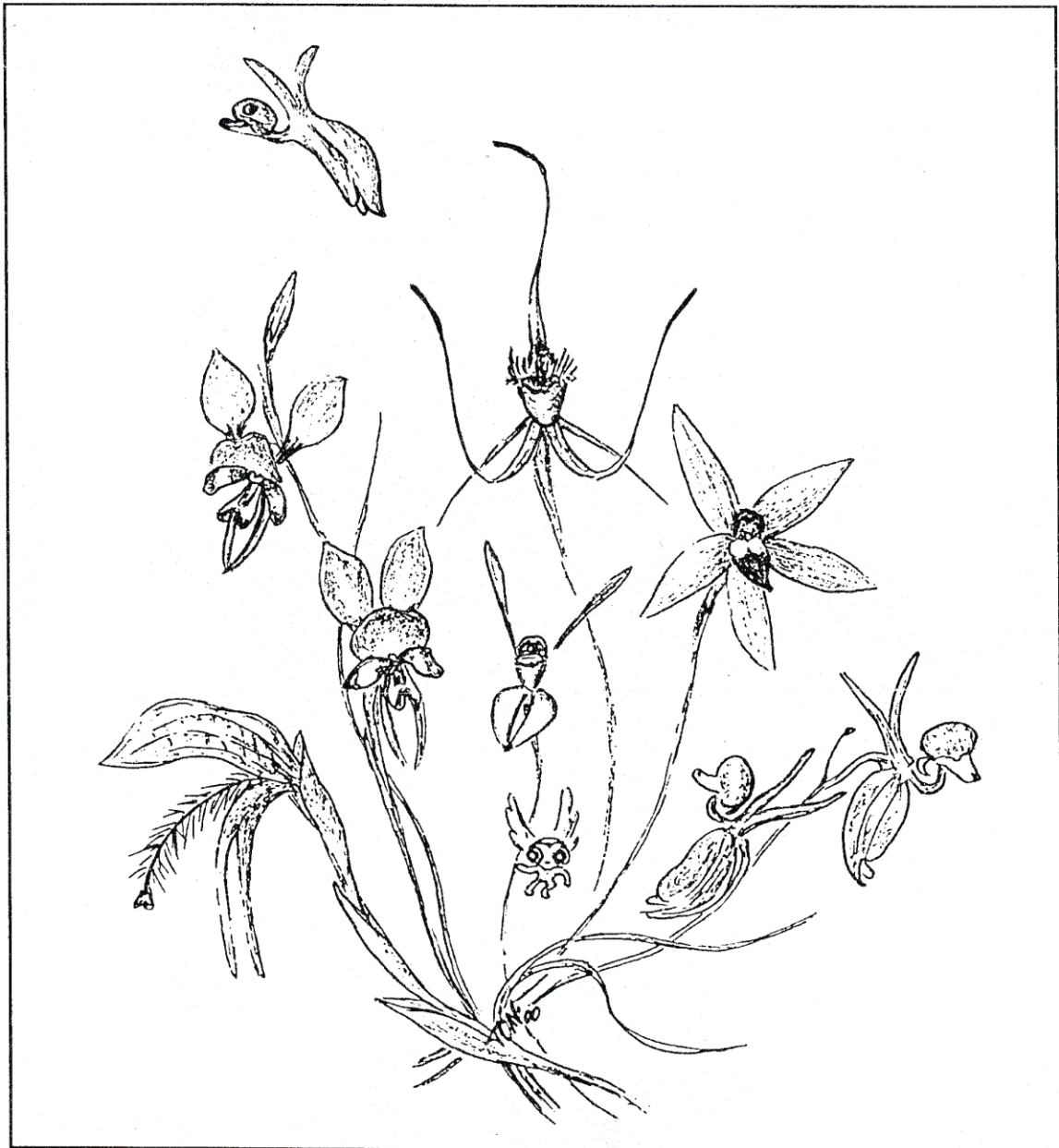




Journal  
of the  
**Native Orchid Society**  
of  
**South Australia Inc**



# **NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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The Native Orchid Society of South Australia promotes the conservation of orchids through the preservation of natural habitat and through cultivation. Except with the documented official representation from the Management Committee no person is authorised to represent the society on any matter. All native orchids are protected plants in the wild. Their collection without written Government permit is illegal.

