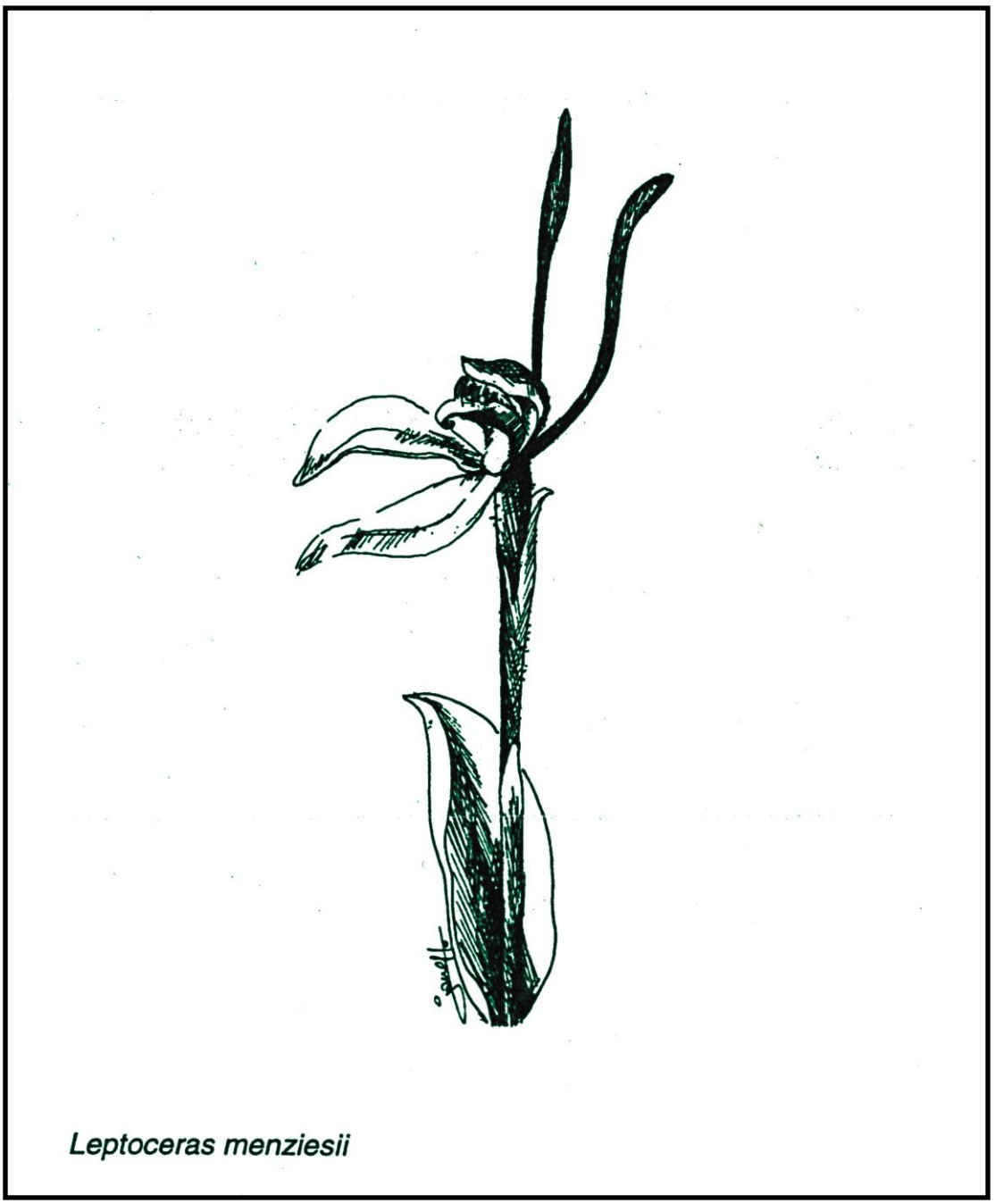
Journal of the Native Orchid Society of South Australia Inc



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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

POST OFFICE BOX 565 UNLEY SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5061

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia promotes the conservation of orchids through the preservation of natural habitat and through cultivation. Except with the documented official representation from the Management Committee 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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JOURNAL OF THE NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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NEXT MEETING 24 JUNE 2003

Tuesday, 24 June, St Matthew's Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Doors to the hall will be open from 7:15 p.m. to allow Members access to the Library. Bring your plants for the display table. Our speaker will be Brian Tindall who will talk on Australian Alpine Orchids.

