Native Orchid Society of South Australia Inc.

Journal

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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

JULY 1996 Vol. 20. No. 6 JOURNAL

JULY MEETING

Tuesday, 23rd July 8.00 pm: at St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington Past President, Reg Shooter will show slides from the Wally Upton collection 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.

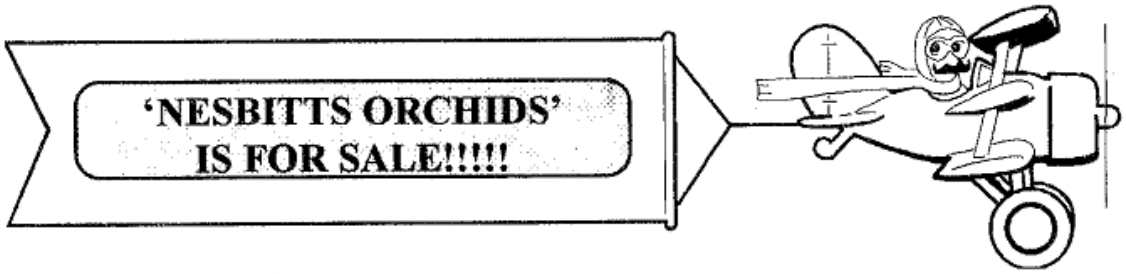
DIARY DATES

August 2nd Last day for journal articles.
Aug 4th Monarto Field trip
Aug 10-11th Conservation Group Excursion - Potters Scrub.
Sept 26-30th Third Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show - Flinders University, Hosted by NOSSA.

COMMITTEE MEETING

To be held at 7.30 pm Friday July 26th at the home of Gerry Carne, 118 Hewitt Ave., Toorak Gdns.

FOR SALE:



Established 21 years and containing approximately 50,000 terrestrial orchids. Regular income from local mail order and export sales. Easily managed by one person or couple. Excellent growth potential. Contact Wayne Rosenberg 018 837120 L.J. Hooker, Tea Tree Gully.

CHALLENGE for July General meeting: Lets bring in lots of native orchid species and hybrids and fill the three tables at the front of the hall. Show our newer members and visitors the large number of orchids that are in flower in July and what great growers we are.

Raffle: at July General Meeting - Autographed copy of Walter Upton's book Sarcochilus Orchids of Australia. Proceeds to the Third Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show. Tickets $1.00

ONLY TWO MONTHS UNTIL THE THIRD AUSTRALASIAN NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE AND SHOW. -DON'T MISS IT!

ARE YOU FINANCIAL?

Subscriptions are due in March each year. A check shows sixty members had not paid as at June 25th. It costs $12 a year just to send each member a journal.

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday 4th August Monarto and Ferries McDonald Conservation Parks Meet at Callington turnoff on South Eastern Freeway (at junction of Freeway ramp and Strathalbyn Road) at 11am.

We should see *Pterostylis dolichochila, Pterostylis mutica, Pterostylis sanguinea, Diuris palustris* and perhaps *Caladenia stellata*.

NEW MEMBERS: NOSSA is pleased to welcome -

Mr Tim Jenkins of Panorama
Mr David Sparrow of Belair

ON THE BENCH

Terrestrials: *Acianthus pusillus, Cyrtostylis robusta, Pterostylis dolichochila, P. hamiltonii, P. nana, P. nutans, P. procera, P. robusta* (2), *P. sanguinea, P. taurus, P. x toveyana, Diuris carinata* (leaves only)

Epiphytes: *Dendrobium* Bright Spark (2), *D.* Hilda Poxon (6), *D.* Jesmond Dazzler (2), *D.* Ku- ring-gai (3), *D.* Pee Wee, *D.* Pee Wee x Ellen, *Sarcochilus* Melba.

Les Nesbitt gave the commentary on the Terrestrials

Noel Oliver spoke on the Epiphytes.

POPULAR VOTE:

Terrestrials: *Pterostylis taurus* grown by George Nieuwenhoven.

Epiphytes: *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon grown by Reg Shooter

COMMENTATORS CHOICE:

Terrestrial Species: *Pterostylis nana* from Black Hill.

