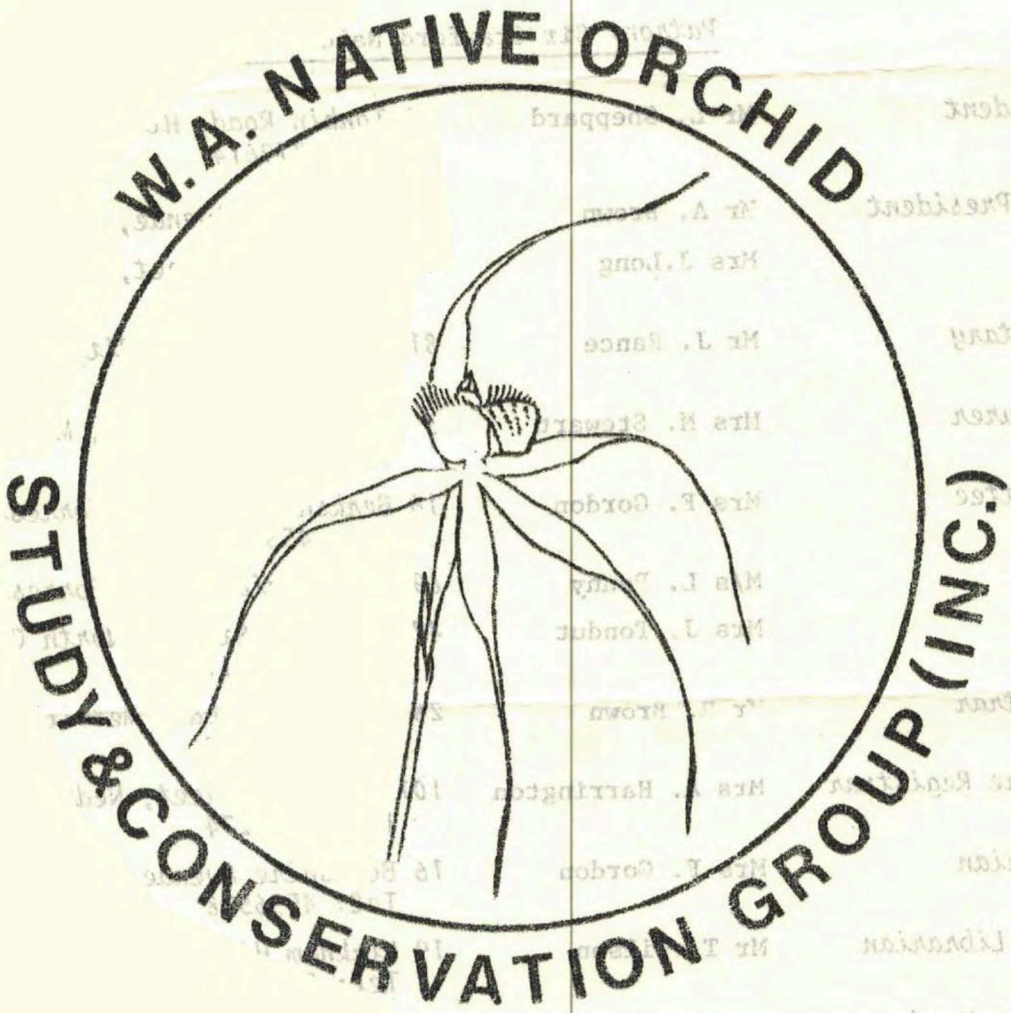
JULY 1979

OFFICIAL BULLETIN



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The next Committee Meeting will be held at Mrs A. Harrington's residence [redacted] on 31st July at 8.00pm

The next General Meeting will be held on Friday 3rd August at the Department of Agriculture Film Room, South Perth.

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FIELD DAY TO MOGUMBER - L. Sheppard

Sunday 1st July, middle of our winter, but we were blessed with a beautiful sunny day, which not only made our outing enjoyable but also to our advantage.

We were met at the starting point by members of the Swan Districts Camera Club making a convoy of ten cars, proceeding to Mogumber where we were met by Des Kruske, who was to act as guide from here on.