DIARY DATES
21 June Sausage Sizzle, see reminder page 44
26 June Mt. Lofty Botanic Gardens
29 June Halbury weeding
26-27 July *Oligochaetochilus despectans* monitoring
30 July *Arachnorchis behrii* conservation
16-21 Sept. 16th Australian Orchid Council Conference Adelaide.
7 December Annual BBQ

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING
Wed, 2nd July at the home of David & Rosemary Hirst. Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.

MAY MEETING
PLANTS BENCHED

Terrestrial species: *Corybas hispidis*[=*Corysanthes*?];*Leporella fimbriata*; *Pterostylis concinna* [=*Diplodium concinnum*]; *Pterostylis doliochila* [*Diplodium dolichochilum*]; *Pterostylis laxa* [=*Diplodium laxum*]; *Pterostylis obtusa* (2 plants) [=*Diplodium bryophilum*]; *Pterostylis pedoglossa* [=*Crangonorchis pedoglossa*]; *Pterostylis procera*; *Pterostylis reflexa* (2 plants) [==*Diplodium reflexum*]; *Pterostylis sanguinea* (3 plants) [=*Urochilus sanguineus*].
Terrestrial Hybrid: *Pterostylis* Ruckman.

Epiphyte species: *Dendrobium lithacola; Liparis reflexa* (5 plants).
Epiphyte hybrids: *Dendrobium* Annes Rainbow Surprise; *Den*. Desmond Dazzler (6 plants); *Den*. Desmond Treasure x Sunglow; *Den*. Essie Banks; *Den*. Gai-Ellen; *Den*. Hilda Poxon (4 plants); *Den*. Jannine Banks; *Den*. Regal Affair x Aussie Victory; Den. Strawberry Moon x Aussie Velvet; *Den*. Warrior; *Sarcochilus* Southern Cross.

Judging results
Epiphyte species
1st *Liparis reflexa* grown by Graham & Jan Burford
2nd *Dendrobium lithacola* grown by Les Nesbitt
3rd *Liparis reflexa* grown by Graham Zerbe

Epiphyte Hybrid
1st Dendrobium Annes Rainbow Surprise grown by Graham Zerbe
2nd *Dendrobium* Desmond Dazzler grown by Brendan Killen
3rd Dendrobium Hilda Poxon grown by Graham & Jan Burford

Terrestrial Species
1st *Pterostylis obtusa* grown by Malcolm Guy
2nd *Pterostylis procera* grown by Les Nesbitt
3rd *Pterostylis reflexa* grown by Malcolm Guy

Terrestrial Hybrids
1st *Pterostylis Ruckman* grown by Les Nesbitt
No second or third place

Orchid of the Night
Pterostylis obtusa grown by Malcolm Guy

Popular Vote

Epiphyte Hybrid
Dendrobium Annes Rainbow Surprise grown by Graham Zerbe
Epiphyte Species
Dendrobium lithacola grown by Les Nesbitt
Terrestrial Species
Pterostylis obtusa grown by Malcolm Guy
Terrestrial Hybrid
Pterostylis Ruckman grown by Les Nesbitt

Commentary on Epiphytes given by John Gay, on Terrestrials by Peter McCauley.

ACTIVITIES - MAY MEETING

Noel Oliver and Graham Zerbe demonstrated how to repot a *Dendrobium kingianum* donated by Ted and Marjorie Chance that had overgrown its pot. About four good-sized lots were potted and these raffled off to members.

