

W.A. NATIVE ORCHID STUDY

&

CONSERVATION GROUP

DECEMBER 1975.

PRESIDENT MR. H. B. FOOTE.

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TOPIC

The topic for November was given by Mr. Herb Foote, the subject, *Monadenia*, *Lyperanthus*, *Gastrodia*, *Spiculaea*. This talk was supported by slides which showed the peculiarity of these orchids.

Monadenia micrantha (monadaynya mikrunta)

Discovered in 1944 between Albany and Denmark, it was at first thought to be a native, but proved to be the Sth. African species. It was found to be most abundant on the roadsides. Described as an erect glabrous herb.

We found it near Capel and Manjimup last year and at Walpole this year. The tuber is not deep and likes moist conditions, plenty of humus and is easy to cultivate.

Lyperanthus (lypp-eruntoos)

From the Greek word *lyperos* (mournful) & *anthos* (flower). There are 12 species in this genus, 4 endemic to Australia, 1 to New Zealand and 7 to New Caledonia.

Lyperanthus nigricans RED BARKS - POTATO ORCHID - ELEPHANTS TONGUE OR BARKS.

Widespread from Geraldton right through the S.West of W.A. but seeming only (and not always) to flower after a fire. Alex Johnson recommends trying bonemeal in the compost to replace the ingredients that is lost and entice these to flower.

Nigricans is found in N.S.W. VIC. TAS & S.A. as well as W.A. The leaf is flat on the ground. It is also an easy one to transplant, not deep and has big tubers, but will damp off if kept too wet. W.H. Nicholls collected several albino specimens near MT. BARKER in 1948.

Lyperanthus serratus WHITE BARKS.

Found only in W.A.

Not as common as *nigricans*, but flowering more readily than it. The leaf is quite different to *nigricans* being upright, swordlike but ridged. It has a fairly large tuber and is not very deep, making it easy to transplant.

Lyperanthus forresti

Named after Lord Forrest the first premier of W.A. found in W.A. only in swampy country in the South. We saw some specimens at Walpole that had been collected between there and Greenbushes, many areas were searched without success, until Margaret Groves with some other members of the group found it near Lake Muir on the way home from Walpole.

Lyperanthus sauecolens

Meaning sweet smelling is found in the E.States only.

Gastrodia

From the Greek word *gaster* (a stomach) (*gustror-dya*).

This genus has 17 species and is distributed from Northern India, China, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. Australia has two species one confined to Nth. Queensland.

Gastrodia sesamoides (sesame-odes)

A leafless saprophytic herb. Has no leaves, no chlorophyll must rely on fungi to extract the necessary food for its existence from rotting material on the forest floor. This is said to be an advanced form of plant life - letting something do the processing work. It is called the Potato Orchid because of the large tuber, or Cinnamon Bells because of the spicy cinnamon perfume the bell shaped flowers give. The sepals and petals are joined together, the labellum being the only separate part. The Tasmanian natives roasted and ate the tubers.

Spiculaea (spick-co-lay-a)

Means having flowers on a spike and no doubt refers to the fact that at flowering time the plant is not conspicuous the spike of flowers being all that is seen.

Spiculaea ciliata (killee-ata)

Meaning bordered by hairs; is found only in W.A. The only two other species are found in the Eastern States. The genus is closely allied to *Drakea* & *Caleana*.

Called the ELBOW ORCHID the wings of the column are the elbows - the labellum being on top of the reversed flower. The stem dries from the base up, the lower flower opening first and have matured and cast its seed before the uppermost flowers begin to open, the fleshy stem supplies all the nutrient needed and no connection is required with the tuber which is often proved when wind will break the spike at the base and carry it away to another situation to complete it's cycle.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The Group have for some time been endeavoring to put into operation their main aim: that is conservation of our orchids. We must now report that our request have been taken up by: The Minister of Conservation, The Fisheries & Fauna Dept., T.V.W. Channel 7 and the Nedlands Shire.

The committee have inspected several lots and Mr. Herb Foote and several members are to meet Mr. Powell of the Fisheries & Fauna to inspect some A Class reserves which could be available. The committee will sieve through the reports and decide which is the best, the encouraging thought is that we will get our piece of land. Then it will become a united effort to make this project succeed.

The committee have nearly completed the drafting of the Constitution.

The November slide competition was won by Mr. Reg Lander With an excellent slide of *Praso. fimbria*. Reg & Dot are holidaying somewhere in the Hong Kong area as he has reported that the volume "Orchids of Australia" may be reprinted.

FIELD DAYS

The field day to Waroona - Yarloop did not reveal very much, except that the Sun Orchid was plentiful, but not out in flower. The *Corybas* was found in a pine plantation growing under a Blackboy.

Walpole on weekend of the 1st & 2nd. of November was an exceptional trip. Mr Terry Wilson and his daughter Annette were the host and guides. Terry and Annette have been combing this area for some time and they took the party to some of the beauty spots of Walpole, stately Karri trees, the picturesque coast and a waterfall deep in the karri forest and last, but not least a climb to the top of Mt. Frankland. The beauty spots were enjoyed by everyone, orchids were our main interest and we found many, even though we had to jump from tussock to tussock to find the beautiful *Thelymitra caniculata*.

This was Saturday and by night all was tired as some had only several hours sleep, Terry insisted that the party return to his place for tea. For his time and his hospitality in cooking tea for seventeen people, many thanks must be extended to him and Annette.

Sunday it was to head for home, but as usual the road home always seems to have frequent stops. It was decided to go through the back way to Lake Muir in search of *Lyperanthus forrestii*. On the western side of the lake, *L. forrestii* was found along with *Praso. fimbria* and *regium*, these plants were in the vicinity of 5-6 feet in height, the whole area was covered in orchids and in some patches anything up to 6 genera and species growing together.

It is a must that the story of the Gravel Shifters is told, as these incidents all help to make these trips different from the others.

This road was gravel, but quite a good one, and it is used extensively by log hauling trucks, so in places it was abit rough. Although warned of these patches it was not expected to find a truck load of gravel tipped in the middle of the road, naturally, the road workers came under criticism. This load was not too bad as the cars could drive over one side, this hazard negotiated it was to continue on only to find in the next dip in the road not one load of gravel, but two, right across the road with boggy swamp on either side. There was an urgent meeting called and the work programme set, out came the shovels to level one side, but out came the cameras too, mainly to record that the women did do their share. Once past this obstacle and continueing on, only to find that just over the next rise a grader heading towards the dumped gravel.

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It would be interesting to know the grader driver's thoughts when he saw the occupants of three cars shaking their fists at him on that lonely road on a lovely sunny Sunday morning.

After leaving the Lake it was to a swamp 7 miles north of Manjimup, then on to Greenbushes for *Monadenia micrantha*, one more stop for *Caleana* and *Drakea* on the south side of Donnybrook, then a straight run home.

THE OFFICE BEARERS AND THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO
TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WISHING ALL MEMBERS AND
ASSOCIATES A HAPPY ENJOYABLE NEW YEAR.
