia on the eradication of feral animals. In the Adelaide area wild goats, pigs and deer are constantly being removed from bushland yet a year or two later they are back. The reason: groups such as the Wild Game Hunters Club make excursions to outback NSW and capture young



feral pigs and goats and steal deer from deer farms to release at places like Mt Bold. These animals cause immense damage to the environment and constantly cause local extinction of orchids.

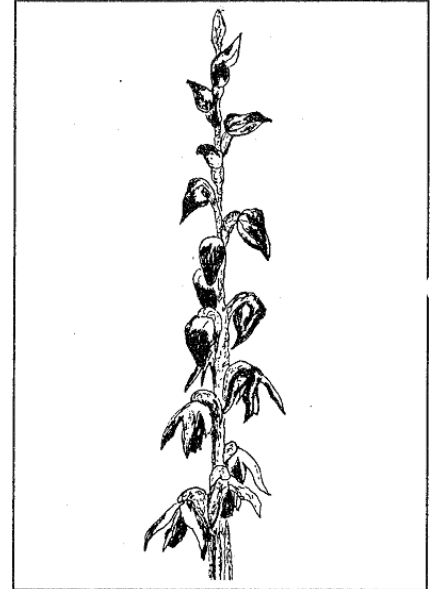
Endangered Orchids: Management of Weeds in April. Friends of Scott Creek recently put in a big day cutting and swabbing *Erica* invading the *Caladenia rigida*, *C. gladiolata*, and *C. behrii* woodland near the Alrnanda mine. Well done! !

Several NOSSA members attended a recent weeding day at the Millbrook Reservoir, *Diuris behrii* site. (Hosted by E&WS manager John Minnie and organised by Pat and Peter Clark). We then visited an E&WS reserved site which has suitable *Caladenia rigida* habitat but is infested with Gorse. Local Endangered Orchid adoptees are systematically cutting and swabbing this nasty weed.

## NEW ORCHID DISCOVERY AT HALBURY

Editor

In April 1994 NOSSA members Ken and Barb Bayley were looking for *Genoplesium nigricans* in the Balaklava area where they live. They found plants near Halbury but were surprised that some of the plants had flowers which were not green and purple like *G. nigricans* but purple-brown with white edging. When Ken told me of these plants in March this year I suggested he send one to David Jones (in Canberra) who is working on this genus and in April Ken did just that. David Jones was delighted as it turned out to be a new species which he had previously received only from Kangaroo Island. You don't have to be an expert to find new orchid species and you don't have to travel to wild places to find them. Although it amazes me that any orchids could be found in the over-cleared drought stricken Balaklava area! Barbara Bayley sent the accompanying drawing (most professionally done) of the new species here magnified about ten times.



## TRIP REPORT - EXCURSION TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS IN APRIL

by Ron Glover

A trip to the Blue Mountains sounded like something different for a family holiday so, despite the distance, off we went for a most enjoyable week. I didn't know much about the orchids of the area and I didn't think there would be many to see in April; especially during a drought. Besides we would be strictly limited to the tourist sites and the kids would probably not be keen on too much walking. After nearly 1,000 kms of driving across dry, dusty plains we arrived in the mountains and were told that as the waterfalls were almost dry we might be disappointed - but instead we were delighted!

In a tiny patch of bush right next to our motel we found *Pterostylis nutans* in full flower. They looked identical to our spring flowered, Adelaide Hills plants but in NSW the seasons are often reversed and they flower from March to May. The track through this patch of bush looked dry but all along it were leaves of *Cryptostylis subulata* and *C. leptochila* and late flowers of *Spiranthes*. These species need deep swamp in South Australia but in NSW are happy in woodland. Further down the road the soil became sandy and there were millions of *Chiloglottis reflexa* plants with about one flower per 100 plants.

Next day we headed to Katoomba. The track down to the Three Sisters was crowded with Japanese tourists yet smothering the banks were dozens of *Pterostylis parviflora* a rare species in SA but here growing like weeds. Mixed among them were *Pterostylis longifolia* in bud and *Eriochilus* in seed. After lunch we rode the Sky Car and Cable Train then walked the lower cliff track past the bottom of Katoomba Falls to the base of the Three Sisters. Orchids were in the thousands. *Pterostylis grandiflora* with their chunky, brown, green and white flowers, patches of the smaller green *P. obtusa* (looking quite different to our SA plants) and a *P. aff. parviflora* with tiny red-brown flowers. Everywhere there were the little Ant-orchids *Chiloglottis*. The kids were curious to see the little fake ants on the labellum and fascinated to hear that they represented decoy female insects which attracted male wasps which try to mate with them. The kids have keen vision and soon commented that some of the flowers had different sorts of ants on them. By comparing the various flowers we realised that we were looking at three different Ant-orchid species. These were later identified as *Chiloglottis reflexa*, *C. trilabra* and *C. diphylloa*. Collin Bower of Orange NSW has discovered that each of the three species of Ant-orchid in the area attracts a different wasp pollinator!

