

Journal  
of the  
Native Orchid Society  
of  
South Australia Inc



*Oligochaetochilus excelsus*

**NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
**POST OFFICE BOX 565 UNLEY SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5061**

*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 of the management committee, no person may represent the Society on any matter. All native orchids are protected in the wild; their collection without written Government permit is illegal.*

**PRESIDENT**

Bob Bates:  
Telephone 8251 5251

**SECRETARY**

Cathy Houston  
telephone 8356 7356

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Bodo Jensen

**COMMITTEE**

Malcolm Guy  
John Bartram

Brendan Killen  
Bill Dear

**EDITOR**

David Hirst  
14 Beaverdale Avenue  
Windsor Gardens SA 5087  
Telephone 8261 7998  
Email [hirst.david@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:hirst.david@saugov.sa.gov.au)

**TREASURER**

Peter McCauley  
**ASSISTANT TREASURER**  
Bill Dear  
telephone 8296 2111  
mobile 0414 633941

**LIFE MEMBERS**

Mr R. Hargreaves†  
Mr H. Goldsack†  
Mr R. Robjohns†  
Mr J. Simmons†  
Mr. L. Nesbitt

Mr D. Wells  
Mr G. Carne  
Mr R Bates  
Mr R Shooter  
Bill Dear

**Registrar of Judges:** Reg Shooter

**Trading Table:** Judy Penney

**Field Trips and Conservation:**

Thelma Bridle telephone 8384 4174

**Tuber bank Coordinator:**

Malcolm Guy telephone 8276 7350

**New Members Coordinator:**

vacant

**PATRON Mr L. Nesbitt**

*The Native Orchid Society of South Australia, while taking all due care, take no responsibility for loss or damage to any plants whether at shows, meetings or exhibits.*

*Views or opinions expressed by authors of articles within this Journal do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the management committee. We condone the reprint of any articles if acknowledgment is given*

**Journal Cost \$2. per issue. Family or Single Membership with subscription \$16.00**

Front cover from an original drawing by Jane Hutchinson. Used with her kind permission.



**JOURNAL OF THE  
NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY  
OF  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.**

**JUNE 2005      VOL. 29 NO 5**

**CONTENTS THIS JOURNAL**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Page</b>
Diary Dates		41
May Meeting		42
For Your Information – NOSSA News		43
A Thank you from the President: helpers at Native Plant Sale	Bob Bates	44
Rosa Fiveash Original Paintings		44
Additional to Ira Butler & Bill Murdoch Trophies	Reg shooter	45
How it is Done	Reg shooter	46
Kuitpo Karers Kolumn	Les Nesbitt	46
AOF Awareness Campaign: Mealy Bugs		47
Recent Conservation Matters	Thelma Bridle	47
Book Review: Census of Vascular Plants of South Australia Barker & Barker, Jessop and Vonow eds.	Bob Bates	49
Antarctic Beech	Steve Howard	50
Orchid Grid: May 2005	Les Nesbitt	51

**NEXT MEETING 28 JUNE 2004**

**Tuesday, 28 June**, St Matthew's Hall, Bridge 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.

The speaker for the meeting will be Ann Tindall on New Zealand Orchids.

**DIARY DATES**

<b>2 July (Sat)</b>	Scott Conservation Park greenhoods
<b>4 July (Mon)</b>	Hindmarsh Valley monitoring <i>Diplodium bryophilum</i>
<b>10 July (Sun)</b>	Potters Scrub, Coorong greenhoods
<b>24 July (Sun)</b>	Newland Head Conservation Park greenhoods
<b>August</b> (dates to be announced)	Caroona Creek CP
<b>10-11 September</b>	NOSSA Spring Show - NOTE CHANGE OF DATE
<b>13-19 September</b>	WA Orchid Spectacular
<b>4 December</b>	Annual BBQ

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wed, 6th July** at the home of **Malcolm Guy**. Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.

## MAY MEETING

### Plants benched

#### Epiphyte Species

*Dendrobium bigibbum*.

#### Epiphyte Hybrids

*Dendrobium* Annes Rainbow Surprise; *Dendrobium* Colonial Campio; *Dendrobium* Esse Banks (2 plants); *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon (2 plants); *Dendrobium* Violet Yamaji (Australasian hybrid); *Dendrobium* Wasył.

