

# BULLETIN

OF THE

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NATIVE ORCHID STUDY AND CONSERVATION GROUP (INC)

September 1994

OFFICE BEARERS PHONE PATRON Dr Stephen Hopper PRESIDENT John Eaton VICE PRESIDENT Andrew Brown VICE PRESIDENT Steve Phillips **IMMEDIATE** Joan Biddle PAST PRESIDENT SECRETARY Noel Clarke TREASURER Minna George REGISTRAR & EDITOR Chris French LIBRARIAN Tony Lock **AUDITOR** Anna Brunnbauer COMMITTEE Bill Burton Jean Long Joni Eaton John Arends **OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP** 

- 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 environments.
- 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 exchange of knowledge and furthering of interest in Western Australian orchids.
- f. To affiliate with kindred organisations.
- 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 conductive to the attainment of the above objectives.

NOTE: The opinions expressed by contributors to this bulletin are not specifically endorsed by the group.

POSTAL ADDRESS OF GROUP PO Box 323 Victoria Park 6100

# CHANGE 70 MEETING VENUE



Please note that due to prior arrangements made by Kings Park Board, the normal meeting place in the Kings Park Administration Centre is not available to the group for this month or for October. Arrangements have been made for an alternative meeting place to be used. This will be the Kings Park Education Centre. The Education Centre is under the



lookout. opposite our normal venue. Access to the Education Centre is also from Fraser Avenue. If you turn up at the usual meeting place, then you will be in the wrong place!





NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING -Wednesday, 21 September 1994 at 7.00 p.m., Kings Park Education Centre.



NEXT GENERAL MEETING -Wednesday, 21 September 1994 at 8.00 p.m., Kings Park Education Centre.

# TOPIC FOR GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speaker for September will be Dianna Papenfas. Dianna is working with the C.A.L.M. Threatened Species and Communities Unit and will talk on her work developing management plans for rare and endangered plants.



Contributions are needed for every edition of the Bulletin. Articles should be sent to Chris French

The article submission deadline for the next issue of the Bulletin is 1 October 1994.

Please send in anything remotely newsworthy which relates to our group, to our members (ie, birthdays, special occasions, pen portraits, etc.), grower's tips, rescue digs, field trip reports, native orchids and conservation activities. Anything (almost!) will be published, provided it is of interest to our group (or should that be read "of interest to your Editor"?).



ANNUAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP FEES

1994 Membership Fees are now due!

Does your Bulletin label have a red spot? If so, you are an unfinancial member of the group! Your membership fees are now overdue for 1994!

The group membership fees for 1994 are as follows:

Single Membership \$20.00 pa Family Membership \$20.00 pa Junior Membership \$ 2.00 pa

Please note that according to our constitution, unfinancial members are not entitled to raise any issues at meetings, speak in response to motions at meetings, or vote at meetings. While we are not trying to make the running of meetings too technical, we must abide by the constitution as lodged with the Corporate Affairs department (or else we may face prosecution).

Please note that the updated membership list is not held by the Treasurer (also in accordance with the Constitution) so there is a small time lag between receiving fees in the mail and actually updating the membership list. Hence we may not have caught up with your payment if it was received during the last couple of weeks, and you may have been red spotted in error. Please accept our apologies if this is the case).

#### FIELD TRIPS

Please let John Arends know of one of your special areas, either in the metro area or in the country, that you would like to lead the group to so that we can all share in the orchids there. We need to know where the area is, a rough idea of the orchids that grow there, the best time to visit the area and the dates that you could lead the group on.

The sooner you get the information to John, the sooner we can organise your next trip. John's address and telephone number are on the inside cover of the Bulletin, or you can contact him at a group meeting.

### FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

September 21, Ordinary General Meeting

October 9, Metro Area

John Arends will once again lead a Field Trip to revisit burnt swamps in the Perth metro area, and in particular, around Nicholson Road. Meet at the Thornlie Pub in Spencer Road, Thornlie, at 10.00 a.m.

October 19, Ordinary General Meeting

2

#### October 15, Bridgetown Area

Steve Phillips will be staying in Bridgetown during the week from October 10 until October 15 with his family. Steve has kindly offered to spend time with group members at any time during this period to look for orchids in the Bridgetown Area. Please ring Steve at home (his telephone number is on the inside of the front cover) if you wish to take up his offer.

