

of the

Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group (Inc.)

June 1986

OFFICE BEARERS 1986 Mrs J Holmes a'Court . Patron: President: Kingsley Dixon Kings Park & Botanic Gardens, West Perth, 6005 John Tonkinson Vice President: Immediate Past President: Noel Clark Stephen Van Leeuwin Secretary : Treasurer: Lionel Johnston Field Trip Co-ordinator: Sid Gibbings Stephen Hopper Registrar/ Field Cultivation K Jones Editor : Bevan Buirchell Librarian: Committee Members: Don Graham

Wayne Merritt

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Note:

Opinions expressed by contributors to this Bulletin are not specifically endorsed by the Group.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN NATIVE ORCHID STUDY & CONSERVATION GROUP

OBJECTS OF THE GROUP:

- a. To promote interest in and preserve Western Australian indigenous orchids.
- b. To learn the best means of cultivation and do all things possible for the conservation of native orchids in their natural environment.
- c. To learn their habitats and keep records.
- d. To have field days and learn to recognise the different genera and species.
- e. To hold meetings for the exchanging of knowledge and furthering of interest in Western Australian orchids.
- f. To affiliate with kindred organizations.
- g. To make rules for the governing of the Group's domestic affairs.
- h. To do all such other lawful things as are incidental to or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

18 June 1986 at 7.00 pm Kings Park Administration Building

NEXT GENERAL MEETING:

18 June 1986 at 8.00 pm Kings Park Administration Building

Topic:
1) Rod Peakall will present a fascinating movie detailing pollination events in some W A orchids. This is a must as the photography is superb.

2) On behalf of Dr Pierre MILON of Paris, France, Kingsley Dixon will present an "Introductions to the orchids of the southern mediterranean basin".

FEES Now due - \$10 per family.

MAY PLANT DISPLAY

Orchid Grower

- 1) Pt. angusta W. Merritt
- C. aphylla (leaf W. Merritt only)
- 3) Pt. scabra robusta S. Gibbings
- 4) Pt. vittata subdifformis
- R. Heberle

Comments

Potted 3 yrs - original soil Potted 3 yrs - original soil

Potted 5 yrs - original soil Five flowering plants (inc 2 double headers) and five seedlings originally 2 plants. Potted 2 yrs.

FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIP

To be held on Saturday June 21st, to search in the Lancelin/ Ledge Point area for the early Queen of Sheba Orchid, Thelymitra variegata var apiculata.

This is a one day excursion meeting at 10.00 am at the entrance to Yanchep National Park (the left turn off Wanneroo Road).

Please call the Field Trip Co-ordination, Sid Gibbings, on for further details and car-pooling for this trip.

Hope to see you there.

FIELD TRIP REPORT - Walpole - 25th-26th April

NUYTS WILDERNESS. Dianne and I did a five hour trek from Tinglewood to Thompson Cove, Aldridge Cove and return. The vegetation ranged from Karri forrest to coastal scrub. ERIOCHILUS DILATATUS was found the to within 200 metres of the ocean. CRYPTOSTYLIS OVATA (in seed) was common around peppermint trees. CALADENIA APHYLLA and PRASOPHYLLUM PARVIFOLIUM (south coast form) were both in full flower wherever casuarinas occurred. A surprise was PTEROSTYLIS VITTATA in full flower. The foliage appeared to be more like PTEROSTYLIS ANGUSTA or SARGENTII than VITTATA as we know of it around Perth metro. This orchid was once described as PTEROSTYLIS VIRIDIFLORA but currently called VITTATA VAR VITTATA.

Mt Frankland

An interesting sighting was approximately 70 ERIOCHILUS DILATATUS growing on a decaying log and in full bloom.

Eaton - 18 May

Found some early flowers of PTEROSTYLIS ANGUSTA, PT VITTATA var VITTATA and PT SCARBR var ROBUSTA. However, most were in bud.

