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CAPTAIN COOK'S ORCHIDS

We do not normally associate Captain Cook with orchids. His botanists, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander, collected many new plants during the 1770 voyage up the eastern Australian coast. Included were just five representatives of the Family Orchidaceae. Here is a short description of each species, so that we can combine a bit of history with our botany:

Dendrobium canaliculatum: Teatree orchid: so named because it is often found growing on teatrees, especially *Melaleuca viridiflora*. Collected by Banks & Solander whilst the Endeavour was being repaired at the eponymous river. An epiphyte occurring in drier areas of northern Australia from Gladstone on the Queensland coast to the Kimberleys in W.A. Also known as antelope orchid for its extended upper sepals, colours vary locally and include brown, white, purple and yellow to present an attractive plant which can be locally abundant.

Dendrobium discolor. Golden orchid. Collected by Banks & Solander in four Queensland localities. There is reputed to be an area of Golden orchids near Cooktown which almost exclusively occupies an acre or so. They would be in full flower now, and quite a sight to see. This is one of the largest Australian orchids, with canes up to five metres in length. We have several of these orchids currently flowering at home; one is about thirty years old. They produce a long inflorescence, sometimes two per stem, bearing up to fifty chocolate-golden flowers about 4cm in diameter.

Dendrobium rigidum: Collected at Endeavour River. A small plant which can be epiphytic or lithophytic, occurs in Queensland from about Cairns to Cape York. Flowers are small - 15mm across, cream coloured with red blotches. Although Jones (*Native Orchids of Australia*) asserts that this is a "very common species", we do not recall having yet seen it in the wild. A pleasure in store, perhaps?

Prasophyllum striatum: Collected at Botany Bay. One of the large Genus of Leek Orchids, which occur in sclerophyll forests and heathlands, mostly in southeastern Australia. Terrestrials. *P. striatum*, Streaked Leek Orchid, is

endemic to the NSW central coast, and is found in seasonally damp, sedge-type localities. Each plant produces a single leaf to 20cm high with a 30cm inflorescence presenting up to ten small greenish flowers striped white/brown.

Pterostylis revoluta: Large autumn greenhood. Collected at Botany Bay. Terrestrial. As is usual with greenhoods, this plant prefers open forest land and can occur in large, scattered colonies. The flowering stem can be 25cm high, bearing a translucent green, hooded flower.

Those are the orchids collected by Lt James Cook's team between April & August 1770. It would be an interesting exercise for an enthusiast to try to grow them all, perhaps in association with other plants from the Endeavour's voyage, e.g. *Melaleuca viridiflora* was collected at three Queensland locations.

And the Queensland floral emblem, the Cooktown Orchid? Not recorded by Banks and Solander, although it may have been plentiful in the area in 1770.

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Queensland SGAP is presently entering on the name change debate endured by all other eastern SGAP groups in past years, and it seems inevitable that those who yearn for change will have their way. Perhaps other units of SGAP could also think about nomenclature: In the September '02 Journal of the Australian Native Plants Society, Canberra Region inc., an article by Leigh Murray on planting in a difficult area includes the following observation: "This article started out as non-technical notes on a few eucs for the Eucalyptus Study Group - I'm one of those 'enthusiastic amateur' members. (I'd prefer Study Groups were called Interest Groups - 'Study' put me off for ages, but since joining the Eucalyptus and Wildlife Groups I've learnt all sorts of interesting stuff, and contributed a little)....."

I was also hesitant to join a Study Group when I first joined SGAP; I had visions of some sort of onerous correspondence course with assignments and deadlines, which of course is not the case. Do readers feel that we should begin a movement in SGAP to change the Study Group title to Interest Group, or something even better? This could make for interesting debate at an ASGAP conference - comments are invited!!