In any case, Steve will lead a Field trip on October 15 to look at orchids in the area. Please let Steve know if you wish to attend.

Meet at the Bridgetown Picnic Area near the caravan park on the road leading out of Bridgetown towards Manjimup at 10.00 a.m.

# October 22 & 23, Walpole Area

Once again Bill Jackson has offered to lead a trip to the Walpole and Muir Highway areas to look for Pterostylis species (bird orchids and snail orchids). Of course there will also be plenty of Caladenia, Diuris, Thelymitra, Prasophyllum and other species to be found.

#### October 29 & 30, Eneabba Area

Noel Clarke will lead this trip which will have two purposes, to see *Diuris* sp. white (aff. *picta*) and to do a bit to protect the plants. Bring along a spade to clean out the silted drain (and not to dig orchids!). We will also look for *Paracaleana dixonii* m.s. Accommodation will be at the Western Flora Caravan Park consisting of two chalets, six rooms and three on-site vans. Meet at the Western Flora Caravan Park at 11.00 a.m. sharp!

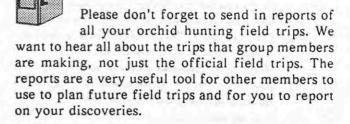
#### November 16, Ordinary General Meeting

## Supper Cost

There has recently been some confusion regarding the cost of the supper provided to group members at the monthly meetings. Although the supper is generously donated by group members (per the list on the back of the Bulletin), the group supplies the tea, coffee, sugar and milk. To recoup some of the cost of these supplies, a modest fee of 30 cents applies. This can be left on the supper table and will be collected by the Treasurer at the end of the evening.

While on the subject of supper, it would be very helpful if everybody could rinse out their tea and coffee cups when they have finished with them. Currently this task falls on the shoulders of a dedicated few who have to stay back later to finish the job. By washing your own cups, you can share the load more evenly.

### FIELD TRIP REPORTS



Field Trip reports don't have to be long and witty, so don't feel daunted. A brief description of locations visited and orchids found is all that you need to supply. Of course, long entertaining stories will also be reproduced.

# August 14 -- Shenton Park and Karrakatta

Ten members plus three juniors attended.

At the Shenton Park "Bushland" site Caladenia flava subsp. flava m.s., C. sp (bud), Cyanicula deformis m.s., Pterostylis vittata, Microtis media subsp. media (1), Leporella fimbriata (1), Elythranthera brunonis (bud) and Diuris brumalis (bud) were located. Part of the site is badly infested with two varieties of lupin. An interesting weed found there in large numbers was a yellow relation of the common Guildford Grass.

At the Karrakatta site, where many years ago members of the group planted and nurtured a variety of orchids, the following were found. Pterostylis vittata, P. recurva, P. barbata (bud), Cryptostylis ovata (1), Burnettia nigricans m.s., Lyperanthus serratus, Microtis media subsp. media (1), Thelymitra macrophylla (1), Caladenia flava subsp. flava m.s., C. latifolia (1) and Diuris corymbosa.

The site is heavily infested with weeds of many species and the soil and plant-life is being badly affected by a network of pedestrian and cycle tracks. Photographs of the site taken at the time orchids were planted show how much the area has been affected.

Thanks go to David Emery (one of the original planters) for attending the site and guiding us to locations where plantings were made.

Joan Biddle & Bill Burton

# HISTORY OF THE HOLLYWOOD NATIVE ORCHID PLANTATION

Location: Smyth Road, Hollywood, opposite Tennis Courts.

# Origin:

This block next to Karrakatta Cemetery was made available by the Nedlands City Council. Andrew Brown would recall the arrangements. The date was 1978 (or possibly 1977).

# Preparation:

Measuring of the land allotted and weeding of it was arranged over a few Sunday sessions. Subsequently much of the work was performed by Mick Leece and David Emery.

Plants and shrubs were provided by the Council and also privately, Many still remain, and some are very large.

# Planting:

This was mainly done by the above-mentioned two enthusiasts, from orchids rescued and donated by club members.