Les Burgess gave a terrestrial potting demonstration using a fine sand and sandy-clay mix with the larger gravelly bits sieved out to place on top to keep the soil from being splashed out by rain and also prevent the leaves from contact with the damp soil. As tubers are not repotted at this time of the year broad-beans were substituted.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION - NOSSA NEWS

DIARY DATES FOR FIELD TRIPS / CONSERVATION

Sun June 29th - Halbury weeding
Meet: 10am Block 706, Halbury

Weekend 26/27th July - *Oligochaetochilus despectans* monitoring
Meet: 10am Sat 26th just across the cross roads 2km north of Brinkworth. Drive through Brinkworth town and continue north towards White Cliffs/Yacka.
O/N Burra eg. Burra Motor Inn, Market Street (08) 8892 2777
Burra Hotel, Market Square (08) 8892 2389
Burra Caravan Park, Bridge Terrace (08) 8892 2442
Meet: 9am Sun 27th Market Square, Burra

Thurs 30th July - Arachnorchis behrii conservation
Meet: 9.30am corner of Ironbank and Morgan Road
Please contact Cathy Houston if more details required.

ORCHID WEEKENDS
Sept 13/14th - Coorong Weekend
October 3-6th - South East long weekend
November 1-4th- ANOS Vic trip to Tasmania
Please contact Thelma Bridle 8384 4174 if you are interested in any of the above trips. Bookings for accommodation in both the SE and Tas need to be made promptly as these are holiday periods and popular destinations.

MT. LOFTY BOTANIC GARDENS
We will visit Mt. Lofty Botanic Gardens on Thursday 26th June, meeting at the Administration Centre at 10a.m. The arrangements will be the same as last year.

The next NOSSA Judges meeting is Saturday July 5th

NOSSA Dinner

The dinner was held again this year at the Buckingham Arms. The quality, choice and tastes of the food does not seem to have varied over the 30 odd years it has been serving smorgasbord meals.

It was a huge success and 25 stalwarts of the Society enjoyed a very pleasant evening, including our Treasurer, Iris and husband David who travelled up from Victor Harbor for the occasion.

Reg and I happened to be sitting on the end of the table (so we could be near to the food!!) and we could not help noticing that our members certainly liked the 10cm high pavlova as it wobbled past us.

A great time was had by all, thank you.

Gill Shooter

WINE GLASSES embossed with the NOSSA logo are for sale at $7.50 each.

Reminder
Free Sausage Sizzle, everybody welcome. Saturday 21st June at the Royal Society of the Blind, Blacks Rd, Gilles Plains between 11 am & 2.30pm to inform orchid club members of events taking place at the 16th Australian Orchid Conference and Show to be held in the Royal Adelaide Showgrounds on the 16th to the 21st September 2003.

Orchid Pest and Disease Project

A cooperative project involving RMIT University, The University of Melbourne and the Victorian Threatened Recovery Team is about to get under way. The project will record and document pests and diseases found on Australian orchid taxa, with a view to developing a reference "handbook", possibly accessible on the web.

It will greatly assist the project to have growers of Australian orchids send in their diseased orchid plants or the pests associated with their orchids. The material will be photographed and the pest or disease identified accurately. Disease control methods may be looked at.

If you can send in some Australian orchid pest or diseases, please contact me, Rob Cross, at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne via email or phone

Email: rob.cross@rbg.vic.gov.au
Phone: (03) 9252 2329

HOW IT IS DONE

Reg Shooter

There were several very nice and interesting orchids exhibited at the May meeting. I cannot help but be surprised as each year passes at the number and variety of orchids benched earlier and earlier each year. I, like many of you, can remember the early days of the society when, at this time of the year, just one or two plants would be benched and it was not until around August/September before we enjoyed a mass like we saw at the May meeting. This is mainly due to the incredible advance in hybridising by a number of Australian breeders and their use of early flowering species such as *Dendrobium tetragonum*.