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PENCIL ORCHID: This common name is applied to at least three epiphytic *Dendrobia*: *fairfaxii*, *schoeninum*, and *teretifolium*, and the last is the one we frequently encounter. It is possibly the most commonly occurring orchid in the Qld Wet Tropics, and is an orchid that manages to survive and thrive

in many urban situations. *D. teretifolium* also rejoices in such names as Rat's Tail and Bridal Veil Orchid, and both names are appropriate, the pendulous terete leaves could almost be compared to a rat's tail, and a large flowering plant would make a stunning bridal bouquet, although I don't know about a veil. This orchid is flowering profusely in mid September, with masses of perfect white flowers, although flower colour can be very variable. Public parks in Cairns city have retained many old trees and these bear large numbers of Pencil Orchids. One of the most notable, if one happens to visit Cairns Esplanade in September, is a large *Flindersia* tree with the trunk encircled from crown to head height in gorgeous orchid flowers.

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HAS SPRING SPRUNG ? By Mary Gandini, Cairns, North Queensland.

It looks like spring has arrived at my place. Several orchids think so anyhow, the *Dendrobiums* in particular. *Dendrobium bifalce* has finished flowering now (dated 22/8/02 -Ed.) and has one seed pod. The flowers on one *Dendrobium discolor* are already two weeks old. Two others of this species have budded up. Sadly, last year, I lost others to the weevil that enters the new growth and bores down the stem. This was the first time that had occurred and it was too late by the time I realised what was happening. *Dendrobium trilamellatum* has several flower sprays and one pseudobulb has two sprays. This should make a good show. One specimen of *Dendrobium teretifolium* (I never know what to call these orchids nowadays) has numerous sprays of small white flowers. Sometimes I wonder if this plant is what is termed a "horse tail". Another specimen has larger yellow flowers that do not open as widely as the white variety. *Dendrobium rigidum* has a few flowers. I have a few of these orchids and they tend to flower throughout the year.

A tiny specimen of *Bulbophyllum gadgarrense* has several tiny white flowers with yellow/orange tips for the first time. *Cymbidium madidum* has racemes of sweet-smelling buttercup yellow flowers. *Pomatocalpa macphersonii* has buds.

Sunday 18th August I climbed Lamb's Head (a peak in the Malbon Thomson Range approx 30km south of Cairns - Ed.) which is a wonderful orchid place. It is over 1,000 metres in altitude so all the high country orchids can be seen. It was with the Bushwalking Club so was not a botanical walk. I named 22 orchid species in passing, so, if one really looked, there would be several more. On the rock face *Dendrobium speciosum* made a lovely display of creamy white flowers among the orange *Borya septentrionalis* which is a resurrection

plant and is dry at this time of year. When the heavy rains come it reverts to green again. Other orchids in flower were *Dendrobium adae* (two cream flowers on each peduncle) *Sarcochilus falcatus* (white flowers), *Plectorrhiza tridentata* (greenish flower with white labellum), *Cadetia taylori* (white flowers), and *Octarhena pusilla* (spikes of tiny yellow flowers). *Dendrobium jonesii* was budded but no open flowers were observed.

I have a couple of *D. jonesii* but they have no sign of flowers. I guess that they need the chill factor and, apart from a couple of really cold days, winter seems to have passed us by. With the exception of *B. gadgarrense* my flowering orchids are all lowland species.

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NOTES FROM THE ATHERTON TABLELAND, July 2002 : By Doreen.

Oh, to live in Mossman, Nth Qld., now that orchid flowering is here!! Visited a garden there recently with the Atherton Tableland Orchid Society and drooled over the plethora of vigorous healthy native orchids growing on the trees. This is in MAY would you believe? *Dendrobium nindii* in full glorious flower - undoubtedly one of Australia's most attractive orchids, as claimed in Dockrill's "Indigenous Orchids". Reportedly difficult to cultivate, yet here it was with a display of lovely mauve-ish flowers on dark brown to blackish stems in dappled sunlight on a tree in the open garden. The Mossman climate is perfect for it, and it relished the conditions. We told it how beautiful it was!