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SEPTEMBER 2001                      Vol. 25 No. 8**

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SEPTEMBER MEETING ,

Tuesday, 25 September, St Matthew's Hall, corner of Bridge Street and Wellington Street, Kensington. Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m: Doors to the hall will be open from 7:15 p.m. to allow Members access to the Library and Trading Table. South Australia's own expert on Australia's native terrestrial orchids and author of *Orchids of South Australia*, Life Member Bob Bates will be our Guest Speaker for the evening. Bring lots of orchids- all that you may have in flower as it is these that attract many of our Members to our meetings.

DIARY DATES

22-23 September Ngarkat weekend - see inside Journal .  
 24-28 September First International Orchid Conservation Congress, Perth, WA  
 29 September Belair. Annual survey and weeding - see inside journal  
 1 October Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park field trip.  
 7 October Spring Gully Conservation Park field trip.  
 14 October Kycema Conservation Park and Kuitpo Forest field trip  
 2003 16th Australian Orchid Conference Adelaide, hosted by O.C.S.A.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 3 October at the home of Malcolm Guy. Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.

NEXT JUDGES MEETING

Saturday 13 October 9:30 am at the home of Reg Shooter

## AUGUST MEETING

Reg Shooter and Les Nesbitt talked about preparing and presenting native orchids for the Spring Show. Les talked about terrestrials and Reg addressed the epiphytes. Members were encouraged to attend the show and the growers to exhibit as many Australasian native orchids as possible. Setting up displays and labelling were also discussed. Reg and Les then showed slides of some spectacular award winning Australasian orchids.

## Plants Benched

Terrestrial Species: *Acianthus caudatus* (Marble Hill), *Acianthus pusillus*, *Caladenia latifolia*, *Chiloglottis truncata*, *Corybas diemenicus*, *Corybas incurvus*, (Black Hill), *Cyanicula deformis*, *Cyanicula deformis* (Lyndoch SA) *Cyrtostylis robusta*, *Diuris behrii*, *Diuris conspiculata*, *Diuris lanceolata*, *Diuris laxiflora*, *Diuris pardina* (Lyndoch SA), *Glossodia major*, *Pterostylis baptistii*, *Pterostylis baptistii* - Janney (x2), *Pterostylis bicolour*, *Pterostylis concinna*, *Pterostylis concinna* (yellow), *Pterostylis curta* (numerous pots), *Pterostylis melagamma* (Latrobe Tasmania), *Pterostylis nana* (Lyndoch SA), *Pterostylis nutans*, *Pterostylis nutans* (variegated), *Pterostylis pedunculata*, *Pterostylis plumosa*, *Pterostylis pusilla*, *Pterostylis russellii*, *Pterostylis samophila*, *Pterostylis sanguinea*, *Pterostylis taurus*,

Terrestrial Hybrids: *Caladenia* Fairy Floss, *Diuris* Pioneer (Big Ears), *Pterostylis* Bantam, *Pterostylis* Dusky Duke, *Pterostylis* Joseph Arthur, *Pterostylis* Nodding Grace, *Pterostylis* Ruckman

Epiphyte Species: *Dendrobium aemulum* (3 in total), *Dendrobium gracilicaule* (7 in total), *Dendrobium lichenastrum*, *Dendrobium speciosum* (3 in total). *Dendrobium tetragonum*, *Dockrillia shilleriana*

Epiphyte Hybrids: *Dendrobium* Bicentennial Rose x *D. Ku-ring-gai*, *Dendrobium* Brinawah Sunset, *Dendrobium* Eddaz Cool, *Dendrobium* Gillian Leaney x *Gai-Ellen*, *Dendrobium* Kathryn Banks, *Dendrobium* Manning x *D. Sunglow*, *Dendrobium* Zip x *D. falcorostrum*, *Dendrobium* Zip x *D. Gracillimum*, *Dendrobium* Zip x *D. Hilda Poxon*, *Dockrillia* Gilliston Glow

A terrific showing! I count 30 terrestrial species representing 9 genera and including 5 species of *Diuris* and 15 species of *Pterostylis*, and 6 epiphytic species, for a total of 36 different native orchid species. I also count 7 different terrestrial hybrids and 10 epiphyte hybrids for a total of 17 different hybrids. Many thanks to those growers who contributed to this tremendous showing (ed).