There were four plants of the primary hybrid (i.e. a cross between two species) of *Den*. Hilda Poxon, (*speciosum* x *tetragonum*). This was the hybrid that really started the interest in Australian Dendrobiums. The four plants benched varied quite a lot between them. This is unusual for a primary hybrid where the progeny produced is usually quite stable but because of the different varieties of both the species *tetragonum* and *speciosum* used to make Hilda Poxon quite different plants result. Some have short pseudobulbs, some long. Flower size, shape and colour can be distinctly different. Flowers on the plants benched varied, some flowers were 80mm long while others were only 50mm. Three were clear yellow in colour, one was yellow with brown spots. But they were all attractive orchids.

Brendan Killen brought in a number of plants including six of the Hybrid *Den*. Jesmond Dazzler. Now this is a different kettle of fish to Hilda Poxon in that it is a fourth generation hybrid having in its parentage four species, one dose each of *Den. fleckeri, speciosum* and *kingianum* and two infusions of *tetragonum*.

Now with all those different genes influencing the outcome all sorts of progeny can be produced ranging from the very good to the downright useless. The six that Brendan brought in were all from the same seedpod but to look at them without reference to the label you would be hard put to say so. The six were all lovely plants having flowers in an assortment of sizes, colour and form. The point of all this rambling is to indicate that when purchasing seedling hybrids you don't necessarily get what is in the picture in the nurseryman's catalogue.

To shorten the odds and stand a better chance of getting a decent plant there is a couple of options you can take (1) purchase a flask of a cross that, because of the parents used should produce good progeny. (2) If you are not confident in deflasking then buy more than one of the crossing. Of course even then there is no guarantee of getting a prizewinner but that is what makes growing these wonderful plants so interesting.

DIVIDING AND RE-POTTING AUSTRALIAN NATIVE DENDROBIUMS

John Gay

The Australian Native *Dendrobium* that was divided at the May Meeting was certainly in need of some attention, although in good condition.

The plant is taken out of its pot, after rolling it on the edge of a bench or table, or maybe tapping around the sides of the pot with a rubber mallet or similar, it is sometimes quite difficult to separate a congested root system by hand without the assistance of a sturdy knife, tomahawk or cleaver. Regardless of which method is

used a few canes may be damaged and this seems to be quite normal, and unavoidable.

You need to decide what size divisions you require. One word of ADVICE IS NOT TO MAKE THESE PIECES TOO SMALL, as it takes too long for the plant to become established.

The potting medium that was used was just 10-15 ml. pine bark that was quite damp. The undivided plant had originally had ½ gravel added to the pine bark, and this gives the pot some help in stability and assists with the drainage.

It is quite a good idea to leave 2.5 to 4 cms gap between the division and the edge of the new pot. Depending on how the rate of growth is, you may find that after 2 years or longer the growths have filled the pot. Then you have to make the decision again to either pot the plant on (this means just placing in a larger pot) or divide it again.

There were a lot of babies on the plant divided, and these are called Keikis, which is a Hawaiian word meaning "baby". They can be taken off the parent plant, and the best time to remove them is when the roots on the Keikis are about 2.5 cm. long, as by this time the new growth has ripened a little or perhaps become a little ridgy, i.e. not looking so fresh and succulent. If these are taken off too soon they are soft and will usually rot.

Potting mix for the Keikis can be a fairly fine and small bark, or even clean sand is a good medium to use. Plant Keikis approx. 1.5 to 2 cm. deep.

After 12 months or so, when the new growths are evident, these can be transferred to a normal size bark, i.e. 10 - 15 ml.

Some Dendrobiums tend to have more Keikis than others - it seems to be an individual thing. It does appear that too much nitrogen fertilizer encourages Keikis, to the detriment of flowers later in the season.

Talk by Andrew Batty- Translocation of Orchids.
Reprinted from Western Australian Native orchid Study and Conservation Group (Inc.) May 2003

Andrew used Power Point to present his topic. It was divided into five sections, threats, orchid biology, new propagation methods, seed bank and *Rhizanthella* project.