The first stop was typical "Queen of Sheba" country but it was very sparse of orchids - one plant in flower Leporella fimbriata leaves of Caladenia flava and Thelymitra species which I would venture to say would flower sometime in August to September.

We moved on to the second stop, here we found Drakaea species leaves and a colony of banded greenhoods.

By this time it was past the hour to eat but we decided to move on and then have lunch at the next search. This was to be the area where we hoped to find the "Queen of Sheba". The cars had hardly come to a standstill before the search was on. The hungry ones including myself settled down and had a good meal. Then by some method only known in the bush, (bush telegraph I think they call it) came the news that the "Queen of Sheba" had been found. (Thelymitra variegata). That started everyone into action, cameras, tripods,flashes, then up the hill to the find. It was one of the best specimens I have ever seen and beautifully arranged for photography, it was warm and sunny and therefore fully open to show off her beauty. There were other plants found one with five flowers and others that had formed seed, but were too immature to collect. This made our day successful and as I mentioned earlier, the weather to our advantage.

From here everyone went their separate ways. We continued on to the Brand Highway, stopping to search a burnt out area. This was also interesting - there were leaves of Leporella fimbriata, Thelymitra ?, Caladenia gemmata, Caladenia flava and I should imagine many others if a more thorough search was made, but they were as before very small.

In closing I would like to thank Des for his guiding and the Camera Club for their company.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Have you something to sell or is there something you wish to buy.

Why not advertise inside the back page of the monthly bulletin.

As a free service to members we will accept advertisements if received by 15th of each month. Please contact Mr L.Sheppard, [redacted]

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LYPERANTHUS SERRATUS - B. Stonor - Margaret River.

All orchids are fascinating of course, some more so than others as is only natural.

The genus Lyperanthus may be small, with only two reasonably common species in Western Australia but both these species have features which I for one consider very interesting.

Lyperanthus nigricans, the type species of the genus must be well known to most people, at least in the vegetative stage. It is abundant locally though flowers are seldom seen, being hard to find even after a fire. The name 'Potato orchid' used to be used rather than 'Red beaks', at least in the lower South West.

During the last few seasons several curious facts have been noticed concerning Lyperanthus serratus. The leaf for instance could hardly be more distinct from that of Lyperanthus nigricans being almost grass-like, though broad and erect. It is rather similar to the leaf of Lyperanthus suaveolens a species found in the Eastern States. This long, lanceolate leaf is easily recognisable, enabling the plants to be identified whether they are flowering or not. They are also, luckily for the plants, not a favourite with kangaroos and other fauna which create such havoc among the Caladenias and other genera. I have very seldom seen a leaf which has been nibbled, maybe they are too tough and fibrous, or simply do not taste nice.

In this area the plants are spread over the whole area where orchids of various other species are found, usually just one or two plants together, never forming a colony. Here we come to the first riddle. On a number of occasions I have noted the position of a good flowering plant and returned to the spot the following year, hoping to find another flower. In almost every case there has been no sign of a plant close to the one found the previous year. Sometimes there may be plants a few metres away but practically never in the same spot. It would almost seem that the species is monocarpic. Perhaps it would be possible to find out more about the manner of growth by cultivating a few plants, but I believe that Lyperanthus are difficult to grow.

Turning now to the flowers we find that the plants are inclined to be individualists compared with those of other genera. The inflorescence always comes up next to the lower surface of the leaf instead of the upper surface as in most of our orchids. This peculiarity is shown clearly in the illustration of this species in 'Orchids of the West'. I have never seen this point referred to in any book so maybe I am alone in thinking it strange. After all why should the plant develop a growth habit which is to its disadvantage? That it is in fact a disadvantage is shown by the plant itself, in nearly all cases the scape develops a twist to bring the actual flowers opposite the upper leaf surface.

During the spring of 1978 Lyperanthus serratus flowered unusually freely, being one of the few species to have increased in numbers in the last ten years or so. Two years ago there were a number of small plants of this species growing locally, far more than usual, so the plants flowering last year were presumably the survivors of these young plants. There must have been a very good season for seed a few years ago. Unfortunately much of the area on which the plants were growing was burnt very thoroughly last November and many plants must have been destroyed.