#### Problems:

The biggest problems were:

- Remoteness of the area from most club members' homes.
- Massive weed growth veldt grass, sour grass, lucerne, etc.
- Red mite, which infested the whole area and feasted on the plants and flowers, especially the caladenias. Their hairy stems and leaves were 'ladders' to the red pests. The mites were also very partial to donkey orchids.

### Initial Results:

Plantings were mostly of flowering or budding plants. Perhaps half to one third reappeared the next year. Most species rapidly dwindled thereafter, due to the weed growth and the voracity of the red mites. Some orchids that did well for a time were *Caladenia patersonii*, and *C. reptans* (10 years).

#### Subsequent Happenings:

There was a fire in about 1982.

Council installed a watering system and planted

many shrubs, mainly nearer the cemetery fence.

The project eventually foundered due to the lack of support for it.

#### Present Situation 1994:

No work has been done for more than ten years, and no fresh plantings have been made in that time.

#### Survivals:

A number of species may still be found:

Cryptostylis ovata - under 3 jarrah trees
Lyperanthus serratus - spread throughout
Pterostylis vittata - one small planting under
a tuart

P. recurva - one small planting under a jarrah
P. barbata - one small planting under a jarrah
Caladenia sericea - one small planting under a jarrah

Only the first of the above named species has multiplied. All still flower yearly, however, and have survived more than 12 years.

David Emery 14/8/94

# FROM THE PEN OF OUR BUNBURY CORRESPONDENT

### FOR THOSE WHO CARE

A recent issue of the Bulletin left a question unanswered - what happened to the goat after it disappeared down the mine shaft east of Mullewa.



Rest assured good people, a visit to the newly opened rest area at the Galena Bridge (Murchison River Crossing) will show the animal alive and thriving on the abundant pasture. It was seen and recognised by several members of the group visiting the area, and, how did we know it was the same goat? easy, it was still tied to the very same sleeper.

#### KULIN'S PAST

A weekend visit to the Kulin area brought to mind a snippet of history read during a four year work stint there in the 1960's.

Prior to settlement, a local tribe made use of Wave Rock as it's focal point and many a corroboree with many visitors travelling from near and far. The draw card was the tribes senior elder, a wizard on the didgeridoo and famous for his renditions. He called himself Cool Chuditch.

Because of his renown, audience numbers had to be restricted and sitting stones reserved in advance. Bookings were made through the 'ROCS' office by message stick or smoke signal.

Now Cool Chuditch was dependent upon a younger elder who was a master didgeridoo maker, capable of finishing them off to produce the sweetest, most hypnotic sounds. Because he was Cool Chuditch's 'oppo' and, could knock up a didgeridoo at short notice, he was called Opporknocketty.

A big corroboree had been arranged and a new didgeridoo prepared by Opporknocketty, carefully shaped and adjusted to produce the perfect tone and timbre. The instrument was carefully placed in Cool Chuditch's dwelling and, Opporknocketty tired after his labour, decided he needed a holiday and went off to visit his distant relatives.

Meanwhile, Mrs Cool Chuditch arrived home with all the ingredients for a feast to be held after the 'big do'.

Seeds, nuts and bulbs needed crushing and, like all wives, she used the nearest suitable piece of equipment - the didgeridoo. This was disastrous for the didgeridoo and Cool Chuditch was devastated. He called a younger, younger elder to go after Opporknocketty and fetch him back to do a quick repair job on the instrument. Catching up with Opporknocketty he explained the situation. Opporknocketty was not amused, "Go back and tell Cool Chuditch I am on holiday and no way am I returning, besides, he is fully aware that Opporknocketty only tunes once!"

The following article was written by Kingsley Dixon and was published in a recent edition of the Orchadian. Kingsley has kindly given us permission to reproduce it in our Bulletin.

# TROPICAL TERRESTRIAL ORCHIDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Only in the past 15 years have the terrestrial orchids of the tropical north of Western Australia become more fully understood and appreciated. Previously the inaccessibility and trying climate during the orchid growing season made botanical exploration and trips by amateur groups very difficult.