## Popular Voting

Best Terrestrial: *Diuris* Pioneer 'Big Ears' grown by Les Nesbitt

Best Epiphyte: *Dendrobium speciosum* grown by Peter Barnes

## Judges' Choices

Best Epiphyte Species: 1st *Dendrobium speciosum* grown by Peter Barnes

2nd *Dendrobium gracilicaule* grown by Noel Oliver

3rd *Sarcochilus falcatus* grown by Brendan Killen

Best Epiphyte Hybrids: 1st *Den.* Bicentennial Rose x *D. Ku-ring-gai* grown by Bodo Jensen

2nd *Den.* Manning x *D. Sunglow* grown by Graeme and Jan Burford

3rd *Dendrobium* Zip X *D. falcorostrum* grown by Malcolm Guy

Best Terrestrial Species: 1st *Caladenia latifolia* grown by Graham & Sue Zerbe  
 2nd *Pterostylis curta* grown by David Pettifor  
 3<sup>rd</sup> *Cyrtostylis reniformis* grown by David Pettifor

Best Terrestrial Hybrids: 1st *Pterostylis* Joseph Arthur grown by David Pettifor  
 2nd *Diuris* Pioneer grown by Les Nesbitt  
 3rd *Pterostylis* Dusky Duke grown by Simon Lloyd

Judges' Plant of the Night *Dendrobium speciosum* grown by Peter Barnes

Noel Oliver provided the commentary for the epiphyte orchids, Bob Bates provided the commentary for the terrestrials.

## HOW IT IS DONE

Reg Shooter

Both terrestrial and epiphyte sections were well patronised at the August meeting. There were a total of 26 epiphytes and about the same number of terrestrials.

David Pettifor's pot of *Pterostylis curta* caught the judges' eyes and was awarded the best terrestrial. This is probably the easiest of the *Pterostylis* to grow and is the best one for the beginner to start with. David grows his in an open shadehouse with a 50% shadecloth covering. Members will remember that the Rogers shadehouse was removed to David's property sometime ago, this is where he now grows most of his terrestrials. He uses a commercial potting mix, one that contains no fertiliser, to this he adds 5mm gravel to open up the mixture. Like all the deciduous terrestrials they require no water during the summer months apart from the occasional misting to prevent the tubers dehydrating. In the winter David waters once a fortnight and then only if it does not rain. The only fertiliser that is given is a small quantity of blood and bone added to the potting mix when potting in late spring early summer.

*Pterostylis curta* is so named in reference to its curt or blunt abbreviated dorsal sepal;- its common name is the blunt orchid. *Pterostylis curta* is one of the easiest of the greenhoods to recognise by its twisted brown labellum and large flower, the only larger *Pterostylis* flower is *Pterostylis baptistii*. which in fact used to be called *Pterostylis curta* var. *grandiflora*. It is a wide spread species forming large colonies usually in quite open bushland from Queensland through New South Wales, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

It was good to see members responding to the featured orchid of the month. The terrestrial species selected for August was *Pterostylis curta* and some 9 or so pots were displayed.

The epiphyte species of the month was *Dendrobium gracilicaule*, -7 were exhibited, some in pots some mounted, one very large specimen brought in by Noel Oliver and another by Rick Pankoke, but it was a magnificent specimen of *Dendrobium speciosum* grown by Peter Barnes that won the Orchid of the Night and the popular vote. The species *Dendrobium speciosum* consists of seven varieties, although some botanists have split them into seven different species. This has not been universally accepted. Peter's plant is *Dendrobium speciosum* var *speciosum* 'Mangrove Mountain Gold'. It is grown in a 50% shadehouse in a compost of Van Schaiks Orchid Pinebark. Peter rarely fertilises his plant although he is trialling the addition of old sheep pellets to the top of the compost.

This was suggested to him by Len Field. It has not been used long enough to report on the results yet, it will be interesting to see if it is successful.

The plant survives on winter rain and is only given a light sprinkle every night in the summer. This orchid was purchased from Ted Gregory's Merrellen Orchid nursery some years ago. Peter bought it because Ted told him it was a nice yellow variety and at the same time he purchased a number of seedlings selfed from this *speciosum*. We look forward to seeing what they produce.

Congratulations to both winners and thank you to all who brought in plants to be looked at and admired, maybe its your turn to feature in the winners circle next month.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION - NOSSA NEWS

## Two Somethings New Being Trialled!!

- 1) A table will be set up at the future General Meetings for Novices to display their orchids. Anyone with less than two years growing experience is invited to display his or her plants on this table.
- 2) At the August meeting we trialled what will be referred to as Plant of the Month, where all Members are encouraged to bring in Journal nominated plants be they in flower or not. We will give this a go again at the October Meeting.

Trading Table. Items are needed for the trading table. Items don't have to be orchids.

Journal Articles are sought (from you the reader and others). Make 2001 your year to contribute. We need articles about your own experiences in growing or seeking native orchids.

Library: NOSSA has a very extensive Library from which all Members are encouraged to borrow. Now located in the back of the hall!