The threats to orchids included land clearing, salt incursion, mining, dieback and accidental destruction. All these factors contribute in varying degrees to the loss of habitat suitable for orchid propagation and growth in the wild. Our terrestrials all grow in conjunction with fungi. This fungus is only found in the top 10-15cm [should this be mm] of the soil. Therefore no fungus is found where the orchid tubers grow. The fungus is also necessary for successful propagation from seed. It is the powerhouse for seedlings. Orchid seeds are like fine dust and unlike other plant seeds do not have a food store built in. Past methods used for propagation had only a 10% survival rate. The current method uses a sterilised plastic takeaway food container with an agar solution covered with silica sand into

which the germinated seeds are transplanted. In three months they become equivalent to 3-4 year old plants that are then transplanted into punnets. Using this method a 90% survival rate has been achieved.

Our terrestrials have evolved to grow in a wet followed by a dry season. The seeds lay dormant till it rains which cracks the cover and germination starts. If the rain is late and the dry is early the seedlings do not have sufficient growth to survive. In good years when the rain is early and is maintained to late in the season the seedlings have a good chance of surviving. Seed collection in the bush is achieved by enclosing the seedpod in a fine cloth so that the seeds can be collected instead of being dispersed in the ground. They are then collected, dried and stored in liquid nitrogen till required. The associated fungus is also stored in liquid nitrogen though in a different container.

Andrew is currently working on germinating *Rhizanthella gardneri*. He has successfully pollinated the flowers and produced seedpods. The seed is 50 times larger than *Caladenia* seeds. The technique used is first to grow the *Melaleuca uncinata*. The *Rhizanthella* seedling when it starts to germinate causes the fungus to attach to the *Melaleuca*. The nutrition required by the *Rhizanthella* seedling is now transferred from the *Melaleuca* plant by the fungus. *Rhizanthella* is related to *Prasophyllum* & *Microtis*. The plant has shrunk till it grows completely underground.

Translocation of tubers and seedlings with and without fungus introduced has been tried. There did not appear to be much difference between the two methods used. The survival rate was about 18% for both methods. Currently an experiment is under way. The translocation site is surveyed and soil samples are taken. Orchid seeds are sown in the soil samples and if they grow the fungus is introduced at the site and the seedlings translocated.
Regarding pot culture, the rescued plants thrive for a few years and then die. This is a result of the fungus dying because it also requires nutrients.

[Editors note: The last paragraph concerning the failure of plants to survive in pots affects us all. In the May journal Les Nesbitt mentioned that many plants had been lost and in my article in a future journal I too state that many have been lost or are gradually falling off in numbers. I am sure that many of our members growing terrestrials are having the same problem. If we are to successfully rescue orchids from the bush we need to find a way to contribute to the survival of the fungus or to be able to re-introduce the fungus on a regular basis.]

MOUNT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDENS

Cathy Houston

During 2002 members of N.O.S.S.A. met with staff from the Mt. Lofty Botanic Gardens to do some field work at the Gardens. There were two main aims; to cover as much area as possible in order to ascertain what orchids are found in the Gardens and to assist staff to gain a greater understanding of some of the natural resources of the Gardens, viz. native orchids.
The Mt. Lofty Botanic Gardens had its origins in 1948 when the idea to purchase land in the Mt. Lofty Ranges with a high rainfall and a cool temperate climate, was accepted by the Board of the Botanic Gardens. Initially 40 hectares were purchased, with a further 57ha being added later. It was opened to the public in

November 1977. Retained native vegetation is interspersed with more formal gardens of plantings from around the world. The gardens are near Mt. Lofty as the name suggests, and as such incorporate steep slopes and deep gullies. The dominant native tree species is Stringybark, *Eucalyptus odorata*. The understories vary from very thick to more open heaths, from grasslands to areas which are slashed once a year and hence are very open.