Another orchid perfectly at home there was *Dendrobium antennatum*, also in full flower showing twisted petals and purple veins on the white lip. Not so spectacular, but nevertheless flaunting a mass of tiny flowers was *Dendrobium rigidum*. *Dendrobium semi-fuscum* was at home there, as was the natural hybrid *Dendrobium superbiens* (*D. discolor* x *D. bigibbum*).

The Mossman trip included a visit to Wongabel Gardens where *Spathoglottis* hybrids were flowering profusely and causing much comment. Varying shades of yellow/flushed mauve caused a guess at a hybrid between exotic *Spathoglottis chrysantha* and *Spathoglottis plicata*. *S. paulinae* apparently not used. (The cross could, just possibly, be "Elizabeth Catherine" made in Java in 1938.)

A speaker at a club meeting who is hybridising *Spathoglottis* told of success she had with growing these plants by placing the bulb just on the surface of the mix, not burying it. A hint only learnt by trial and error I would say. A well-known grower present valued the tip.

A surprise sighting on the Waterfalls Circuit near Millaa Millaa on the

Atherton Tablelands was *Dendrobium baileyi*, usually thought to be mostly in lowland ainforests, although occasionally at higher altitudes. It was thiught that the *Dendrobium jonesii* seen in the same area was most likely *D.jonesii* var *magnificum*. The flowers on *Oberonia titania* were admired greatly, but *Mobilabium hamatum*, *Bulbophyllum macphersonii*, and *Plectorrhiza* sp. were not seen in flower. *Den gracilicaule* could be seen in flower through the glasses at Zillie Falls and also *Cymbidium madidum*.

With *Den speciosum* varieties in flower in some parts of the Tablelands ,it was interesting to discuss why a plant displayed at the Atherton Show was labelled "*Den. speciosum* var *pedunculatum*". Identifying feature, it was explained, was the length of the flowering stem, where the flowers are usually crowded at the top of the pedicel. The peduncle in var *pedunculatum* is more than half the length of the flowering stem before flowers emerge. Bulbs are usually squat and conical in shape.

Oldtimers remember this orchid as being very plentiful in all areas of the Herberton Range (behind Atherton) in years gone by. Like most others in natural habitats, it is now rarely seen there.

(Eds: we once had the privilege of viewing an extended colony of these orchids growing on rocks in a dry creekbed in the Herberton Range, flowering profusely, safe for the timebeing, but entirely vulnerable....).

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Some taxonomic changes, from "Queensland Herbarium Achievements" 2000-2001, per Jan Sked, Editor, SCAP Qld Region Bulletin, Sept 2002:

<u>Old Name</u>	<u>New/Current Name</u>
<i>Bulbophyllum globuliforme</i>	<i>Oncophyllum globuliforme</i>
<i>Bulbophyllum minutissimum</i>	<i>Oncophyllum minutissimum</i>
<i>Bulbophyllum weinthalii</i> (new ssp.)	<i>Bulbophyllum weinthalii</i> ssp <i>striatum</i>
<i>Bulbophyllum weinthalii</i> (new subspecies)	<i>Bulbophyllum weinthalii</i> ssp. <i>weinthalii</i>
<i>Caladenia alata</i>	<i>Petalochilus alatus</i>
<i>Caladenia alba</i> var <i>picta</i>	<i>Petalochilus pictus</i>
<i>Caladenia atroclavia</i>	<i>Arachnorchis atroclavia</i>
<i>Caladenia caerulea</i>	<i>Cyanicula caerulea</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	<i>Petalochilus carneus</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>fuscata</i>	<i>Petalochilus fuscatus</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>gracillima</i>	<i>Caladenia gracillima</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>gracillima</i>	<i>Petalochilus gracillimus</i>
<i>Caladenia catenata</i>	<i>Petalochilus catenatus</i>
<i>Caladenia chamaephylla</i>	<i>Petalochilus chamaephyllus</i>
<i>Caladenia dilatata</i>	<i>Arachnorchis dilatata</i>
<i>Caladenia filamentosa</i>	<i>Calonema filamentosum</i>
<i>Caladenia flaccida</i>	<i>Calonema flaccidum</i>
<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>	<i>Petalochilus fuscatus</i>
<i>Caladenia gracillima</i>	<i>Petalochilus gracillimus</i>
<i>Caladenia picta</i>	<i>Petalochilus pictus</i>
<i>Caladenia reticulata</i>	<i>Arachnorchis reticulata</i>
<i>Corybas neocaledonicus</i> (misidentified - does not occur in Australia)	<i>Corybas cerasinus</i>
<i>Dendrobium minutissimum</i>	<i>Oncophyllum minutissimum</i>
<i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> var <i>papuana</i>	<i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> ssp. <i>rosenstromii</i>
<i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> var <i>rosenstromii</i>	<i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> ssp. <i>rosenstromii</i>
<i>Phalaenopsis rosenstromii</i>	<i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> ssp. <i>rosenstromii</i>