Judging Classes Any Member wishing to join the group will be made very welcome. The classes are not technical or difficult and participants are not required to sit tests or exams. In addition to judging matters general discussions on all aspects of Australian Native Orchids, both terrestrials and epiphytes are examined. The meetings are held usually once a month on Saturdays from 9.30am to noon. If you are interested in joining the group feel free to talk to Reg Shooter either at a meeting or by phoning him on 82352323

David Banks is seeking articles for the Orchadian. Lets give the Orchadian our full support, through articles and why not also through Membership in the Australasian native Orchid Society. Contact Gerry Carne for further information.

## FIELD TRIPS FOR OCTOBER

Oct 1st Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park.

Meet: Park entrance on corner of Fraser and Dover Streets at 2pm.

Oct 7th Spring Gully Conservation Park.

Meet: Sevenhill crossroads (turn left) at 10am.

Oct 14th Kyeema Conservation Park and Kuitpo Forest.

Meet: Forest HQ on the Willunga-Meadows Road at loam.

Oct 28th Adelaide Plains 'Rufa' group *Pterostylis*.

Meet: Balaklava, outside council offices at loam.

## MURRAYLANDS FIELD TRIP REPORT 19/8/01 Thelma Bridle

A wet day in Adelaide but a sunny day in the Murraylands. Pioneer Park in Karoonda has a nature trail and contains a number of mallee orchid species. *Pterostylis nana* was found in large colonies, still flowering and *P. mutica* was very common. A *Thelymitra* sp. was in bud. There were several different *Caladenia* sp. present. *C. verrucosa* was close to flowering and one flower was open. Other *Caladenias* with buds still in the leaf axils were possibly *C. tensa*. Another sp. had a very red, hairy leaf with a bud. Across the railway line, *P. dolichochila* was found.

Perponda, 25 km north of Karoonda had many *Caladenia capillata* flowering on the deep sand under the broombushes and low mallees, either singly or in small clumps. Flower colour varied from cream through white to a greyish-white, all with red osmophores, dense or sparse on the sepals and petals. Only the cream flowers failed to have red markings on the labellum. Flower shape varied from a short-sepalled star-like appearance to the more common long-sepalled form. A total of 18 of the red form (*C. filamentosa* v.

*filamentosa*) were in bud/flower/over. These long-sepalled mauvy-pink flowers had white markings at the base of the petals and sepals and all had pale labellums. *Thelymitra megacalyptra* was in bud, *Caladenia verrucosa* with some close to flowering, *P. mutica* in flower and a number of various *P. nana* types.

After lunch we drove another 14 km further north to Goondaloo. Unfortunately this area was very dry, even the annual Compositae were wilted from lack of rainfall. The area also supported spinifex indicating it is always drier mallee. *P. mutica* was quite scattered, a single *Caladenia* sp. leaf with no bud and one *P. biseta* in bud were all the orchis detected by seven pairs of searching eyes. The only other noteworthy item was an abandoned mallee fowl mound. We decided to head back south, and on the same latitude as Perponda visited Lowan Conservation Park.

This area had a higher rainfall this year and was quite green. *T. megacalyptra* buds were numerous amid the many spring-flowering mallee shrubs found in the park. Again, *P. mutica* was common, a colony of *P. dolichochila* rosettes (no flowers) was located and some *P. pusilla* in bud. Further into the park a number of *Caladenia* sp. leaves and buds were found - *C. verrucosa*, with large buds and *C. tensa* with buds still in the axils. Rabbits seemed to be quite numerous in the mallee at Karoonda, Perponda and Lowan.

As we drove towards Mypolonga the rain started and continued most of the way home. I hope some managed to fall as far north as Goondaloo.

#### RECOVERY PLANS FOR THREE SPECIES OF ORCHID IN SOUTH-EAST SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH-WEST VICTORIA FOR 2001-2005

Thelma Bridle

NOSSA has recently received this comprehensive report by Anne Craig and Andrew Pritchard. NOSSA members were involved in its construction, providing details of sites where the three species had been seen recently, and last spring we joined Anne and Andrew in visits to some of these sites.

*Caladenia richardsiorum* (Little Dip Spider Orchid) is endemic to the South-east of South Australia, where it grows on calcareous soils on the inland side of coastal dunes between Little Dip and Southend. Ten subpopulations were recorded in 2000 with a total of 1,430 mature plants.

