

V.A. NATIVE ORCHID STUDY  
and  
CONSERVATION GROUP (INC)

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1977

Patron: Sir C. Nalder K.B.

President: Mr H.E. Foote

Secretary: M/s Linda Penny

Treasurer: Mrs D. Lander

The item talk for August was given by Mr Harry Lodge on Caladenias, mainly on the process of lifting them and difficulties encountered in cultivation.

Five cars made the field trip on the 31st July and quite an interesting day was spent, as it was ideal weather for searching. Kelmscott was the target area, but the way to this area was found-a-bout. Wharton Road just past the Golf-course was the first area searched and here we found: Caladenia reptans, Caladenia deformis, Caladenia flava, Pteris barbata, Pteris recurva, Prasocarpus parvifolia, Diuris longifolia, Eriochilus scabra. Then through to Turner Road where Prasocarpus fimbria, Prasocarpus parvifolia Diuris longifolia and Caladenia deformis were found flowering. Further along and into Canning Mills Road, Acianthus reniformis, Thelymitra antennifera, Diuris longifolia and Caladenia deformis were all flowering. There were quite a few others that were coming up into bud.

Here is an article which has come to hand on Diuris (Donkey Orchid).

DIURIS or Donkey orchid as they are commonly known are amongst the most common orchids found in V.A. The name DIURIS - double tails - refers to the green sepals which protrude from under the labellum. While this is a feature of the orchid the common name has been adopted because of ear like petals. The flowers of the V.A. species are predominately yellow in colour.

#### DIURIS longifolia

This extremely variable species is the most common and widespread of the Western Diuris and also has the longest flowering period, ranging from July for the Darling Range type to Nov. for the purple coloured South Coast type.

#### DIURIS laevis

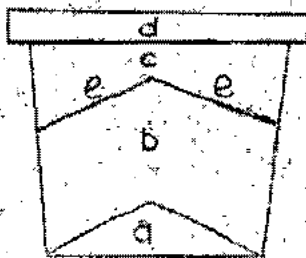
Laevis is very similar to PURDIEI another West Aust. Diuris, but is lighter in colour and has much larger column wings, also it is found only near the South Coastal plain, where as PURDIEI is common on the coastal plain near Perth. Both grow in similar conditions, adjacent to swamps which are wet through-out winter and flower in Oct, Nov. Both these DIURIS require a burn of environment to induce flowering.

#### POT CULTURE

This article was submitted by Simon Charton, but includes an article by Mr R.C. Nash of South Australia.

Growing Terrestrial Orchids by R.C. Nash

Mr Nash is leader of the Native Orchid Study Section. The following is based on his experience with orchids in South Australia.

Growing Terrestrial Orchids (cont)

- (a) Broken Pot Limestone pieces  
 (b) Sand coarse or fine washed must not hold large amount of water or be capable of staying damp.  
 (c) Sand sawdust mixture  
 (d) Sawdust top band.  
 (e) Appr. position of tubers

Potting mixtures

- (1) The following methods have proved successful for *Pteroc. curta*, *Pteroc. pedunculata*, *Pteroc. cuculata*. Areas b & c to be proportioned 20-30% sand 70-80% sawdust. *Pteroc. nutans* prefer this method, but more shade.  
 (2) *Pteroc. robusta*, *alata*, *Acianthus exertus* and *reniformis*, *Diuris maculata* and *palustris*. Area b 70-80% sand and 20-30% sawdust. (c) 50% sand and sawdust. *Diuris brevifolia* prefers this treatment also but must be kept damper in early summer. *Corybas dilatatus* and *C. diemenicus* also like this treatment if the pots are kept in a well shaded cool damp location.  
 (3) *Caladenia latifolia*. Area (b) 100% sand (c) 80% + 20% sawdust.  
 (4) *Pteroc. barbata*, *mutica*, *vittata*, *cynocephala*, *pusilla* *longifolia*. Areas (b) & (c) good washed sand. Allow sawdust on top to rot down into sand, replenish every three years only. *Caladenia cardiochila* and *C. filamentosa -tentaculata* prefer this no. 4 mixture, but should be planted in a cluster.

During summer remove about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of top soil from pots and fill to top with new sawdust.

.....This article appeared in Australian Plants, March 1965. P.72 V.3

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Since 1965 many nurseries have discontinued using sawdust for as it decays it depletes the soil of Nitrogen. This can be replaced by the application of Sulphate of Ammonia. I use one teaspoon to a gallon plus another teaspoon of garden lime in the same gallon of water, to counteract the natural acidity of Sulphate of Ammonia. The short term results seem very promising, one application each year at the beginning of the growing season should be sufficient.

Instead of Sawdust there are a number of substitutes:

Vermiculite: hold large amounts of water and nutrients

Polyethylene: low to moderate holding properties - good for aeration.

Perlite: absorbs little water good for aeration

..... S. Charlton

POINTS OF INTEREST

The Group is to start a seed and tuber bank, but this will take a little time to organise and get a bank.

There is to be a busy-bee at [redacted] on the 7th Aug. to complete our conference stand, and the exhibit for the Royal Show. "All the more hands make light work."

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Congratulations to Andrew and Charmaine, a son and heir. I believe he is making his presence felt.

We require helpers for setting up the Sheraton for the Orchid Conference, those who can help can contact the president. Setting up 11th September at 10 am.

There are some very good books in the library which members may use, Reg Lander is the Librarian.

We welcome 3 new members into our Group and we may not see them but hope that our association with them will be a pleasure:

Mrs B.E. Hall  
[redacted]

R. Bates  
[redacted]

Mr Arthur (Will) S.E. Chanty  
[redacted]

Raffle for August is a book donated by Mrs Rance 'Wildflowers of Western Australia'. This is a very good book and a must in a wildflower library.

September Raffle: Mrs Ruth Bishop is donating a cake for the raffle. I have tasted Ruth's cooking, so I have good grounds to recommend whatever comes along.

Royal Show setting up 22nd Sept (Thurs)

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