W. Merritt

FIELD TRIP REPORT - Dowerin - Moonijin Excursion - 31 May-2 June

All the ingredients were present for a great weekend searching for the underground orchid - warm, sunny days, an enthusiastic turnout and an excellent local guide. All that was lacking was our elusive underground friend, Rhizanthella gardneri.

The drive to our base camp at Dowerin is some 150 km and most travelled by the Toodyay route which traverses the Avon Valley and some very scenic countryside. En-route, members noted a number of familiar early flowering species. These included

Continued

Eriochilus dilatutus (in flower and seed), near-blooming
Pterostylis vittata,
Number of Caladenia species. Most orchid plants were
growing well for the time of the year reflecting the excellent
'season break' experienced throughout the wheatbelt this year.

Base camp was the home of Rod Randall and most members (except A Brown!) arrived promptly around noon on the first day.

The lunch stop was at the farm of Wally Shankland who unlike many of his farming colleagues has left sizeable areas of his property as virgin bushland. Given that nearly 98% of the Shire of Dowerin is cleared, Wally Shankland's place was not only a valuable relict of once common vegetation type for the region, but also provided some excellent Malaleuca uncinata country. Again the usual repertoire of early species (E.d., P.v., P.s.) with the addition of two 'headless' winter spider orchids (Caladenia drummondii). By dusk the group had scratched and scraped wide and far searching in vain for Rhizanthella. The day concluded with a brief stop at the locality of a soon to be described Dryanadra species. This unusual plant was growing in a yellow sandy soil over laterite.

That night a hearty country-style meal was had in the delightful Commercial Hotel in Dowerin. Members later retired to base and discussed the day's proceedings and orchids over a couple (? of dozen so it sounded?) of ports.

Next morning the group departed for the laterite escarpment visited briefly the previous day. Much searching again revealed the ubiquitous P. vittata and P. sargentii and possibly some plants of P. scabra var scabra.

The party then moved to a nearby Wildlife Reserve where <u>Caladania drummondii</u> was in bloom. Several plants of <u>Thelymitra sargentii</u> were also found. It is proposed that a revisit be made to this reserve in spring to further investigate what could be an interesting orchid flora. Next stop was Moonijin, an early location of <u>Rhizanthella</u>. This was a particularly fruitless stop as no orchids were recorded. Last <u>Rhizanthella</u> stop for the day was to some superb <u>Melaleuca uncinata</u> thickets nearby Manmanning siding. Hopes were high but the thirst for orchids was only partially quenched by the exciting discovery of some 8 C. drummondii.

Lunch was had at Uberin Rock - an enormous granite monolith. This site was typical of most undisturbed wheatbelt rocks but was on a very grand scale. Ample evidence of a rich orchid flora was seen in leaves of Spiculaea, Thelymitra antennifera, Diuris sp and a number of Pterostylis species. Eriochilus as always was abundant.

The remainder of the day was spent in the southern part of the Shire looking at rare species. The most interesting was a population of the very rare Wongan Cactus (<u>Daviesia euphorbioides</u>).

Continued

This eggs-and-bacon type pea produces unusually plump stems not unlike some cacti or succulent species.

The group split at this point with the majority returning to Perth. However, a number stayed on at Dowerin and travelled to Babakin the next day. Here 8 specimens of Rhizanthella were found and provided the uninitiated with a glimpse of this most fascinating orchid.

Although the underground orchid elluded discovery in new sites this time the chance to see some late autumn orchids was appreciated by all.

Many thanks to our host and to the following members whose support made this trip such an enjoyable occasion:

Pat Dundas
Maria Gowdy
Lionel Johnston
Don and Sally Graham
Peter Gee
Ken and Glen Jones
Bevan and Margaret Buirchell
Andrew Brown
Rod Peakall
and last but not least
Greg and Mary Bussell who travelled from
Margaret River for the weekend.

Many thanks to all, and see you on the next trip.