*Caladenia calcicola* (Limestone Spider Orchid) is found in the south-east of South Australia and the South-west of Victoria. It grows in shallow terra-rossa on limestone ridges on deep, sandy soils. The species was probably more widespread prior to European settlement, but is now very restricted. 140 mature plants in 6 subpopulations were recorded in 2000. Both the species of *Caladenia* are listed as endangered and thus require a management plan to ensure survival.

*Pterostylis tenuissima* (Swamp Greenhood) is mainly restricted to the coastal plains of Southeast South Australia and South-west Victoria. The species occurs exclusively in *Leptospermum langigerum* (Silky or Woolly Teatree) tall closed shrubland in black alkaline soils in swamps or alongside watercourses, all subject to seasonal freshwater inundation. Rainfall thus makes the number of plants very variable from year to year, especially as it is very shallow-rooted. In 2000, 2,655 mature plants of this vulnerable listed orchid from 19 subpopulations were recorded.

All three species are threatened by fragmentation of habitat, grazing and environmental weed invasion. Both *Caladenia* species are pollinated by unidentified Thynnid wasp species, so it is important to maintain nectar producing plants in the orchid areas. *Pterostylis tenuissima* is pollinated by an unknown fungus gnat species. As much of its habitat has been drained for agricultural purposes, it is critical to maintain current orchid sites and avert any change to local drainage or water tables.

Anne and Andrew detail short and long-term priorities for conservation of the orchid species, both in terms of scientific research and physical changes or enhancement of sites and the related biodiversity, together with costings. As always, the co-operation and assistance of land-owners and local groups interested in conservation is paramount to success.

A copy of this excellent report, well worth reading, may be borrowed from the NOSSA library.

*Dockrillia schoenina* (Lindley) 1846. M.A. Clements and D.L. Jones

Len Field

Previously named *Dendrobium becklerii*

Synonyms. *Dendrobium mortii* Benth 1859

*Dendrobium striolatum* Bailey 1883

*Dendrobium striolatum* var. *becklerii* Muell. 1886

*Dendrobium becklerii* (Muell. ) Kuntze 1891 )

*Dendrobium becklerii* var. *racemosum* Nicholls 1936 Now named *Dockrillia racemosum*

*Dockrillia becklerii* was named after Dr. Heckler an Australian collector. M. Clements reinstated the name *Dockrillia schoenina* as being the correct name as it was used by John Lindley 23 years before Mueller named it *Dendrobium becklerii*.

Found in an area from the Hunter River in N.S.W. up to the Burdekin River in N.E. Queensland where it is very common throughout this range growing on trees and rocks from the lowland coastal areas in open forests and up to 600 metres in altitude in thick rainforest. It is a very untidy plant in its growth habits with straggly growths growing in all directions. It has a habit of growing on very small branches which break off and drop the plant to the forest floor and while this could be detrimental to most plants long time survival, it has little effect on this orchid as it is so prolific in its growth there is always plenty of other plants to carry on.

Some of its favourite host trees are the many Casuarina species. This would be the stoutest and strongest grower of the terete leaf growing *Dockrillia* orchids. It produces new growths from the point it flowers from and when these new growths mature it will produce more flowers from them.

Flowering. These are the largest flowers of the group and are very fragrant, wide opening, coloured green, cream or white with purple streaks on the petals and a white labellum filled with bright purple markings. These are long lasting and will flower every year and as the plants get older flowering, which can be singular or pairs, become more profuse.

Culture. These would be one of the easiest of all the orchids to grow, in particular if placed on a tree or shrub in the garden. If grown in a bush-house, most of the more common slab materials can be used and if grown in a pot, it would be preferred to be hung up high with plenty of air movement, high humidity and kept moist during the summer months with watering ceasing when the plant goes into dormancy. While it will grow readily in a cool climate it is not frost resistant so a minimum temperature should be kept above zero if possible. It prefers more light than many of the other orchids of the terete leaved variety. It is very similar in its growth habits to *Dockrillia racemosum*

*Dendrobium speciosum* Smith 1804

Len Field

Common names the "rock Lily" or "rock orchid"

Named from the Latin specios(us) meaning showy or beautiful by Sir James Smith who received a plant from Surgeon General J White who found it at Port Jackson and this plant is now at the Herbarium of the Linn. Society of London. Further plants were sent to Kew Gardens in 1823 by Cunningham.

Found in a large area from Bulahdelah in N.S.W. down to the Cann River in Victoria. It also ranges West of the Great Divide to the Mudgee area and I have seen them growing near than under very harsh conditions. These harsh conditions of these western areas take a toll on the plants as all the plants I saw growing there were small and stunted in comparison to the more Eastern types, but to be able to survive anyway under these conditions speaks of the hardiness of this orchid.