Phyllorchis minutissima	Oncophyllum minutissimum
Pterocerus moorei	Rhinerrhizopsis moorei
Pterostylis bicolor	Oligochaetochilus bicolor
Pterostylis boormanii	Oligochaetochilus boormanii
Pterostylis chaetophora	Oligochaetochilus chaetophora
Pterostylis cobarensis	Oligochaetochilus cobarensis
Pterostylis cycnocephala	Oligochaetochilus cycnocephala
Ptersostylis daintreana	Oligochaetochilus daintreana
Pterostylis gibbosa	Oligochaetochilus gibbosa
Pterostylis hamata	Oligochaetochilus hamata
Pterostylis longifolia	Oligochaetochilus longifolia
Pterostylis mitchellii	Oligochaetochilus mitchellii
Pterostylis mutica	Oligochaetochilus mutica
Pterostylis praetermissa	Oligochaetochilus praetermissa
Ptersostylis pusilla	Oligochaetochilus pusilla
Pterostylis rufa	Oligochaetochilus rufa
Ptersostylis setifera	Oligochaetochilus setifera
Pterostylis woollsii	Oligochaetochilus woollsii
Rhinerrhiza moorei	Rhinerrhizopsis moorei
Sarchochilus moorei	Rhinerrhizopsis moorei
Thrixspermum moorei	Rhinerrhizopsis moorei

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FINANCIAL REPORT 1/7/01-30/6/02

BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD 1/7/01			\$647 72
INCOME: Subscriptions, grants, donations	170 00		
Bank Interest	29	170 29	818 01
N.B. Bank Charges NIL			
EXPENDITURE: Printing	107 70		
Postage	72 65		
Stationery	18 66		
Preparation of photograph disk	20 00	219 01	
CASH IN BANK 30/6/02			\$599 00
Bendigo Bank a/c no. 114 030 240			

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Although there is evidence of insect damage on plants, we don't dare use insecticide because we have recorded as many as 28 species of bird in one day, all seen from our small plot of land

We are pleased to have been invited to write an article on the the Orchid Study Group for a publication to be released at the 38th Tropical Queensland Orchid Council Conference in June 2003. More on this in a later newsletter.

An article in APS Victoria's March journal reported on the successful in situ recovery of the critically endangered orchid, *Caladenia hastata*, Mellblom's Spider Orchid. The first and most important point is the co-operation received from the owners of a large industrial plant, no doubt due to the manner of the approach. Secondly, although the attempt to re-establish the orchid off site failed in spite of every technical assistance, this attempt showed the way. The colony was watered during the hot summer. Seed spilled accidentally during collection germinated, so mycorrhizal fungal baiting sites were established nearby, seeds sown, a fine layer of mulch added and watered. This approach and excellent result is one we could all emulate where extinction is threatened by industrial sites and road works.