Amongst the *Chiloglottis* were tiny Helmet orchids *Corybas pruinus* with beautiful tricoloured red, white and green flowers. I had never seen these in the wild before. Large rocks here were covered with epiphytic (lithophytic actually) orchids, various *Dendrobiums* (none in flower). The next day we took the under-cliffwalk from Wentworth Falls. There was quite a lot of water here and as elsewhere the scenery was spectacular, 500 metre high cliffs, 200 metre waterfalls and the walks, dozens of them, along the cliff faces, in and out of caves, clinging to the cliff face and ducking under waterfalls, and again there were the orchids. The 'upside down orchid' *Rimacola elliptica*, growing out of the ceilings of the shallow sandstone caves were all in seed as were the *Thelymitra venosa* and *T. circumsepta*. And then there were the *Genoplesium*, all past their best and we could only guess at the species. I would recommend the Blue Mountains to anyone wanting to see spectacular scenery combined with Autumn orchids. Mid April would probably be best. (Other features nearby include Jenolan Caves, the Zig Zag Railway at Lismore and the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens.)

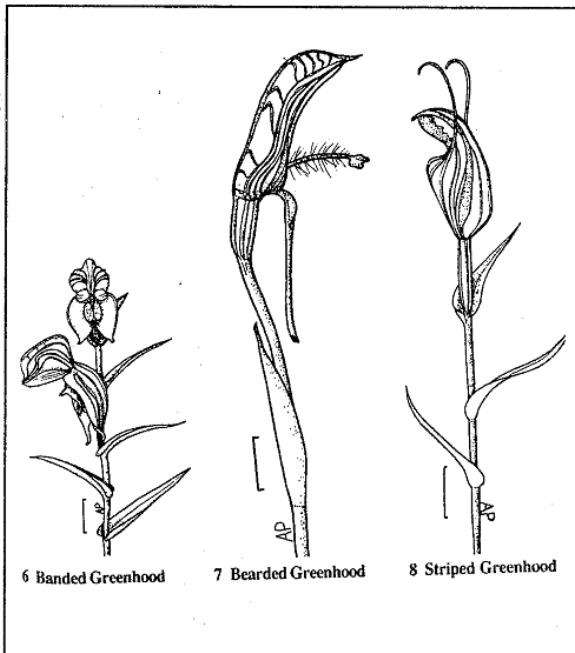
#### BOTANISTS OF THE ORCHIDS NO. 26 DOCTOR WOOLLS

by MARK PHILIPS

Doctor C.A. Woolls was born in Manchester, England in 1813 and arrived in Sydney about 1830 where he worked as an educator at Parramatta, running his own school and studying to become a clergyman. He became friendly with Rev. Walker, headmaster of Kings school (in 1843) who introduced him to botany. This soon became such a passion that Woolls corresponded with Australia's top botanists of the time. He travelled widely in NSW, collecting especially in the Blue Mountains. In 1857 he joined the staff of the Sydney Grammar school and began to publish botanical papers. His book, Contributions to the Flora of Australia, earned him his Doctorate from the University of Gottingen and he was made a Fellow of the Linnaean Society of London. His main work was Plants of New South Wales in 1885. He was very keen on orchids especially after meeting the famous orchid artist RD Fitzgerald. Woolls was one of the few people interested in *Genoplesium* (he did after all live at the centre of distribution of this genus of tiny Autumn flowered midge orchids) and Ferdinand von Mueller named the minute *Genoplesium* (*Prasophyllum*) *woollsii* in his honor. He also made the first collection of the bizarre long sepalled Greenhood *Pterostylis woollsii* which also bears his name. Woolls died in 1893 after a very productive life and has no less than one genus and ten species of plant named after him!

#### ITS BLUE WITH FIVE PETALS

Kangaroo Island Field Guide by Ann Prescott



#### BOOK REVIEW

Some people may be surprised that this book should have almost the same title as Ann's last book (*Its Blue With Five Petals: Wildflowers of the Adelaide Region*) in fact the two books look similar inside and out! Yet it makes sense: the first "Its Blue with Five Petals" had a very popular format so why change that.