Found nearly always growing on rocks (lithophyte) and seldom on trees but when epiphytic they tend to be high up in the canopy in open forests. On the rocks and cliff faces it can form gigantic clumps which can become a remarkable sight when in flower. It has a large range of habitats ranging from sea level to high mountain tops. While it does not like deep shade it is not uncommon to find them in very deep shady ravines but it does prefer the high sandstone cliffs where it is exposed to the harsh elements and gets little or no shade although I have noticed that where it grows high up on these high cliff faces there is usually a cool updraft of air also it likes to grow with a North East exposure to make full use of the Winter sun. In



its Southern habitat it is only found as a lithophyte but otherwise both the Victorian and N.S.W. types are similar.

This is one of Australia's largest *Dendrobiums* and one of the showiest orchids of the world. The large Pseudo bulbs that can be straight or curved can grow to over 60cm tall but are usually less and taper from a diameter of 5 to 7cm. At the base and reduce to about 3cm at the first leaf, these leaves which number 2 to 5 are large and have a leathery feel about them can stay on the plant for up to 12 years. The huge clumps that these bulbs rise from do not have aerial roots like its more Northern relations, *Dendrobium tarberi* and *Dendrobium rex*, but the roots tend to form a dense matted bed for the plant as it spreads across the sandstone rock.

Flowers. One of the nicer things about being in the bush on a warm sunny day is the aroma of a large clump of "rock lilies" this aroma can travel for some distance from the clump. This aroma is not there on a dull day or night time. Flower stems are erect, long and either straight or slightly arching with very long racemes and flowers can number up to 70 or more on each spike but usually number less, however the larger number of flowers on each spike tends to make them individually smaller whereas when there are only a few flowers present they tend to be larger. Flowers are also more spaced apart than similar species and are thick textured and about 2.5cm in diameter but on some clones can be much larger. Colours range from white, cream to strong yellow with a white labellum spotted and veined with red or purple and these flowers can remain open for up to 2 or 3 weeks in August to October. A large minus for this plant is that flowers can take up to 10 years from seedling to appear but usually less.

Culture. This is one of the easiest orchids to grow and can be grown in the garden, tied on to a tree, stump or on a rock, wherever it is placed it will usually prosper. The preferred method is in a pot with a coarse mix and as it is such a vigorous grower it will often need potting on as it outgrows its existing pot. If mounted it will require more watering but wherever it is grown it needs watering well in Summer but allowed to dry out in the Autumn and Winter months to promote flower growth for the next season. A regular fertiliser during the growing months and after flowering would be very beneficial. Good light is also essential and it will withstand full sun even during the summer months within reason. Minimum temperature should be kept above 0 if possible. A natural hybrid is *Dendrobium x kestevenii*

*Dendrobium tarberi* Clements

Len Field

Previously known as *Dendrobium speciosum* Smith var. *hillii* Anon 1877

Named from the Aboriginal words "Tar Beni" that was used to describe this and other epiphytic orchids from S.E. Queensland.

The name *hillii* was named after Walter Hill Superintendent and Botanist at the Brisbane Botanical gardens who sent the type plants to Kew gardens.

Found in an area from the Northern side of the Hunter Valley although I have seen them much further South than this growing in the Watagan Mountains and Central coast area of N.S.W, up to S.E. Queensland where they mingle with and are replaced by *Dendrobium rex* in the Brisbane Nambour area. There is an isolated community growing on the Saddleback Mountain in southern N.S.W. that is very much like *Dendrobium tarberi* but does have some significant differences.

Growing in moist forests and rainforests where it is common on rock faces (Lithophytic) and trees (epiphytic) but does favour growing on trees in rainforests. On these rainforest trees it can form huge untidy clumps up to 2 or 3 metres in size, these clumps can become so large that they will break the trees and come crashing to the ground. It has large aerial roots similar to *Dendrobium rex* that are good for catching litter where the plant can benefit from the nutrients contained in this debris. Differing from *Dendrobium speciosum* by having longer, untapered cylindrical bulbs that are contracted near the base, also it grows in more damper and shaded localities than the former, these Pseudo bulbs can be up to 1 metre tall with long narrow leaves that are thinner in texture and narrower in width than most other species of this type. These tall canes allow the plant to reach from its shadier environment to get more light.

Flowers. Flowers are usually white to cream and can slightly yellow with age. While smaller than *Dendrobium speciosum* they are similar in shape but do not open quite as wide. While these flowers are smaller they are more crowded with more spikes per cane than the other species but are otherwise very similar and can be up to 3cm in diameter with a labellum bordered with purple inside and out. Flowering time is similar to *Dendrobium speciosum* (August to October).