Kingsley Dixon

VARIATIONS IN W A TERRESTRIAL ORCHIDS

The May meeting talk was presented by one of our country members, Mr Ron Heberle. Ron, a knowledgeable orchidologist and instigator of many controversial observations, gave an impressive talk on the variations within species in W A terrestrial orchids. In his introduction Ron gave his audience an insight into his own enthusiastic pursuit of terrestrials in W A. Ron observed that our terrestrials are unique and that in the last four years more knowledge had been collected about them than in the previous forty years. One of the problems facing both amateur and professional orchidologists is the variation within species and the differentiation of hybrids from new species.

Ron began with variations he had noted in his many years of wandering the highways and byways of Western Australia. First up he presented some beautiful colour variants of Thelymitra spiralis - from blue to pink forms. He suggested that if one looks hard enough one will always find the spotted variation

Continued

within clumps of the non-patterned occurred in column structure and segment size. The most impressive slide was one of an orangy-red specimen found in the inland region which had previously been assumed to be a hybrid between T. Spiralis and T. antennifera. However, Ron contended that it was only a colour variant of the former. Another interesting specimen found between Katanning and Boyup Brook had a yellow base to the segments and Ron took the bull by the horns and suggested it may be a link between T. spiralis and T. variegata.

The <u>T. variegata</u> variants were stunning. This orchid is most attractive and any attempt to describe the blending of colours in the several variants would fall short of the beauty that appeared on the screen. Ron did note that this orchid was once found in abundance in the metro area before expansion of the suburbs destroyed the woodlands of the coastal plain. This is a great loss to us all.

Prasophullums were viewed next. There are twenty named species in W A and probably five or six unnamed species. Even though prasophyllums are the largest orchids in W A they are the hardest to identify. Variants and hybrids are even more difficult to differentiate, Ron ran through the variants he had seen in Pr. brownii, Pr. elatum, Pr. fimbria, Pr. macrostachym, Pr. gibbosum, Pr. hians, and Pr. regium. There were numerous colour variants and subtle changes in segment length and shape. Another controversy arose over the correct name for Pr. giganteum, or is it as Ron suggested Pr. grimwadeanum. Hybrids between prasophyllums are numerous due to cross fertilization by non-selective and very mobile wasps. Ron showed his audience three prasophyllums he considered were previously undescribed and which required professional investigation. The one found near Ongerup will be visited by the group on a field trip in late September. A small pink species was found near Hyden while the other unnamed prasophyllum was found in the Albany area.

With time running out, Ron flashed through another cartridge of slides on some interesting variants and hybrids of Caladenias and Drakaeas. Some of the Drakaeas, found between Katanning and Boyup Brook had intriguing differences in labellum shape, spotiness and hairiness and deserve further investigation by the group.

Over all, an impressive photographic journey through some of W A 's most beautiful terrestrial orchids. Ron pointed out the difficulties - even for the botanists - of differentiating between species, intra species variants and hybrids. The take home message from this talk for those discerning orchidologists was that a quick glance at an orchid may give you a superficial appreciation of its beauty but closer attention may reveal a subtle and exciting variant - or even a new species. You never know - a variant to you may be a new species to Steve or Andrew. They can't have seen all the orchids in W A.

Bevan Buirchell

ORCHIDS OF THE KIMBERLEY REGION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (1)

K.W. Dixon

Over future issues of the bulletin it is proposed to describe in some detail the dozen known species of orchids from W.A.'s tropical north.

This issue will examine the genus Habenaria, and in detail H. elongata.

Habenaria is a genus of many species found throughout tropical and temperate regions of the world. Australia possesses 17 species of which 14 are endemic.

The genus is exclusively terrestrial possessing vegetative and floral features not unlike European and North American genera such as Orchis and Dactylorhiza The flowers are distinctive in being usually cream or white, held in spikes with each bloom usually possessing a prominent nectary sour which is an elongation of the labellum. The anther is 2-celled and separated often on either side of the capillary-like opening to the spur. Most species have a 3-lobed labeleum which is often large and flamboyant as in the Indonesian species H. suzannae. Pollinators vary but butterflys and moths often visit blooms in search of the nectar reward real or imagined.

