

WATERBURY ORCHID SOCIETY
AND
CONSERVATION GROUP (INC)

OCTOBER 1987

MEMBERS

Patron: Sir C. Nelson K.B.

President: Mr R.E. Poole
Secretary: Mrs L. Penny
Treasurer: Mrs B. Lander

FIELD DAYS for NOVEMBER:

5th & 6th - Meet at the roundabout Albany at Ip. on the
5th.

27th - Meet at the shop on Forrest & Nicholson Rds,
Jandakot.

Mr Andrew Brown gave the October meeting talk on THELYMITRA species supported by very good slides.

There are some 50 species of THELYMITRA, the majority in East, Western Aust. has approximately 20 and perhaps more. So in the West we have over a third of the known species of THELYMITRA.

Though they are commonly known as Sun Orchids, heat rather than sunlight induces the flowers to open. This is demonstrated when specimens will open in the heat of a car or when in a heated room, some species require more heat than others and in fact one self-pollinating form (PAUCIFLORA) will rarely, if ever, open.

In W.A. THELYMITRA can be found in a variety of habitats and also have a wide distribution. Most species, however, are found in or near swamps or other wet areas. THELYMITRA cornicina, ocullata and nuda, for instance, favour swamps in the lower South West. T. variegata favours well drained sandy soils on the coastal plains, ornata grows in a variety of conditions, but is often found at its best in the gravelly soils of the Darling Ranges. Thely. nuda complex can be found almost anywhere from swamps to comparatively dry areas in the wheatbelt. Perhaps the two most common are antennifera and nuda, these species extend well inland and can be found growing in large numbers at the base of granite rocks, where they receive a certain amount of run-off. Last week I saw these species growing South of Cockleford at Queen Victoria Rocks.

As in many other native orchids, the flowering date of Thelymitra vary greatly depending on distribution. Antennifera can be found as early as July in the foothills of Kelmscott or as late as October in areas such as Cranbrook and Mt Barker.

Many species of orchids can be identified by the shape of the leaf when in bud, or after the flowers have finished. In W.A. we have 3 basic leaf shapes of Thelymitra. The first is a short broad leaf as in crinata, villosa and fuscolutea. The second is an onion like leaf, which can vary in size depending on the species in the case of nuda it can grow to over 12 ins and become quite broad. The third type is the spiral shaped leaf of variegata, mathewii and spiralis.

I have not tried growing many THELYMITRA, however, by observing the few pots of Thelymitra nuda group and variegata, I would say that you must be extremely careful not to rot the tubers or leaf. Thelymitra are prone to fungus attack and suggest that you grow in a mix which drains easily. Just plain sand with a leaf mould topping would suffice. Grow the plants fairly dry, so as to avoid fungus attack and help prevent rotting and spray with a fungicide, such as Benlate once a month..

As the October meeting was the evening before the long weekend & a field trip was organised there were not many plants on display however, there were some of the Pterostylus rufa group on display and one plant of an Eastern States variety of Diuris Diuris.

Members had a busy day at Herb Poole's place early in the year. This was to make up a display stand for the 5th Australian Orchid conference and also a display stand for the Royal Agricultural Show. The shows have now passed and the work that the members put into these displays - resulted in a Gold medal for the Orchid Conference and 7th place and \$50 from the Royal Show with possibly more to come. The President wishes to thank all those members who assisted in making these shows a success.

In recent times it has been the practice of the Forest Dept. and shire councils to burn forest areas in the winter or early spring leaving tracts of forest areas in a blackened and burnt state. This practice may conserve the trees, but it is destroying the smaller growth, not only that, we advertise the wildflowers as a tourist attraction, and in a lot of places in and around Perth there are just blackened forests.

But there is some hope that this situation may change. The Mundaring Shire Council passed a resolution at a meeting to refrain from burning off in this period, which is when our wildflowers should be at their best.

Hollywood Reserve is at a stand-still at the present, Mick Lopez, Bob Lander, Dave Emery and Jian Long are still doing their share, but are putting out a plea for more help from members. So anyone who can help with the weeding etc. please help.

The raffle for October was a Cymbidium Orchid donated by Andrew Brown. This was won by Harry Goodchild.

The Prize for the December meeting was on display - tickets are now available.

We recently had a short trip on the Lakes-York Road. This was very interesting as we found GEMATA flowering and the colour ranged from white, blue and yellow, but in different areas. Further along the road in a Fauna reserve CALADENA dilatata, THELYMITRA villosa, ELYANTHERA brunosis were flowering.

Andrew Brown and myself returned to Salmon Gums to collect specimens and associated brush and scrub cover in the area where CALADENA cristata, they were still flowering and we brought back the relevant information for Alex George. This trip covered the area Coolgardie - Salmon Gums, Esperance, Cranbrook, Frankland then home. The section Perth - Coolgardie - Norseman was very dry and dusty. South of Coolgardie at Queen Victoria Rocks, which is a mammoth granite rock approx 17 miles long by 1/2 mile wide and about 150 ft high we found quite a few orchids at the edge of the rock, but away from the rock there was nothing. This is understandable as at the edge it was quite damp owing to the runoff, away from the rock it was very dry.

When we headed south we ran into rain at Norseman, that was the end of the dry section, as we had rain practically right through to home.

The swamp at the 313 mile peg THELYMITRA nuda and antennifera were in full bloom.

The Phillips River area has had a massive burn and we found CALADENA barbarossa growing and flowering in great numbers.

Fitzgerald River, was an interesting spot, here we found CALADENA dilatata, pattersonii, radialis, multiclavia, THELYMITRA antennifera and nuda.

From there we were into Filamentosa country and these were varied in colour.

Ray Brown



7 Dec.

13 Nov.

Weeding day.