Although not real common hybrids do occur where it crosses with *Dendrobium kingianum* to form *Dendrobium x delicatum* and also crosses with *Dendrobium gracilicaule* to form *Dendrobium x gracillimum*.

Culture. Would be similar to *Dendrobium speciosum* with a little less light and slightly more watering during hot summer months otherwise similar. It is a very easy plant to grow and can be a very showy plant when grown into specimen size. It can be grown in a pot with a very coarse mix and also it will readily adapt if tied to a tree or placed in a garden rockery. Although it will not withstand the direct sun as well as *Dendrobium speciosum* it is still a very hardy and rewarding plant to grow and should prove no difficulty to most growers.

#### SOME THOUGHTS ON GROWING SARCS

Rob Lewry

From ANOS WA Native Orchid News January 2000

During the past few years I have become more involved with sarcs. Mainly because of breeders like Neil and Meg Finch, who over the past few years have without doubt bred some of the finest hybrids I've seen in all my years of growing orchids. Anyway, lets try and see if I can help anyone who has trouble growing these little gems.

First the growing conditions: most sarcs grow in rainforests, usually deep in the gullies on rocks or branches that overhang creeks, where they receive good cool air movement. So with this in mind, we should be looking at air movement as one of the most critical requirements of all. It helps to stop root rot and the plant's roots from becoming water logged. At my place I'm lucky enough to have such a gully, and late every afternoon in summer I receive a cool breeze from the gully floor. So this is when I water, as the breeze dries the plants out before nightfall. Sarcs DO NOT like to be water logged, air movement around the root system is most important! With this in mind, the potting mix I prefer is an open mix, so water drains freely and you get maximum air movement. My mix consists of 50% medium and 50% coarse treated pine bark, a few bits of charcoal and a few pebbles. I use this mix for all my sarcs except seedlings. For these I recommend a medium bark mix - I know this makes potting a little difficult, but you won't lose plants from root rot.

Now what can we do about humidity? Misting under the benches during the summer months, especially on 40 degree + days is one of the most important things to do. The roots of an orchid are like a sponge, so they can draw moisture from the air and misting the floors on these hot days will create humidity. I placed a large piece of sandstone in one corner of the sarc house, and within one year its covered with moss. This should give you some idea of how moist I keep the floor. Now I have noticed birds nest ferns starting to germinate in this environment and in my books this is as close to perfect as I'll probably get to a natural environment. Happy growing!

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ORCHIDOLOGISTS AND ORCHID PAINTERS : 3

JESSIE LOUISA HUSSEY (1862-1899)

Bob Bates

Jessie Hussey was the daughter of C.H. and Harriett Hussey, storekeepers on the South Coast. She was born at Goolwa on June 5th 1862 and attended the local primary school.

Jessie was a fine botanist who in a short span of six years from 1893 to her untimely death (from ovarian cancer) in 1899 sent over 2 000 plant specimens to Ferdinand von Mueller. Most of these were from the Port Elliott district - an area since denuded of native vegetation, but at the time mostly grassy woodland. The way Jessie described it, the Hills that today are either bare or covered with dense regrowth of *Acacia paradoxa* were once an open parkland teeming with 'orchids and lilies'. Jessie was the first person to

collect the rare *Pterostylis bryophila* and perhaps the only person to collect *Pterostylis x ingens* in South Australia. Her collections are today housed at the Victorian State Herbarium.

She wrote frequently to Mueller who explained the best way of preserving her collections. Unfortunately for us Mueller led her away from orchids (he was not a great orchid enthusiast) and into seaweeds as she lived near the beach. The algal genus *Husseyella* was named in her honour. If Mueller had been an orchid enthusiast we may have had a green hood named *T. 'husseyana'*. Most of her letters to Mueller were destroyed in a scrap paper drive during the War but a surviving note to him reads

"My Lord, on Monday and yesterday I spent a long time in the hills... near Port Elliott searching for ...orchids, some of which I send by this post."

Her favourite collecting site was at 'the waterfalls', indeed Hindmarsh Falls where *Pterostylis bryophila* still hangs on. If she collected *Pterostylis x ingens* along the Hindmarsh creek it also means that *P. falcata* grew there too! Other orchids collected by her include *Thelymitra benthamiana* and *P. robusta*. She was a member of the fledgling Field Naturalists Society and read at least one paper to the Royal Society.

Although she was not an orchid painter a few of her orchid sketches do survive.