Leaves are 1-4 (sometimes many) grey-green, borne at or near ground level. As most species are herbaceous perennials the leaves die-off each dry season the plant hibernating by means of familiar spherical or top-shaped tubers.

W.A.'s three species are confined to the West Kimberley and are only recorded from the Mitchell Plateau and environs. All emerge from winter dormancy in December, flowering mid-January through February. The performance of individual plants is very much dependent on rainfall brought to the downpours.

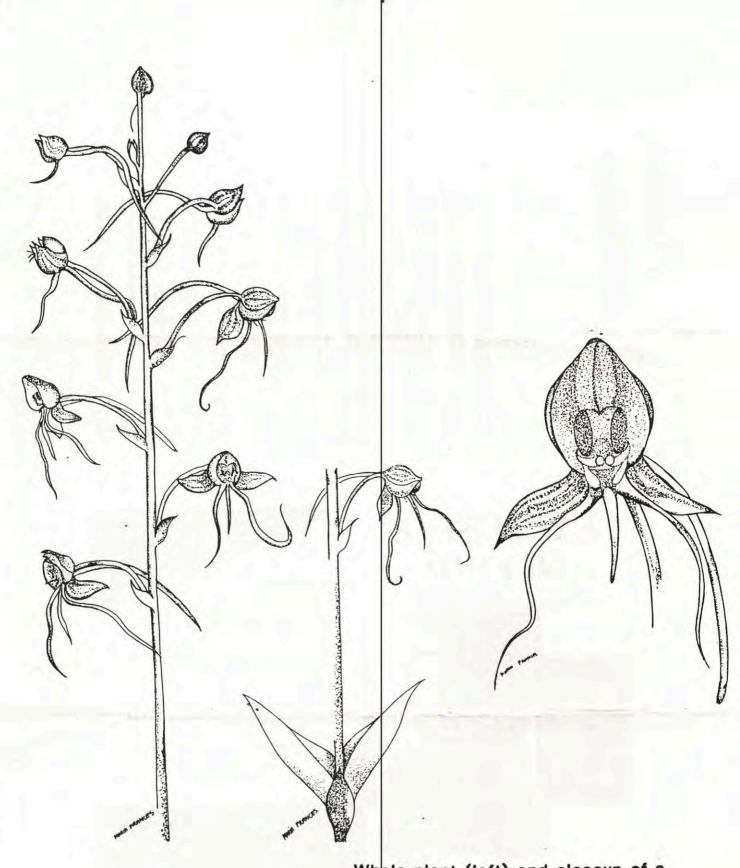
A detailed description of the most beautiful of W.A.'s Habenaria's follows:-

H. elongata:

Widespread but not common though a conspicuous species upto 30cm tall. The nectary spur and greatly elongated lobes of the labell um tend to give the plant a spider-like appearance not unlike many Caladenias, making it one of the most easily recognisable species. The erect and stout scape produces between 10-20 flowers, each bloom remaining open for 2-3 weeks. It is not uncommon to find the entire inflorescence in fresh bloom. H. elongata favours basaltic, loamy or lateritic soils which are free draining. Grows in eucalypt woodland to open savanna though occasional specimens may be found growing on rock ledges and in crevices along water courses. Pollinators have not been observed in this species and very few capsules have been observed on wild plants. Occasionally a plant may produce a vegetative daughter plant though this occurs more so in damper locations.

Cultivation is unknown. Plants are presently being grown from seed and tubers collected by Kings Park and Botanic Gardens in 1986. This is the most desirable of all native Habenaria's to grow and would be a worthwhile addition to any collection especially in view of its flowering time which coincides with a paucity of flowering amongst south west species.