The majority of the terrestrial orchids found so far

are restricted to the moister western areas of the northern Kimberley. This region is notorious for its inaccessibility and vulnerability to heavy rainfall which can reduce the scant road system to an impassable quagmire for months on end. The region is also known for its vast distances between settlements and remote stations. Field work in the past has therefore often been limited to the dry season or restricted to sites adjacent to wet season accessible area. It is no wonder then that the orchids of the region which flower in the early to mid wet season are so under collected with most distribution information based on scant knowledge often of opportunistic collections.

Recent sponsorship though has enabled the first large scale wet season inventories to be taken for the orchids of the Kimberley region. Argyle Diamond Mines, Wesfarmers, B.H.P., E.G. Green & Sons and Bow River Diamonds have contributed to a project to research the distribution and occurrence of orchids in the Kimberley region and to develop a full set of definitive paintings of theses orchids. The noted botanical artist Patricia Dundas has worked on obtaining sponsorship for the Orchids of the Kimberley Project and in production of the paintings. Staff of Kings Park and Botanic Garden have been involved in arranging logistics for the trips and obtaining botanical details.

The Orchids of the Kimberley Project has now been underway for 18 months and has been successful in extending the distribution range for most of the terrestrial species. A number of previously thought rare orchids are now found in new and less vulnerable locations, e.g., beard orchids (Calochilus holtzei and C. caeruleus) are now found in good numbers over a 300 km range where previously they were restricted to small areas of the Mitchell Plateau. Locating orchids in these new locations has helped in developing a better understanding of the habitat preferences for these species which will ultimately help further search efforts.

An exciting outcome of the study is that much of the moister west Kimberley is actually good orchid country and that it is all a matter of searching out the right location at the right time. The large area of possible orchid habitat involved (about one quarter the size of Victoria) makes a trip in the wet to search out orchids an expensive and time consuming task.

The intrepid and supportive station people of the Kimberley have been one of the most important ingredients for making a success of the Orchids of the Kimberley Project.

Habenaria triplonema

# THE WEST KIMBERLEY REGION

The vegetation of the region is similar to that of parts of the arid tropics of Queensland and the Northern Territory. There are no unique orchids species in the Kimberley and most are found across the north of Australia and extend into northern N.S.W. However the orchids of the region are the only locations in the state for all of the tropical species. For southern enthusiasts, Kimberley orchids provide a welcome orchid highlight during the long summer dormancy of southern terrestrials.

In recent evolutionary times, the flora of the Kimberley region was most likely wet tropical but as climatic conditions have become drier these once widespread tropical forest species have in many instances retreated to refugial areas - river and stream valleys and the monsoon rainforests patches. These monsoon rainforests or vine thickets contain many tree species but have a sparse and species poor understorey.

Twelve species of orchids are recorded in tropical Western Australia, Dendrobium affine and Cymbidium canaliculatum are the two epiphytic species. One epiphyte, the native cymbidium, C. canaliculatum, is usually found growing in tree hollows throughout the Kimberley region. The green and maroon flowers are scented and produced in pendulous spikes. The sponsored research has located the apple green and white form of the orchid which was previously unknown for W.A.

#### KIMBERLEY HABENARIAS

Habenaria is a large genus of terrestrial, tropical and temperate species found in many parts of the world.

The genus is the most common of the terrestrial orchids in the Kimberley and often grow in extensive colonies in low lying or seepage areas.

A widespread but uncommon species to 30 cm tall. The erect, stout scape produces between 10 - 20 flowers, each bloom remaining open for 10 - 14 days.

The species grows in basaltic, loamy or lateritic soils which are free draining. The species is most often found in eucalypt woodland and savanna though occasional specimens may be found growing in rock ledges and crevices along streams.

#### Habenaria orchroleuca

Each spike produces 10 - 20, small, 10 mm wide white flowers with the lateral sepals spreading, upturned with the labellum very deeply divided into two, equal, sickle-shaped lobes.

Common and widespread on the Mitchell Plateau and locally abundant from the Carson to the Drysdale Rivers. Flowering from January to March. Plants favour well drained gravelly-loam to loam soils.

Habenaria sp. nov.

This undescribed species which is also known from the Darwin area. The plant is 15 - 20 cm tall with 2 - 3 olive green basal leaves up to 5 cm long. Scape has 15 - 30 white flowers, with the labellum divided into three, 5 - 8 mm long lobes.