Epiphyte Species: None

Epiphyte Hybrid: *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon grown by Reg Shooter

Steve and Betty Meszaros presented a beautifully displayed basket of five Epiphytes. Our Terrestrials commentator, Les Nesbitt must be commended for his efforts as he stopped in at the meeting on his way home from a 14 hour drive from interstate! (Just to do the plant commentary). Les pointed out that the *Pterostylis x toveyana* (Mentone Greenhood) on display came from Mentone Victoria. It had become extinct at Mentone a few years ago so the recently formed Friends of Mentone Park were delighted to receive tubers from South Australia and reintroduced the species to the Mentone (-type) locality. This emphasises the value of cultivation in conservation.

JUNE MEETING

Bob Bates spoke on Endangered Orchids and what we can do to save them. Bob gave the following figures:

Estimated orchid species to become extinct in S.A. since settlement is 50,

Estimated species threatened: 50.

Total 100 - More species than most people would have actually seen in the bush in this state!

Reasons for this situation include:
1. Clearance of 90% of better orchid habitats
2. Altered grazing regimes (Cloven hoofed animals especially)
3. Weeds

4. Introduced pests - rabbits, goats, aphids, snails, insects, virus, fungi, etc
5. Use of herbicides and fertilisers
6. Changed fire regimes
7. The island affect in remaining bushland pockets
8. Draining of swamps
9. Change of climate
10. Collectors, pickers, off road vehicles

What can we do as a group?
1. Education and Public Relations
2. Lobbying on conservation issues
3. Surveys and studies of orchids concerned
4. Contacting managers and landholders
5. Weeding and pest control
6. Join a bush care group or join the Adopt an Endangered Species Program
7. Hand pollination, re-introductions, seed sowing
8. Sowing seed in flasks
9. Long term seed storage project
10. Cultivation

BOTANISTS OF THE ORCHIDS NO. 28 by SANDY PHILIPS

Allan Cunningham (1791-1838).

Cunningham was born at Wimbledon near London. Both he and his brother Richard were assistants to W. Aiton, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Aiton recommended Allan to Sir Joseph Banks who sent him firstly on an expedition to Brazil (1814) and then to Australia in 1825.

After his brother Richard who was a Colonial Botanist at Sydney, was killed by natives whilst exploring with Major Mitchell, Allan accepted the role of Colonial Botanist himself in 1837. This did not last long as he made many demands to the government and was replaced. He died the following year. Like his brother, Allan went on many trips of exploration into remote areas of Australia where he made numerous plant collections. These he sent to Lindley and others but he actually named many himself in his published reports of his expeditions. Orchids named by him include the common *Dendrobium tetragonum* and *D. pugioniforme*.

