

AND

CONSERVATION GROUP (INC)

APRIL 1977

NEWSLETTER

PATRON: Sir C. Nalder, K.B.

President : Mr H. Foote
Secretary : Miss L. Penny
Treasurer : Mrs D. Lander

The topic talk for April was given by Andrew Brown. This talk was supported by slides of the various species.

"Western Australian 'Pterostylis'

In W.A. we have 12 distinct species of *Pterostylis* or (Greenhoods) as they are commonly known. One of them '*Pterostylis rufa*' requires some revision as W.A. Types do not quite match those found in the Eastern States.

Three variations of this orchid exist in W.A. The first being found in the North from Moora to Kalbarri and inland, the second I collected from the 67mp Brookton Highway and the third is common in the Esperance region. All three are found in the drier parts of W.A. and will not be seen in the lower South West. In a dry season the rosette of leaves will often be found in a withered condition during flowering.

There is also a species of *Pterostylis* found in the Stirling Ranges which could be given a distinctive name. Though it is similar to *nana* (snail orchid), it has larger flowers and no rosette of leaves, also it can be found blooming nearly two months before the typical *nana* which grows in the same area.

Of the W.A. species, only four flower from a basal rosette of leaves. They are *Pterostylis nana*, *allantoidea*, *rufa* and *mutica*. Although the rest have a flowering plant which appears above ground without a rosette, rosettes do appear from non flowering tubers.

Pterostylis are among the easiest of our terrestrials to grow. However, they can be divided into two groups, one of which forms a number of tubers from a single plant.

Examples are *nana*, *robusta* and *angusta*.

The second group does not multiply as well in this way and must therefore rely on seed dispersal.

Examples are *barbata*, *recurva* and *rufa*.

The latter group, is the hardest of the two to grow and therefore requires more care. I have had the most success in a well drained pot containing an open mixture that I have kept moist but not saturated. Feeding with a liquid fertilizer does seem to increase the size of the plant.

In W.A. *Pterostylis* can be found flowering from June to November.

The first one seen is often *Pterostylis vittata* var *vittata* (The Cockatoo Orchid)

Like many of the other *Pterostylis* it has an extremely irritable lip which instantly moves up if touched. An insect having landed on the labellum is pushed up against the column and can only escape by squeezing past the stigma thus ensuring fertilization. Within half an hour the lip comes down again and is ready for another capture. *Pterostylis vittata* can be found as early as June but will flower into October in the lower South West.

"Pterostylis allantoidea (Shy greenhood) late August to Oct

I have only seen this orchid at the one location near Ravens-
thorpe, where it was found growing near a creek in dense
colonies under high scrub.

Apparently it is also found in a wide area of the inner
Wheatbelt, growing at the base of granite outcrops. Under
these conditions it receives a certain amount of runoff from
the rocks.

Pterostylis plumosa

Plumosa can be found all along the South coast from Augusta
to Esperance growing in a variety of conditions and at first
glance, can easily be mistaken for Pterostylis barbata,
however, it flowers much later (October to November) also
the labellum is far more hairy.

Pterostylis rufa (September to December)

Rufa is common throughout the Wheatbelt ranging from
Kalbarri in the north where it can often be found as early
as September to Esperance in the South East. In the latter
area, rufa can sometimes be seen as late as December."

..... A. Brown

Mrs Ettles of [redacted] donated to the Library 132 slides
which were a collection of slides taken by her late husband.

Robin Neave of Collie reported that he had found the three
species of Drakea, we have only recorded two species.

Mr Alex George has recommended that the Group should endeavour
to have a collection of dried specimens. To this was added a
talk by our Librarian, Mr Reg Lander, who asked members to press
the flowers, then send them onto him for mounting, but must
be accompanied by relative information. However, more will be
said in later editions of this newsletter.

The slide competition is on again. Graham Micrath has donated
films for this competition each month. A minimum of 10 slides
for judging, if there is insufficient slides, they will be held
over until the following month.