The new 'Kangaroo Island' version is smaller, reflecting the smaller flora of Kangaroo Island and although many of the illustrations are the same all of the Kangaroo Island endemic species are of course in the new book. All drawings are in black and white and the species are set out according to flower colour and shape which makes identification easy and that's the whole idea. It is a field guide and the book's shape makes it easy to tuck under the arm or even stick in a coat pocket when bushwalking on the Island although I'd definitely 'clear-contact' the cover first. The cover has an amazing display of Kangaroo Island flowers modelled in coloured sugar-paste - most effective! The taxonomy is quite up to date in fact some of the orchid names used have not even been verified yet. The

orchids are generally well treated and the illustrations suitable for identification but some of the text is a bit odd. In *Corybas* Ann writes "one petal forms a helmet or hood and one forms a bowl-shape underneath." The labellum is thereafter called

the "bowl petal" (I would have preferred the readers to have been taught the words *labellum* and *sepal*). One error perpetuated perhaps from 'Orchids of SA' is the inclusion of *Prasophyllum odoratum* (which does not occur on Kangaroo Island). Previous collections were wrongly labelled and either came from the mainland or belonged to *P. occultans*. I would recommend this book to anyone intending to visit Kangaroo Island to look at the wildflowers. Published by Ann Prescott and available for \$20 at selected book shops.

#### BUG LEADS CHARGE IN CREEPER BATTLE

by Nicole Lloyd

Extracted from the Advertiser, Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup>.

The luscious green leaves of the South African bridal creeper are an irresistible snack for this creepy crawly. But for South Australia's wildlife, (especially orchids! Ed.) the bridal creeper represents a deadly threat. Now the CSIRO is considering introducing a South African leaf beetle to Australia to combat the weed which has reached epidemic proportions in pockets of the State. The predator is part of a four-pronged armory against the weed. The beetle, along with a leaf-hopper insect, seed wasp and rust fungus are undergoing exhaustive tests in South Africa to ensure they do not destroy what they are supposed to protect - Australian natives. "Our primary concern is to ensure that any biological control agents we introduce will not attack native Australian plants, or crop plants," the CSIRO's Dr Penny Edwards said.



The creeper was imported into Australia in the 1850s and cultivated in gardens, before it became popular for use in bridal bouquets. But it has only been over the past decade that its spread from gardens into bushland has begun to alarm conservationists throughout Australia. It was described as being one of Australia's most noxious weeds at last month's national Weeds of Conservation Concern Conference at the University of Adelaide. In SA, it has taken a firm hold in the Adelaide Hills, Murray Mallee, Mid North, Upper South-East and the eastern portion of Kangaroo Island. The weed has no natural predators in Australia and even spraying with broad-spectrum knockdown herbicides is proving of limited value. "We have found that when vegetation in a treated area starts re-emerging, it doesn't take long for the bridal creeper to come back," said creeper specialist, Mr Graham Pritchard, of Victoria's Keith Turnbull Research Institute. "And spraying with herbicides tends to kill the native vegetation you're trying to protect, because the bridal creeper is usually mixed amongst it." The creeper threatens native vegetation by smothering the understorey of the smaller native plants and grasses. It also has clumps of tubers which make it difficult for native plants to establish themselves in the soil. But the stringent biological test procedures means it could be at least two years before the leaf beetle is able to munch into bridal creeper in SA.

David Jones is looking for flowers of SA orchids from any country areas of the state his address is:

13 Saville Close

Melba

ACT 2615

The recent good rains throughout SA hold promise for an excellent orchid year in 1995!

The following article on *Bulbophyllum bracteatum* has been lifted from The Orchidophile, It would be much better if we could get original epiphytic orchid articles from NOSSA members.

#### A BIT ABOUT . . . *Bulbophyllum bracteatum*

*Bulbophyllum bracteatum*, unfortunately, is not well known in cultivation. Once again we have a beautiful orchid that only the small core of species growers appears to bother with. On the other hand, this is quite understandable because *B. bracteatum* is seldom encountered in the wild and, to make things more difficult, it has perhaps the narrowest distribution of all the temperate *Bulbophyllum*s with the exception of *B. caldericola*.

*B. bracteatum* is restricted to the Border Ranges and adjacent areas: Richmond Range in the south, Northern Tablelands in the west, Mt Warning and Numinbah Valley in the east and the Bunya Mountains to the north. The Buoyu Mountains recording is perhaps a case of misidentification as I have never seen reference to this species occurring there except in Australian Indigenous Orchids by Alick Dockrill. Dockrill also reports *B. bracteatum* as occurring on the Dorriggo Plateau. I know of no one who has ever collected a specimen from down there, and this is probably another misidentification. If anyone can provide evidence of *B. bracteatum* definitely known in these doubtful areas then please do so.