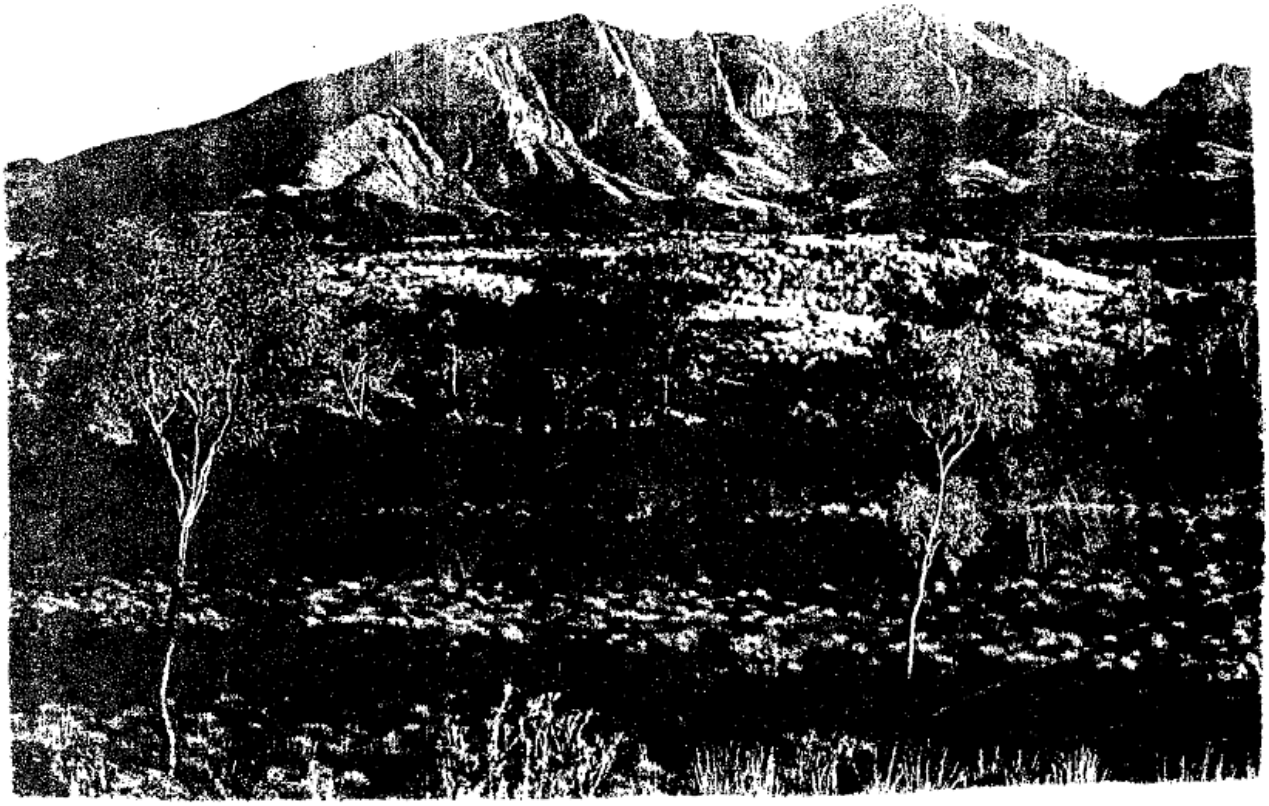
WILDERNESS/NATURE by PAUL FRAHM

The essential meaning of wilderness in the 1990's is described as the most natural areas which we have left - those areas with only minor disturbance. They have to be large areas so that they maintain their naturalness, allowing them to be a workable unit where populations of animals and plants can survive indefinitely.

For most Australians, nature offers and enables us a unique 'escape valve' to the pressures of urban living. Travelling in wilderness areas on Nature's terms has an affect on people both physically and psychologically. It allows us to brush away the cobwebs from living in a sometimes monotonous urban environment, time, which inevitably, should make us feel alive once again. This revitalisation allows us to work once more in the urban society.

Our urban lifestyles now deprive us of the kinds of relationships we can have with natural environments. Therefore, wilderness and nature should be seen as an essential part of the human species psychological survival.

The history of human evolution has shown that for most of the time there has been a harmonious relationship between nature and ourselves. However, modern living and the associated technological advances have distanced the human species from its ancestral roots. Nature, and particularly wilderness, can provide us with the opportunity to experience a sense of our ancestral roots - commonly referred to as our 'natural essence'.



Wilderness and nature based experiences are valued by a large and growing number of people, and are beneficial in a variety of ways. People can change as a result of going into a wilderness area. This is particularly true with respect to self-perception and self-concept, while the entire experience seems to be positively rewarding in such surroundings. A better understanding of the wilderness experience itself can further enhance the argument for conservation, although proper management is essential for the conservation of nature to be successful.

Those who have a satisfying experience generally feel encouraged to preserve that particular place and the global environment as a whole. A meaningful experience also provides very important personal motivations for action on preserving our environment. Presently, there are many thoughtful people who are finding their essential meanings in Nature rather than in God or a god. The effect of this occurs in the form of emerging land being set aside as National Parks and Nature Reserves. Economically it's in the form of environmental impact statements and restrictions on development. The preservation of these wild places is supported by many who will never visit them, but will know of them through the media and photography, which also performs a psychological function in society - sometimes believing can often substitute feeling.