Three visits were made during the year, one at the beginning of May, one at the beginning of July and one during the second week of October. The drought of last year has been well documented, but to put the visits into context the trip in May was made before any significant rain had fallen. Conditions were extremely dry. In July we struck a very wintry day with rain, wind and fog throughout the day! By October conditions were dry again.

In May we were hoping to find two species of Autumn flowering orchids, however *Eriochilus cucullatus* was the only one located, and that was in very low numbers. The surprise of this visit was finding four *Dipodium roseum* still in fresh flower. Dipodiums were widespread, well pollinated, and found in natural and garden habitats alike. Our visit in July aimed to find Winter flowering orchids, as well as the leaves of most other orchids. The weather did not help but we were really surprised when we did not find any Winter orchids; no rosettes and no colonies! Therefore, a late Winter/early Spring visit was not warranted. The October trip had some surprises too. Because of the managed open habitats several species of orchids have faired very well, viz. Thelymitras and *Diuris*. *Thelymitra pauciflora* was widespread and dominant among the sun orchids, with *T. rubra* also being common. Two forms of *T. pauciflora* were found, viz. the common small blue/mauve flowered form and also the small white flowered form. *Arachnorchis tentaculata* was the common *Caladenia*. But the highlight of the day was the numbers of *Diuris orientis* and *D. pardina* with a considerable number of beautiful large hybrids between the two. They bore a close resemblance to *D.* Pioneer 'Big Ears', and were admired by all. Presumably the yearly slashing has aided in the making of these hybrids.

The enthusiasm of participating staff members from the Gardens was rewarding for N.O.S.S.A. members who were working with them. They quickly "got their eye in" and were keen to learn about the orchids. It was unfortunate that the May trip coincided with the time when Messent Conservation Park was alight and two staff members were called away (before we found the *Eriochilus* flowers) to assist with the fire fighting. Another visit is planned for this month (see Diary Dates).

	3-May	5-Jul	11-Oct		3-May	5-Jul	11-Oct
Dipodium roseum	f, p	p					
Eriochilus cucullatus	f		1	Thelymitra luteocilium	1		p,b
Disa (Monadenia) bracteata	p	p, 1	b, 1	Thelymitra pauciflora	1	1	b
Calochilus robertsonii	1,p		b	Thelymitra sp.	1	1	
Microtis sp.	p	1	b	Glossodia major			f
Caladenia tentaculata		1	f, b	Thelymitra rubra	1		f,b
Diuris orientis	p		f, b, p	Pterostylis pedunculata			f
Diuris pardina			f, p	Pterostylis sanguinea			f.o.
Diuris orientis x pardina			f	Microtis frutetorum			f

f - flower, b - bud, p - pod, f.o. - flower over. N.B. Names used are those in use in S.A. in 2002.

PUTTING A SKIRT ON IN HALBURY

Thelma Bridle

On 24th May about 20 volunteers from both NOSSA and Friends of Halbury met at block 706 prepared to put on a skirt. Just to shatter your humorous mental images this was a rabbit-proofing skirt around an existing fenceline, not part of a theatrical production.

The weather was ideal, cool but sunny and recent rain had moistened the soil sufficiently to make pushing in pegs to hold the skirt at ground level easier. The rain had also spurred orchids into coming up. A number of *Oligochaetochilus* sps. Rosettes were transplanted onto the block, away from the fenceline and skirt. On the block *Corunastylis nigricans* was still in evidence and *Diplopodium robustum* were beginning to show buds.

Alliances soon formed - a team to clear vegetation from the fence, another to clip the skirt to the fence, a third to make pegs whilst the fourth pegged the skirt. By midday we were all hungry. Some of the locals returned home for lunch, while the rest of us went to Graham and Judith's for refreshments, a rest and a general discussion on orchids and conservation. A very quick check showed the transplanted *O. excelsa* coming up on the block fenced last year. A full count of both these and the transplanted *O.* "Halbury' will be made during the weeding day on 29th June.