References: D. Kraehenbuhl in Can and Carr, People and Plants in Australia. 1988.  
South Australian Biographies 1986.

#### *PTEROSTYLIS DESPECTANS* PROJECT

(After an article authored by Andrew Dilley and published in the Bulletin of the Australasian Native Orchid Society (Victorian Group) Inc July 2001

Ten members of ANOS (Victorian Group) and Jenny Alexander from the Bendigo region of the Victorian NRE viewed six *Pterostylis despectans* sites. After viewing the sites it was clear that the orchid's environment is under threat from 1) White Winged Choughs, 2) rabbits and wallabies, 3) prospecting, 4) firewood collection, 5) vehicles, and 6) a possible lack of pollinators.

I was intrigued by the White Winged Choughs: "these birds actively search for the orchid tubers, digging down at the base of the plant, eating the tuber and leaving the remains of the plant to die. The birds are voracious foragers and once they find a colony, they will continue digging until most plants have been eaten."

It is not known whether the natural pollinator is present in the area. "So few plants have been seen to flower without being eaten that it is not known at this stage whether the natural pollinator is still active in these regions."

The habitat in which *Pterostylis despectans* grows is gold prospecting country, and many plants are dug up or trampled by weekend prospectors. Some of the areas are also available for firewood collection.

Caging, protecting the plants with natural materials, fencing, use of bollards (to keep vehicles out) and the banning of firewood collection are being considered as possible means of protecting the orchids.

Caging can be expensive and the orchids generally do not form compact colonies. Further, caging would attract the attention of passers-by which would lead to further trampling and possibly theft of plants.

It was also proposed that the orchid could be 'caged' using natural materials found nearby. This would not readily attract the attention of passers-by, but would have to be regularly maintained.

Fencing is good for enclosing large areas of dispersed plants and would help to prevent trampling, but would not keep out the choughs unless netting was also used. As with caging, fencing would draw attention from passers-by and in restricting grazing, would encourage weeds and grasses to grow.

Bollards could be used to better manage vehicular access, but their construction could do considerable damage where orchids grow near road verges.

I was reading through my old Orchadians a week or so ago and came across some interesting articles on using cork for growing orchids. The first (The Orchadian Vol 9 No 8 June 1989) was by Erhard Husted who saw *Dendrobium canaliculatum* growing in pea size gravel. He tried several experiments with gravel and a gravel-bark mix but was not happy with the results. So he switched to wine corks. He had four pots, one with red wine corks, one with white, one with 50 percent of each and one with 50 percent each (red & white) with pea gravel. The plants growing in the pots with straight cork did better than the cork-gravel mix.

The other (Vol 10 No 11 Autumn 1993) was by Bob Napier and titled "A Good excuse to Open a Bottle of Shiraz". Before I go any further, I have a question for Bob. Why do you need an excuse, good or otherwise, to open a bottle of Shiraz? Anyway, Bob had bought a *Dendrobium lichenastrum* from a Port hacking Group member who was moving away and the plant was attached to a mount made up of wine corks cut lengthwise and glued to a backing board. The article goes on to discuss various compounds for attaching the corks to the board and orchids to the corks. I must have read these when they were first published and decided to try my own experiments as I still have a *Dendrobium x delicatum* happily growing in a pot with wine corks. At the time I also tried straight sphagnum moss, the corks, bark and rock-wool. The corks were best, followed by the rock-wool and sphagnum moss (about equal) and the bark last.

By the way, if you have corks and don't want to use them for growing your orchids, they can be recycled for use as gaskets, notice boards, place mats etc.

#### TUBER BANK

Donations of tubers for the NOSSA tuber bank are sought. Any number large or small will be welcome. Locality data should be included where available.

Please advise Malcolm Guy at 15 Naomi Terrace, Pasadena, SA. or by phone(08) 82767350 by November the 27th.

The final list with order form will be published in the December Journal.

#### Emailed - New Dictionary Inclusions

CARPERPETUATION, n., The act, when vacuuming, of running over a string or a piece of lint at least a dozen times, reaching over and picking it up, examining it, then putting it back down to give the vacuum one more chance.

FRUST, n., The small line of debris that refuses to be swept onto the dust pan and keeps backing a person across the room until he finally decides to give up and sweep it under the rug.

LACTOMANGULATION, n., Manhandling the "open here" spout on a milk container so badly that one has to resort to the illegal side.

PUPKUS, n., The moist residue left on a window after a dog presses its nose to it.

TELECRASTINATION, n., The act of always letting the phone ring at least twice before you pick it up, even when you're only six inches away.