Plant favours loamy soils in moist or seepage areas with the scape produced amongst and above the low grassy vegetation from December to February.

Originally only known from Mitchell Plateau this species is now the most widespread *Habenaria* and occurs from Beverly Springs Station to the Carson River.

#### Didymoplexis pallens

A genus of 10 species found in South-East Asia, India and Oceania.

Only *D. pallens* is recorded for Australia and occurs from northern Queensland to Darwin. The demure, leafless habit of the plant and small, insignificant flowers accounts for the infrequent records for this orchid.

The first Western Australian record of this species was in February, 1986 (not November and December as recorded for other Australian collections) from the Mitchell Plateau and consisted of a single specimen with a scape and a number of buds and open flower.

The plant was growing in a tussock of cane grass (Sorghum species) on loamy soils adjacent to a watercourse.

Plant Gastrodia - like, underground tuber swollen at regular intervals. Tuberous segments 10 - 18 mm long, 5 - 7 mm wide, ovoid, pointed and brown with scattered scale leaves and occasional lateral branching. Tuberous segments connected by a 5 - 15 mm long and thin stem segment. The flower scape is 8 cm long, with small white flowers produced in succession along the stem.

#### Nervilia holochila

Only recorded once in flower but widespread in the Kimberley region forming extensive colonies of leaves. The leaves are solitary and pleated, 5 cm wide and 10 cm long on a erect, 2 - 3 cm long stalk. Daughter plants can be produced on the ends of 5 - 10 cm long underground rhizomes.

Grows in loamy, stony soil in savanna grassland or in thick leaf litter in monsoonal vine thickets.

#### Dipodium stenochilum

A leafless, saprophyte which produces an erect, 50 cm tall scape of up to 25 flowers, each pale pink peppered with dark pink spots. Sepals 1.5 - 2 cm long slightly longer than petals; labellum pink with a prominent white, hairy patch near the apex.

This attractive plant favours deep red loams in eucalypt savanna often growing along disturbed road margins and flowers from December to February.

#### Geodorum neocaledonicum

A genus of 10 species found throughout South - East Asia and New Guinea. G. neocaledonicum is widespread in northern Australia but in Western Australia is restricted to moist forests and humus rich sites in river gullies and gorges.

This is one of the only herbaceous terrestrial orchids in W.A. which produces persistent pseudobulbs. The flowering scape is produced from December to January (February) at the same time as the new shoot and arises from the axil of a lower leaf. Flowers 10 - 20, pale pink to white, compressed tubular, 1.5 - 1.8 cm long.

# Eulophia bicallosa

A large genus of South - East Asian and African tropical terrestrials. Four species occur in Australia with only one found in Western Australia.

A widespread but uncommon species flowering just prior to the onset of rains in October to November. Flowers pale to ivory on a 60 cm tall scape, with 40 cm long leaves produced after flowering.

#### KIMBERLEY BEARD ORCHIDS

#### Calochilus caeruleus

The smaller and more inconspicuous of the 2 beard orchids found in the Kimberleys with overall height not exceeding 20 cm. The 15 - 20 cm high scapes carry 2 - 5 red brown and green flowers which last for up to 3 days. A pale green form with a "grey beard" is recorded from one site near the Carson River.

This is a widespread but rare species from loamy sands to black loams which are seasonally damp to wet. Plants occur singly or in clusters and flower from January to March. A difficult species to locate because of the small stature of the plant and dark colouration of the flowers.

#### Calochilus holtzei

Stout species to 100 cm high. The single leaf is fleshy and distinctively keeled becoming almost 3 winged in section. Scape 5 - 30 flowered. Flowers green yellow with red markings with a large and distinctive labellum.

Widespread and locally common on rocky, lateritic soil to gravelly loams to loamy soils often at the base of eucalypts from east of Derby to Mitchell Plateau and east to the Carson River. Flowers December to February.

#### CONCLUSION

The orchids of the Kimberleys are an interesting and diverse group of plants which have demonstrated that the region is a rich resource of orchid species. Most of the stations in the west Kimberley provide excellent accommodation and fly-in stays during the wet and orchid enthusiasts should contact the station owners directly for details.