Work speeded up during the afternoon. It had been anticipated that two sides of skirting could be accomplished, but Graham just kept producing more fencing, so we kept working, completing all three sides of skirting, with vegetation cleared from at least half the final side. If the Friends have not completed the task, our first job on the NOSSA weeding day will be to complete the skirt.

Thank you to all the members who turned up for this enjoyable day, with again special thanks to our dedicated Victorian conservationist, Mike.

Rogers, Jean Scott (1867 - 1954) Naturalist

Jean Scott Rogers (nee Paterson) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 14 March 1867. At the age of 17 years she met a young medical student, Richard Sanders Rogers, who had travelled from Adelaide to Edinburgh to study for a medical degree. The couple married in 1887 and she joined her husband at his private medical practice at Port Wakefield, S.A. in 1888. Dr Rogers later became known as an authority on Australian native orchids.

During the 1890's Rogers began accompanying her husband on his exploratory field trips as he developed a strong and consuming interest in native orchids. She was proud to claim that she was the first white woman to have travelled all the way around Kangaroo Island.

Jean Rogers worked with her husband to construct a herbarium at their Flinders Street, Adelaide City, home where they resided from 1891 to the mid 1920's. There they kept dried specimens of orchids some of them dating back to 1815. All the plants were arranged in their generic order and all were meticulously

described and many were, in later years, recorded in their natural colours by the artistry of Miss Rosa Fiveash.
Rogers and her husband discovered a large number of new species and travelled the country from Oodnadatta in the north to Mt Gambier in the south and across South Australia from east to west. In 1912 they went to Tasmania and did an orchid hunt across the island. Their private collection became one of the largest in Australia. She accompanied her husband as often as she could while not neglecting her teenage daughter and young son. She was gifted with what Dr Rogers described as 'an Orchid Eye' and soon became a close and enthusiastic assistant to Dr Rogers.

Of particular note, Rogers accompanied her husband to Western Australia in 1919 where they rediscovered all of R.D. Fitzgerald's 'lost' species of 1881 and they also discovered five new orchids. As a result of their WA trip, Jean Rogers' work was commemorated in the name *Drokaea jeanensis*.

In 1928 the couple described a new genus of Australian orchid - *Rhizanthella gardneri* - a remarkable orchid that flowered underground. The plant had first been found by a farmer in WA growing near the roots of honey myrtle. The farmer showed it to the local farm inspector who passed it to the agricultural college from where it was sent to Dr Rogers in Adelaide for identification.

On another occasion a specimen of the South African orchid, *Satyrium coriifolium*, was brought to their home from Victor Harbor, SA. It had been brought back by a soldier after the Boer War. Jean Rogers at once went to collect further specimens which she eventually found after a rain soaking day in a farm garden and in an adjacent paddock. It should be said that such gatherings, including the five new plants found during their 1919 trip, were rushed to the studio of Rosa Fiveash at North Adelaide where beautiful botanical paintings were completed preserving the natural colours of the flowers.

On one of the cards used by Dr Rogers in his herbarium index he wrote the following in honour and appreciation of his 'collaborator':
Rogers (nee Paterson), Jean Scott b. 14 March 1867.

"My wife is a very dear partner in my botanical joys. She has a keen eye and a super sense for an orchid habitat. An excellent pedestrian and a sheer love of 'the game'. She will go anywhere and risk everything for a capture or a find. She lacks the knowledge of botany as a science. However, she is an artiste, a soul with a great love for all plants and it has always been so since her childhood. She has collected with me in all Australian states except Queensland. Her natural instincts include a passion for music and she is an excellent and well-trained music critic. The specimens in my herbarium appear under our joint names as we invariably hunted as a couple."

Dr Richard Sanders Rogers died in Adelaide on 28 March 1942. Jean Scott Rogers later died in Adelaide on 18 April 1954.

(Written by Lauder R Scott Rogers, grandson, Sydney 2002)