POST SCRIPT: information has just been received indicating that H. elongata in W.A. is H. triplonema



Whole plant (left) and closeup of a flower (right) of Habenaria elongata

Merch,

EXCLUSIVE

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The Australasian Native Orchid Society

Western Australian Mative Orchid Study & Conservation Group, Monorary Secretary, Mr. S. Yan Leewin, P.O. Son 323. Victoria Park, W.A. 6100.

Deer Secretary.

Our bulletin exchange programme continues to work successfully and I then your Group for its co-operation. I have enclosed a couple of copies of the current smiling list and it is supposted that one copy be placed in your vaccous and the other passed onto your Group's Editor. Please check that the inderesses to which you are presently sanding your bulletin are correct. One new Group, ANDS Gold Coast Group, is now a mamber of our organisation, so please make sure this address is added to your smiling list.

I have compiled the current list from recent bulletins and from letters advising results of recent Group elections. However, there are still a few blank spaces in the list and I would like Group Secretaries to write and advise me of the relevant details. Also, if there are errors in the list as it stands, please let me know so they can be corrected.

Lest menth I received a letter from ANCS Berling Bouns Group asking about the possibility of members from other ANCS Groups, who may be visiting or passing through the Touscomba area, acting as guest speakers at their menthly meetings. Although this suppostion was intended for Derling Downs Group, it is an excellent proposal which deserves consideration from all Groups. I know my own Group, ANCS Sydney Group, has, in the past, benefited greatly from the visits of quest speakers from other ANCS Groups, and it would be wonderful if such visits could be arranged for all Groups on a regular, or at least frequent, basis.

It would be appreciated if you could raise this matter at your next meeting. I expect it would be impractical to arrange any kind of formal reciprocal agreement between Groups, so perhaps it would be better left to individually, with regular runninders at monthly meetings. If any of your number are planning trips only, then encourage them to contact other regional Groups and offer their services as youst species. Should such ambiers feel unexty and offer their services as youst species. Should such ambiers feel unexty about approaching control from alone, I am sure Group Secretaries would be more than happy to arrange a more formal Group to Group introduction by letter or by them happy to arrange a more formal Group to Group introduction by letter or by phone. Even if visiting members feel they would not like to commit themselves to speaking, they would certainly be made welcome simply as visitors.

are united by a common interest, namely, Australian Native Orchids, and the interaction between members of different Groups, on a face to face basis, can only be of benefit to all concerned.

I thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of your

Yours stacerely. liea Hi Hichael Harrison, Honorary Secretary.

P.S. Please do not ferent Barling Downs

ANOS Mollongong Group. Monorary Secretary. Mrs. V. Stackton. 12 Deakin Street. Ook Flats. MSM 2529. Ph 042 664228

Marts on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in Marting Room, Mallongong Town Mall, corner Crown and Kamble Streets, Mallongong, at 7.00 p.m.

Postal Address: as above

AMOS Victorian Group, Monorary Secretary, Nr. D. Smith, 6 Baccon Court, Lewer Templestowe, Victoria 3107.

Ph. 63 8508624

Mosts on the 1st Friday of each month in the Matienal Merbarium, Royal Botonic Gardens, Melbourne, at 8.00 p.m.

Postal Address: as above

ANDS Bass Group, Honorary Secretary, Mrs. G. Smith, R.D. 783, Kindred, Tasmenia 7310 Ph. 004 293198

Meets on the last Thursday of each 2nd month in Room 156, Ulverstone High School

Postal Address: as above

Mescern Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group, Monorary Secretary, Mr. S. Van Leounin, 18 Jennings May, Locaridge, M.A. 6064. ... O9 3781278

Merts on the 3rd Mednesday of each month in Kings Park Board Adminis-tration Centre, Freser Ave. Kings Park.