For many people it is important just knowing that wilderness and natural places exist. They fulfil this desire by seeing photographs and films of these special environments. These images rely upon the photographer to capture the true meaning of an area as well as an artistic input to hold the viewer's attention.

People cannot consume wilderness nor ask for more in these areas. The only material wealth you own is what you carry on your back, The Aborigines learnt many millennia ago that the less you have in your possession the better. Wilderness and natural area are a place where it doesn't matter what you have, but more importantly, what you are!

A FLOWER PERSONALITY
From an Adelaide paper, probably The Register about 1914/15
Extracted from the Bulletin of the Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group (Inc.), May 1996.

The cult of the Orchid.
The gnat was intoxicated - drunk! It had enjoyed too long the seductive hospitality of the greenhood orchid, and was loath to rise from the banquet table. There he lay - a shockingly minute example of over indulgence. But the gnat was not altogether to blame. When the little Bohemian flew into that delicate fragrant room it was probably with the intention of having a 'nip' and going out again like a respectable insect. But the orchid had good reasons for detaining its gay visitor. It was going to get the gnat drunk, and make him stay longer.

Why? This is why. The orchid wanted the gnat to work for it, a sort of quid pro quo. As a matter of fact, the orchid trapped the gnat. First enticed, and then imprisoned him. The exit was barred by a wonderful system of tiny entanglements. The orchid has a spiteful tongue. Near the point where its hinge is attached to the column there is an apparatus like a watch spring, and the slightest weight on this appendage causes it to fly up. The gnat got in all right, and, having made merry, it wanted to get out. There was no escape by the entrance because the tongue had blocked that. So the front was a dead end and behind was the impenetrable face of the column. The only way the embarrassed insect could leave was exactly the way the orchid desired it should leave - at the proper time. This was to crawl up between the two shadowy wings, which looked like the blades of hatchets attached to the upper part of the column.

The Orchid's Victory.
There was a reason for this. At the back there was a fairly wide space between these blades. The front edges were pretty close together, but had cunningly devised hairs which turned inwards and prevented the gnat from negotiating that particular passage. It, therefore, continued to climb towards the anther that closed the space like the lid of a box. The anther had a small hinge at the back and as the insect pressed against it, it gradually opened. Then the prisoner was free! In the long and rather complex process of reaching daylight again the gnat seemed to have become a perfect gentleman once more. Under a microscope you might have discerned a cynical smile on his face as he flew off - a smile of victory over heavy odds. But the orchid had the last laugh. Its perky guest, unconsciously, had done it a good turn. While forcing past the anther the gnat had lifted some of the pollen. By-and-by, allured to the hair of another flower, it was imprisoned again, and smeared this pollen on the stigma. That was fertilisation.

The Safety Valve.
Do you wonder, then, at Dr. R.S. Rogers taking the orchid as his life's baby? I don't. It is a study of infinite appeal. After all, you know, every professional man, to a large extent, is a Dr. Jeckyl and a Mr. Hyde. I mean he is something in addition to what the general public sees or knows. A hobby is half of life, and represents its devotee in quite another personality, although unostentatious and often exclusive. I never think of Dr. Rogers unless I also think of orchids. And, similarly, keeping the analogy in the realm of physicians, I always associate spiders with Dr. Pulleine, shells and molluscs with Dr. Verco and blackfellows with Dr. Ramsay Smith.

The world would be a prosaic and monotonous thing if we saw it always as a real and serious business, without comparison, without versatility. Variety is the sharp, intimate colour which, introduced onto life's great canvas, gives it contrast and balance and interest. Students who are taking a heavy science course at a university frequently resort to the perusal of trashy novels. It looks silly, but it is perfectly pardonable. What a dull round of duties school would be to youngsters if it were not for the tops and marbles and match brands! It is much the same when we grow up.

The Most Cosmopolitan Flower.