I cannot find any precise information concerning the pollinating agent for the species but insects, perhaps small native bees, are believed to be responsible. There is another query here, how many of these native bees and other insects are destroyed by the wholesale burning of all forest areas which would carry a fire as was the case last spring? Perhaps it is just a coincidence but in the adjacent Forest Department's reserve which covers a very large area, orchids are very scarce except near the edges on land adjacent to bush which is not burnt regularly.

SOME NOTES ON DENDROBIUM FALCOROSTRUM - L.Barton - Wauchope NSW

Journeying west from Wauchope one enters the Bellangry Forest Management Area, some 96,000 Ha of forest ranging from hardwood to softwood to rainforest. Approximately 800 Ha is all that remains of the Beech Rainforest.

Should the journey be made early in the morning the bird and animal life seen can be very rewarding. Menura superba or Superb Lyrebird is often seen scurrying into the dense undergrowth. Alectura lathami or Brush Turkey is another frequently observed foraging along the roadside. The nest of the brush turkey is a large mound measuring up to 4m wide x 1m high in which the eggs are deposited. Incubation is by heat generated by fermentation. The male bird controls the temperature by varying the thickness of leaf mould on top of the eggs. Many parrots, pigeons and doves can be found as well as the smaller heath and forest floor dwellers.

As the altitude increases a change in the forest becomes evident. Near the top of the range the tall eucalypts give way to a rain forest which includes the Nothofagus moorei (Niggerhead Beech) whose towering majesty is adorned by the beautiful Dendrobium falcorostrum (Beech orchid). Large numbers of the Beech trees are now dieing off, mainly due to age, and the huge clones of Dendrobium falcorostrum can be clearly seen etched against the skyline.

From August the dead limbs are transformed into masses of white as this prolific flowerer produces large sprays of that familiar bloom. On a still day the sweetness of their aroma can be quite overpowering.

In their natural habitat Dendrobium falcorostrum grows at a high altitude (over 800m) and usually quite high on the host. The entire area is frquently shrouded in mist or misty rain, and is predominantly cool. Mature plants usually have a mossy growth covering the roots and often the lower portion of the stem.

Two different plant forms are evident. One having a short stout stem that usually does not exceed 150mm is yellow in colour, grows predominantly on the exposed trunks and limbs. Often on the dead trees. The longer, more slender form has green stems and is found in the more shaded rain forest areas. Flowers appear the same on both forms.

For successful cultivation I feel that Dendrobium falcorostrum should be grown high in the shadehouse thus allowing good air circulation. In hot weather frequent light misting can be very beneficial. Plants do well either in a pot or growing on a timber host. Charcoal, sifted to remove all particles under 6mm, appears to be suitable for those who desire their plants in pots. Terra-cotta is very popular, preferably shallow.

Due to human depradations, this once common plant, will soon be extinct in its natural habitat unless orchid enthusiasts and environmentalists take action to have the Beech forests classified as National Parks.

TO KEEP IN MIND - L. Sheppard

Over the past few years there have been good discoveries of orchids, which we feared had become extinct and now the finding of the 'Underground Orchid' Rhizanthella gardneri proves the fact that the method is "keep the very rare orchids forever in the minds of members and adopt the saying of Seek and you shall find." There are still a few which members can keep in their minds while tramping the bush.

(1) Caladenia lavandulacea - Lavender Orchid.

It has been reported to have been found in sandy loam associated with red gum between York and Narrogin. A species approximately 250mm in height. Flowers lavender, petals and sepals have dark streaks with short clubbed tips, labellum on a slender claw and mobile with entire margins. The tip is blunt and recurved and dark purple with conspicuous radiating darker lavender lines, calli dark purple, compactly crowded and stalked.

(2) Caladenia triangularis

Reported to have been found at Wickepin, Highbury, Pingelly and flowers in September.
Dusky tipped petals and sepals, flowers single, cream with reddish brown lines, labellum clawed, with radiating red lines at the base, lateral lobes rather deeply combed, middle lobe triangular, shortly fringed or toothed, calli in two rows, orange and not extending beyond the middle.

Details of other rarities to watch for will be given in later bulletins.

References: Rica Erickson, Orchids of the West.