My personal experiences with *B. bracteatum* in the natural state are restricted to three separate sightings of it. One of these locations involved but a single plant sighted in the Tweed Range in April 1986. Here it was growing in an incredibly exposed position on a razor-back ridge top where winds sweeping in from every direction would be almost ceaseless. It grew in a group of very gnarled, wind-pruned *Leptospermum*-like shrubs that carry an abundant amount of long, straggly moss. So although air movement here was high indeed, the moss would indicate a moisture laden environment as well.

In September 1987, I found myself south of the Queensland town of Warwick, on the mountains that straddle the NSW border. On this day, Ralph Crane and myself located occasional small clumps of *B. bracteatum* in the heads of freshly logged Hoop Pines and Tulip Oaks. The orchid appeared to be growing closely in association with *Dendrobium schneiderae*. This locale was in a deep north facing gully with a large creek flowing through. The tops of the surrounding ridges towered several hundred metres and provided obvious protection. The prevailing breezes could only come from up or down this gully.

There was an amazing variety of orchids colonising those logged trees, something like twenty species on perhaps 15 fallen hosts. This is the only location where I have seen *Sarcochilus weinthalii* growing and flowering in the wild. Fortunately, this area is a long way into private property and the non-resident owner was happy to let us rescue anything we could. There is still a lot of suitable habitat untouched for these rarer species to survive in. Unfortunately, I doubt I will ever get an opportunity to return and see how things are going after the selective logging. This was a really great spot to see orchids.

The third location where I've seen *B. bracteatum* growing is very different from the first two. This place is a deep gash in the New England Granite Belt where the lowest temperatures must be far colder than either the Border Ranges or the Tweed Range. Snow falls would not be uncommon on the cliff tops just above where the orchids grow.

Altitude would be 900 metres or higher. Yet in the protection of the head of this valley there are comparatively good numbers of *B. bracteatum* growing very nicely thank you. In a few spots here, it scrambles over several square metres of rock face - very different to the small clumps at the other locations cited. I have never observed *D. bracteatum* growing on the trees here in the granite country. On a collection of house-sized mossy boulders balancing precariously on a steep hillside, *B. bracteatum* and *B. minutissimum* grow fused together in sheets . . . quite unusual indeed.

The environmental variance of the three locations discussed would indicate that *B. bracteatum* is undemanding with regards to its growing requirements, and this is certainly true in the bushhouse situation. About the only factor I'd say that *B. bracteatum* won't tolerate is drying out. It must be kept reasonably moist at all times. For this reason, my preferred host material is treefern fibre.

I've tried cork, iron bark totems, paperbark logs and hardwood slabs over the years but none of these materials come close to a good, hard slab of *Cyathea* tree fern. The roots seem to relish probing deep into the

rough fissures between the fibre where moisture, coolness and air must be available at just the right ratio. As with most *Bulbophyllums*, a loose layer of epiphytic moss around a freshly mounted plant will aid considerably in the production and protection of new roots.

So long as you pay attention to its moisture requirements, *B. bracteatum* will cause you no heartaches in cultivation. It is not subject to any particular disease, or insect or fungus attack. I don't consider light levels to very relevant either, although more prolific flowering would obviously occur if light levels were maintained at higher levels. About the only difficulty intending growers of *B. bracteatum* will encounter is obtaining a plant in the first place.

If you are finally able to track down a piece of this uncommon species, you will be a proud owner of one of the prettiest of all the temperate *Bulbophyllums* native to Australia. *B. bracteatum* looks for all the world like its very abundant cousin, *B. exiguum*. The most notable difference is in bulb size, with *B. bracteatum* nearly always 50% or more larger than *B. exiguum*, and under perfect conditions, up to triple the size.

The other obvious difference is that the bulbs of *B. bracteatum* tend to arrange themselves into much more tightly packed clumps, whereas *B. exiguum* tends to run in long, spaced-out strands. However, its bulbs are where all resemblances of *B. bracteatum* to any other species ends.

The racemes of *B. bracteatum* are unique in the orchid family of Australia. There can be up to 25 or so 5 cm, creamy with purple blotched flowers, packed closely together along arching racemes up to 10 cms long. Each flower is sheathed by a rather obvious, large white/silver bract at its base; hence the specific epithet "*bracteatum*".

Another unusual aspect possessed by *B. bracteatum* concerns its seed pod. For a start, the pods are not green, but a silvery cream colour. Shape is another strange trait of the seed pod. Instead of being basically round and ribbed, it is long and thin with a banana bend in it, and ribbing is not nearly as pronounced. The pods I have on my plants this year will hopefully be in flask next year. So if you get the urge to have a plant or two of your own you'd better keep your eyes and ears open. Or perhaps you'll be one of the lucky ones who puts in the hard work and is rewarded by seeing the very beautiful and very uncommon *B. bracteatum* in situ.



Drawings from Native Orchids of Australia by David L. Jones