After a chat with Dr. Rogers you love the orchid. He makes you understand its personality. Most people think of an orchid as merely something that Mr Chamberlain wears in his coat - or did when he was in politics, here is the hazy idea, too, that it is the particular flower that has won the heart of stern Kitchener of Khartoum. We recall its spidery picturesqueness and strange beauty, and remember the shy colours that have peeped up at us from a field that had seemed destitute of any floral charm. It is through a superficial acquaintance that the orchid is misunderstood. Listen to the tribute of the enthusiast. The orchid says Dr. Rogers, 'is the most cosmopolitan flower in the world. It extends even onto the artic regions and is an object of worship by certain savage tribes who regard the flower as sacred.' The personality of the orchid is more versatile than any other plant. Once you are attracted by its habit and characteristics and development the study is positively absorbing.

All Over the World.

I asked Dr. Rogers how South Australia stood in the list of orchid countries. There is no genus found exclusively here. Ten of our types have a wide climatic range and extend into the Australian tropics; eight are peculiar to Australia; eleven are represented in New Zealand; seven are in New Caledonia, the Malay or Eastern Archipelago or the East Indies; one reaches southern China; and one is a cosmopolitan flower found in many temperate and tropical regions of the globe. The distribution of the order, remarked Dr. Rogers, 'is apparently very much governed by the average rainfall. A 10 inch record would appear to provide the minimum amount of moisture necessary for the maintenance of these plants. The boundary lies a little to the north of Goyder's line. Beyond this no orchids have been found. It will thus be seen that their distribution occupies a comparatively small portion of this large state and is chiefly coastal in character. So far 100 species have been discovered in South Australia but we are always finding them. Not more than half of those we have catalogued have grown over 100 miles north of Adelaide.

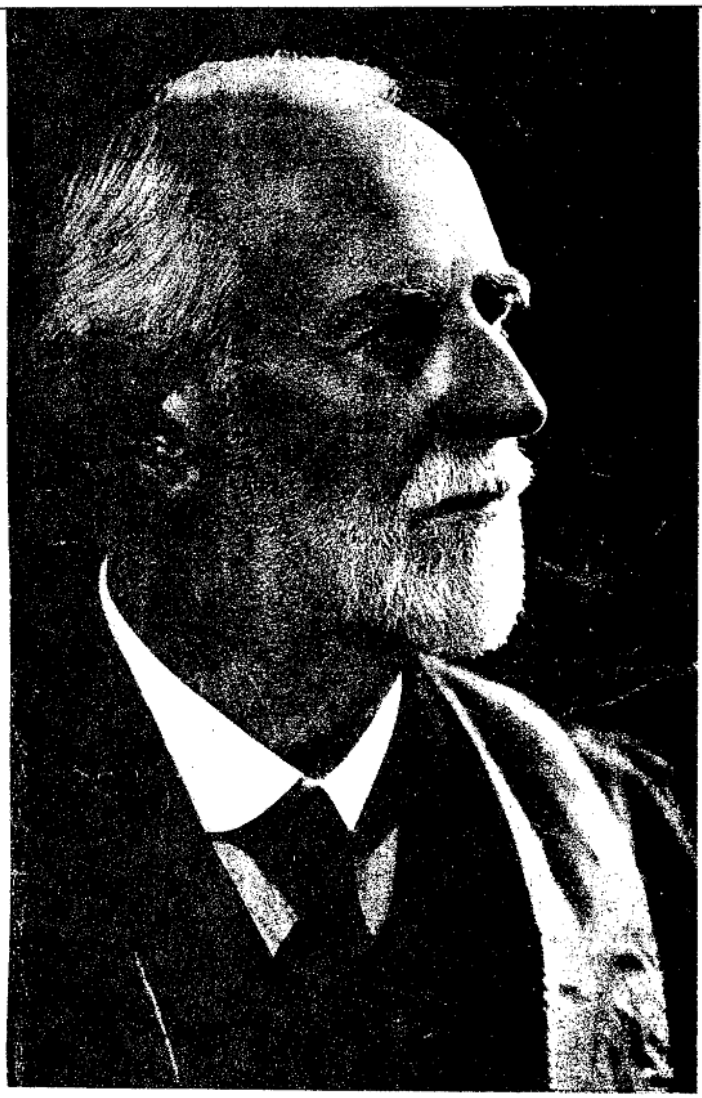
Study in the Open Air.