MINUTES OF W.A.N.O.S.C.G. GENERAL MEETING - 17 August 1994.

VENUE: Kings Park Board Administration Centre.

The meeting commenced at 2010 hours.

The President welcomed new members and visitors and advised that only financial members could speak or vote.

PRESENT: As per attendance book.

MINUTES: It was moved B. Yates / S. Phillips "that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 20 July 1994 be accepted." Carried.

BUSINESS ARISING: Nil

CORRESPONDENCE: As per correspondence list.

The Secretary drew attention to letters from Kings Park and Ministry of Fair Trading.

TREASURER'S REPORT: As circulated.

FIELD TRIPS: Walpole field trip was successful, Eriochilus scaber subsp. orbifolia m.s. being found.

Shenton Park and Karrakatta trip was well attended and about 10 species were found at each spot.

Andrew Brown advised that the northern area inland is very dry with orchids aborting, coastal area is all right.

Noel Hoffman advised that the same applied to the Bremer Bay to Esperance area.

Ian Greeve advised that the West Talbot Road area is being ruined by trail bikes.

John Arends surveyed the Warton Road area and fell into the bush on a work trip to Gidgegannup.

The McKay family had a fruitful trip to Kalbarri.

PLANT TABLE: 23 pots were tabled. Some were renamed.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Volunteers were called for to help at the Kings Park Festival.

There were no volunteers for a speaker for the Fitzgerald River National Park association meeting in Perth in early November.

The raffle provided by Wayne Merritt, was won by Mary Hoffman.

A delightful supper was provided by Tanja Bishop.

Andrew Brown gave an informative talk on the orchids of the Eremaea (the dry outer areas of the South West).

FOR SALE.

ORCHIDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA..
2ND ED.

WANOSCG's second publication of the cultivation and natural history of WA native orchids is now available with 14 pages of colour photographs. The book is priced at \$ 9.00 (plus \$2.00 postage for WANOSCG members or \$12.00 (plus \$2.00 postage) for non-members.

#### **5 IN 1 SURVIVAL AID**

In order to encourage safety awareness in the bush on field trips, the group purchased 50 "Survival Aids". These are basically a whistle and compass combination but also incorporate a small signalling mirror, a fire starter flint, a nylon lanyard (to hang it around your neck) and a water proof match container. In addition, the compass has a luminous dial.

We have sold around half of these items and are now offering the remaining "Survival Aids" at the discounted price of \$4.00 (plus \$2.00 for postage and handling). I recommend members carry a whistle and compass combination of some sort. Even our most experienced members have been lost at some time in the bush.

#### PAT DUNDAS NATIVE ORCHID CARDS

Packs of 6 blank cards and envelopes featuring different W.A. native orchids by Pat Dundas are available from WANOSCG.

These are excellent value at a price of \$8.00. They would make a superb gift or would be a perfect way to contact friends or relatives while highlighting the colour and beauty of our W.A. orchids.

#### WANOSCG NAME BADGES

Be proud of yourself. Let everybody at group meetings and field trips know who you are. Buy a WANOSCG name badge embossed with your name and wear it with pride.

These are available for \$7.00. (cost price).

#### WANOSCG STICKERS

Don't get lost on the next field trip (or if you do, take somebody else with you). Purchase a WANOSCG sticker for your car window. The stickers are 150 mm square, green on white, making them visible from quite a distance. They are priced at \$1.50.

All of the above items can be purchased from Minna George at any meeting of the group, or can be ordered from Minna by mail (address is on the inside cover). Please add \$2.00 for postage and packaging for each item.

SUPPER ROSTER		RAFFLE ROSTER		
September	J. Biddle	September	M. Tiong	
October	J. Long	October	J. Long	
November	A. McKay & M. Haynes	November	E. Swarts	

WANOSCG Print Post approved by Australia Post PP630205/00007

PO Box 323 Victoria Park 6100 SURFACE MAIL POSTAGE PAID VIC.PARK 6100

# Forthcoming Field Trips

October 9, Perth Metro Area

October 15, Bridgetown Area

October 22 & 23, Walpole Area

October 29 & 30, Eneabba Area