Postal Address: P.O. Sox 323, Victoria Park, W.A. 6100

Native Orchid Society of South Australia Homorary Secretary, Mr. W.K. Harris,

Ph. 06 2782917

Meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month in St. Matthews Mall, 67 Bridge Street, Kensington.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 565, Unley, S.A. 5061

Rative Orchid Society of Queensland, Honorary Secretary, Mrs. J. Crane, 17 Rylatt Street, Indoormopilly, Qld. 4068. 07 3762881 Meets on the 1st Monday of each month at Bread House, 49 Gragory Terrace, Brisbane, at 6.00 p.m. Postal Address: P.O. Box 159, Broadway, Qld. 4006.

ANOS Dar ing Downs Group, Honorary Secretary, Nr. R. Knowski, 24 Gloucester Crescent, Toowoomb, Q1d. 4350. Ph. 076 358627

Heets on the 3rd Friday of each month at the Technical and Further Education Centre, Old Empire Theatre, Heil Street, Toowoombs, at 7.30 p.m. Postal Adress: P.O. Bux 5141, Toowoombs, Qld. 4350.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 582, Palm Beach, 014, 4221

ANOS Gol coust Group, Monorary Secretary, Mr. G. Topping.

ANOS Far North Coast Group, Honorary Secretary, Mr. V. Janetski, 7 Eversham Drive, Nodamvil e Heights, MSM 2480. Ph. 066 282123

Meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at Ballina High School, Burnett Street, Ballina, at 7.30 p.m. Postal Acress: as above

ANOS Newcastle Group, Honorary Secretary, Nr. L. Field, 9 Ashley Street, Blackell's Park, HSM 2283. Ph. 049 594023

Meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at John Young Community Centre, Thomas Street, Cardiff

Postal Address: as above

ANOS Central Coast Group, Honorary Secretary, Mrs. D. Johnston, 158 Geoffrey Road, Chittaway Point, NSM 2259.

Ph. 043 681785 Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Baptist Church Hall, corner of York and Frederick Streets, East Gostord, at 8.00 p.m. Postal Address: as above.

ANOS Warringah Group, Honorary Secretary, Mr. T. Carter, 27 McCarr's Creek Road, Church Point, NSW 2105. Ph. 02 994073

Meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Thomas Yicar Memorial Hall, corner of Pitt and Grainger Roads, North Curl Curl, at 8.00 p.m.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 524, Dee Why, MSW 2099.

ANOS Sydney Group, Monorary Secretary, Mrs. J. Hamel, 10/2 Durthan Close, Morth Ryde, MSW 2113. Ph. 02 8885936

Reets on the Trd friday of each month at Lady Game Community Centre, Lady Game Drive, Lindfield, at 8.00.

Postal Address: as above

ANOS Port Hacking Group, Honorary Secretary, Mr. R.G. Napier, 12 Laguna Street, Caringbah, MSM 2229. Ph.

Meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at Community Hall, Gymea Bay Road, Gymea at 8.00 p.m.

Postal Address: as above



ORCHIDS AUSTRALIA '86

NEWS RELEASE NO 5 APRIL 1986

G.P.O. Box 730. Adetaide, South Australia 5001 Phone (06) 258 3968

TENTH AUSTRALIAN ORCHID CONFERENCE and INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW Adelaide, South Australia, September 17 - 24, 1986 Hosted by THE ORCHIO CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

Raffle Roster

June.. Val Preston.

July.. J. Tonkinson.

Aug... R. Stapledon.

Supper Roster

June .. J. St. Jack.

July .. Pat Dundas.

Aug... Marie Pickersgill.

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41 GARDNER ST., COMO, 6152

Mr A Brown

POSTAGE

GPO 6000

Field Trips 1986

June. 21 st. Thel. variegata Ledge Point.

Aug. 23rd. & 24th. Corybas Northcliffe.

Sept. 7th. Corybas Busselton.

Sept. 27th. 28th. 29th. L.W.E. Thel. psammophila

Jerramungup.

Dec 6th. & 7th. Late Caladinias Northcliffe.