Dr. Rogers has his collectors all over Australia. Some of the best of them are school children in whom he has instilled a love for this flower of remarkable personality. They have helped him to discover new species. Mrs Rogers is a victim of the orchid fever and her husband finds her a splendid patient. They go out into the fields together. That's the great merit of this hobby - it is the delectable pastime of the open air and the sunshine. (The fact that the study of the orchid took me into the country remarked Dr. Rogers 'was largely what captured my interest. Don't you see! You combine the instinct of the hunter with the expectation of the gambler! You never know when you may stumble on a new and beautiful species. Some days, I suppose, Mrs Rogers and I walk 30 miles. For the collector not only keen vision but a keen sense of smell is necessary on these exploratory expeditions.' It seems, then, you need the orchid nose as well as the orchid eye. Well in a country where it is commonly reported that the flowers are without scent, it is interesting to note that in the case of our orchids the statement cannot be substantiated. There are species where the perfume is sufficiently marked to reveal their presence in the field before they have been observed by the eye of the collector. There is

one rare little orchid with rather diminutive flowers of common colour. It does not grow in communities yet on warm days the powerful magnolia-like odour of one such small plant will perfume the air for many yards from the spot in which it is growing.

Wonderful Mechanism.

Nature has given the orchid an elaborate mechanism for fertilisation. The story I have told about the gnat is merely one function of that complex and delicate system. Darwin did not believe that cross-pollination ever occurred orchids, so Dr. Rogers explained to me. His idea was that the process was effected by the intervention of insects. The study of Australian orchids shows that Darwin was only partially correct. We have many instances where fertilisation has taken place long before the flower has opened or has reached maturity. In every South Australian species most careful provision is made to ensure its survival and progress. There is sometimes furnished an apparatus that will enable it to become cross-fertilised by insects, but. in their absence, there is the capacity for self- fertilisation. But should both of these fail, the orchid still has the power of what is known as propagation by vegetative methods - a root system almost similar to that of the potato.



Dr. R. S. ROGERS, M.A., M.D., D.Sc.
Passed away 28th March, 1942.

Knows Them all by Name.

The orchid has wonders of which many people have never dreamed, Dr. Rogers opens for you a door to a romantic study. His enthusiasm must be a delightful thing to experience. It is full of tenderness and intelligence and authority. Nowadays we crown either extensive ownership or knowledge with a royal designation. The man who has it is a king of some sort to the other. I am sure that Dr. Rogers makes no pretence to be the Orchid King of Australia, but if he should do so, I fancy the claim would have to be admitted. He is in the intimate confidence of the whole of the members of the orchid family, which is one of the largest in the vegetable kingdom, Dr. Rogers calls them by name, and they converse with him. After a little practice you become aware when he talks of *Caladenia cairnsiana* that it is a spider orchid. *Acianthus exsertus* is how the botanist has christened one of the pretty children of the mosquito generation, and, once you have been introduced, *Dipodium punctatum* is never anybody else than the wild hyacinth, the leafless glory that blooms at Christmas time, But all the appealing

tints of Dr. Rogers' descriptions - and he visualises for you the infinite charms and delicacy and grace of construction is no match for the stirring fidelity of Miss Rosa Fiveash's brush. In these pictorial representations she has embodied perhaps her finest art. You unconsciously feel out to handle the flowers. Only the fragrance is missing and the picture is so trill that you can almost catch that too. Dr. Rogers, for whom this accomplished artist has been working these years, is very sensitive over the precise botanical accuracy of the painted orchid and he declares she has attained as near to perfection as is humanly possible. The ideal thing would be a book which Dr. Rogers should write and Miss Fiveash illustrate. That may be published one of these days, and the world of orchid lovers will adore it,

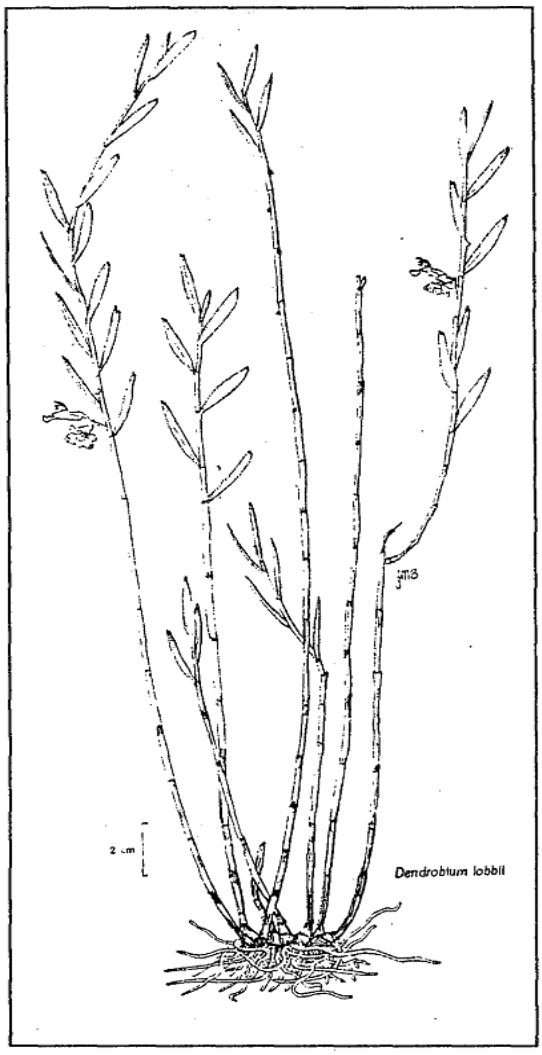
Museum and Art Gallery.
Next to medicine Dr. Rogers has made orchids his life's interest. He began the study when he was a student back in the seventies. It attracted him because few others appeared to be attracted by it. Once he got to confidential grips with the problems and beauties of the flower - why it just held and enthralled him. Nature has been a marvellous architect and painter here. She has built fantastic and beautiful houses on those slender swaying columns and has designed surpassing schemes of colour. The naked eye is often a poor instrument of research. A flower that to it may seem commonplace and insignificant perhaps grotesque sometimes reveals under the magnifying glass an iridescent splendour. There is nothing superfluous about an orchid. Every detail in its delicate building is on an economical plan and no artist ever used a brush with more delightful discretion. Around at Dr. Rogers' house there are pressed orchids, pickled orchids, photographed orchids and painted orchids. His herbarium is a storehouse of the richest treasures. This is the museum. The art gallery is composed of Miss Fiveash's exquisite paintings.

PYRORCHIS THE FIRE ORCHIDS by MARK PHILIPS

Have you noticed the name *Pyrorchis* in the journal lately and wondered what it was?

In a recent issue of the journal Phytologia David Jones and Mark Clements put to rest the problems of generic limits in the artificial genus *Lyperanthus*. This "genus" has included at times species from as many as five different orchid genera. They show quite clearly that "*L. nigricans*" and "*L. forrestii*" are not true *Lyperanthus*, nor do they belong in the genus *Burnettia*. Jones and Clements erect a new genus for these two species namely *Pyrorchis* (simply 'Fire Orchid)). Yes it's official - forget *Lyperanthus nigricans*" forget *Burnettia nigricans*, our fire orchids are now *Pyrorchis nigricans* (R. Br.) Jones and Clements.

The true *Lyperanthus* include *L. suaveolens* and *L. serrates*. Biologically *Lyperanthus* and *Pyrorchis* are not even considered to be closely related in fact they only look vaguely similar in flower and are totally dissimilar vegetatively. I believe everyone will be happy with the new names. A recent visit to the State Herbarium showed that Pierrots specimens have already been removed from *Lyperanthus* and placed in their own boxes!



AUSTRALIAN DENDROBIUMS NO. 18
Dendrobium lobbii Teijsmann and Binnerd the Swamp Dendrobium
The species was named after Tom Lobb the original collector.

This is the only terrestrial *Dendrobium* in Australia! It is a rare species in Australia being known only from two sites in the Northern Territory and a little more common in far North Queensland. Much more frequent in South-East Asia. It grows in low lying sandy swamps amid rushes and sedges. These areas are inundated during the monsoon and never quite dry out.

D. lobbii is an untidy plant with few insignificant dull greenish-white flowers about 10mm across. The canes are long, rigidly erect and the leaves small and dull.

Apparently easy enough to grow in a heated glass house in a sandy peat moss mix kept always damp. But very few growers are interested and it has rarely been seen in Adelaide. In its natural condition it flowers from December to May in cultivation, produces sporadic flowers all year round. We saw this species in swamps along the Archer River on Cape York Peninsula.

1996 ORCHID SEASON:

Autumn - early winter. This year has been one of the poorest flowerings ever. Rainfall was poor throughout the state except for the Adelaide Hills. Heavy rain in June has improved the situation and there could still be a good spring flowering in the settled areas. Further north ie the Flinders Ranges conditions have not improved and this could be one of the poorest seasons on record.

At this stage the season is looking good in the Adelaide area and this should make visitors to The Conference happy.

Champions,
like truth, beauty
and contact lenses,
are in the eye of the beholder.

Extracted from 'Orchid Wise' by Roger Rankin

HANDS-ON CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES
Extracted from the SGAP Journal, May 1996.

Are you bored with television, sick of being a spectator, or concerned that too little is being done to protect our environmental heritage? Here are some activities that will get you out of your rut, enable you to make new friends and probably help you to live longer.

1. Society for Growing Australian Plants would like help with propagating plants for their Coorong plantings, and/or help planting them. Contact Vice President Jeff Reid on 263 0340.

2. Become a volunteer with 'Save the Bush'. This program provides help to farmers and others who are looking after remnant vegetation on their properties under Heritage Agreements with the State Government. There are nearly 1000 such areas throughout the state. As organiser Nicole Keen (Tel 204 8750) says, "It's hard work, but a lot of fun and very satisfying, since you can return to see your work develop and grow over the years." There are projects on Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas, the Adelaide Hills and the South East.

3. Join the Threatened Plant Action Group. This group's aim is to rescue (by locating, weeding, protecting and propagating) species that are in danger of extinction. Rick Davies (Tel 3363755(w)) is the Convenor. Recent activities have included removing bridal creeper from the threatened *Acacia pinguifolia* (Fat-leaved Wattle) along roadsides in the Finniss area, monitoring the vulnerable *A. rhetinocarpa* (Neat Wattle) in Ferries-McDonald Conservation Park and removing Sweet Pittosporum, olive and boneseed from Belair National Park, Contact the Conservation Centre (Tel 223 5155) for details of the next meeting.

4. Become a shareholder in Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd. This company buys parcels of bushland so as to "secure it form agricultural exploitation and to protect and preserve existing landscape, flora and fauna". Shareholders have secured areas on Kangaroo Island and in the Tothill Ranges north of Kapunda. Shareholders get no dividends, other than the satisfaction of having preserved some Australian bush from destruction, and being able to visit/care for 'their' land. The minimum investment is $5,000. Contact John Smyth, 25 Swinden St, Riverton, 5412 (Tel (088) 847 2152) for further information.

5. Undertake voluntary work with The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV). As outlines by Brett Hoben, Program Manager for ATCV. S.A., at the March Regional Meeting, this Trust specialises in matching those who would like to help with those who need help. Examples of activities include collecting seed for revegetation projects, hand direct seeding, growing tube stock for such projects, erosion control, fencing of remnant vegetation, weed control in such areas, construction of walking trails, surveys of flora and fauna and repairing and restoration of historic built objects, In any one month, there are typically about 10 projects underway, While many of the volunteers are young people who are here from overseas on working holidays, there is plenty of scope for locals of all ages and physical abilities. An example is the Watermate program. The 'mate' part of this name is the acronym for Mature Aged Tutor for the Environment. Watermates work with schools, community groups and the wider public to foster an understanding and appreciation of our waterways. As Brett said: "Anyone can help " Contact details are Box 419, Campbelltown, 5047 (Tel 2078747; Fax 2078755), whether you need urgent help in a conservation project, or are wanting to burn off some surplus energy and tome in worthwhile activity.