#### Terrestrial Species

*Diplodium alveatum*; *Diplodium fischii*; *Diplodium laxum* [Bungonia NSW]; *Diplodium reflexum* [Fern Bay]; *Diplodium robustum* [Goldfields, Barossa]; *Urochilus sanguineus* [NSW]; *Urochilus sanguineus* [Marble Hill].

#### Terrestrial Hybrids

*Pterostylis* Ruckman

### Judging results

#### Epiphyte Hybrid

1<sup>st</sup> *Dendrobium* Annes Rainbow Surprise grown by Bev & John Gay

2<sup>nd</sup> *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon grown by Malcolm Guy

3<sup>rd</sup> *Dendrobium* Violet Yamaji grown by Edda Viskic & Russell Job

#### Epiphyte Species

1<sup>st</sup> *Dendrobium bigibbum* grown by Steve Howard

No 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### Terrestrial Species

1<sup>st</sup> *Diplodium reflexum* grown by Les Nesbitt

2<sup>nd</sup> *Urochilus sanguineus* grown by Malcolm Guy

3<sup>rd</sup> *Diplodium robustum* grown by Malcolm Guy

#### Terrestrial Hybrid

1<sup>st</sup> *Pterostylis* Ruckman grown by Les Nesbitt

No 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Plant of the night

*Diplodium reflexum* grown by Les Nesbitt

### Popular vote results

#### Epiphyte Species

*Dendrobium bigibbum* grown by Steve Howard

#### Epiphyte Hybrid

*Dendrobium* Violet Yamaji grown by Edda Viskic & Russell Job

#### Terrestrial Species

*Urochilus sanguineus* grown by Malcolm Guy

#### Terrestrial Hybrid

*Pterostylis* Ruckman grown by Les Nesbitt

Commentary on Terrestrials by Les Nesbitt; commentary on Epiphytes by John Gay

## MAY SPEAKER

Brendan Killen was the speaker for May and he gave a video presentation on epiphytic orchids of Lord Howe Island, 1770 Island, and various localities in Queensland in situ. Many of the orchids shown in the film were growing in extreme habitats, on exposed rock faces or even clinging to coastal scrubs facing all the elements of the weather, yet they were thriving and flowering. If we were to treat our pampered plants in such a way they would surely die. It was an evening of surprises and one was left in awe of nature's vagaries.

### Judging Results for the April Meeting

<b>Terrestrial species</b> –	<i>Diplodium (Pterostylis) laxum</i> grown by M. Guy <i>Diplodium (Pterostylis) obtusum</i> grown by M. Guy <i>Diplodium (Pterostylis) fischii</i> grown by L. Nesbitt
<b>Terrestrial hybrids</b> –	<i>X Taurodium (Pterostylis) furcillatum</i> grown by M. Guy
<b>Epiphytic species</b> –	<i>Dendrobium schneiderae</i> grown by N. Oliver <i>Dendrobium bigibbum</i> var. <i>compactum</i> grown by B. Jensen <i>Liparis reflexa</i> grown by J. & B. Gay
<b>Epiphytic hybrids</b> –	<i>Dendrobium</i> Hilda Poxon grown by J. & B. Gay <i>Dendrobium</i> Jesmond Dazzler grown by J. & B. Gay <i>Dendrobium</i> Esse Banks grown by M. Guy
<b><u>Plant of the night</u></b> –	<i>Dendrobium schneiderae</i> grown by N. Oliver
<b><u>Popular vote</u></b> –	
<b>Terrestrial species</b>	<i>Diplodium (Pterostylis) obtusum</i> grown by M. Guy
<b>Terrestrial hybrid</b>	<i>X Taurodium (Pterostylis) furcillatum</i> grown by M. Guy
<b>Epiphyte species</b>	<i>Dendrobium schneiderae</i> grown by N. Oliver
<b>Epiphyte hybrid</b>	<i>Dendrobium</i> Jesmond Dazzler grown by J. & B. Gay

PHOTOS OF THESE PLANTS ARE INCLUDED WITH THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL.

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION - NOSSA NEWS

#### NOSSA Annual Show 10-11 September 2005

The Annual Show is to be held one week earlier than usual 10-11 September at St Bernadettes Hall, St Marys.

#### 'Show bags'

While you may not be using as many plastic bags at the Supermarkets they will still be required at the NOSSA Show for the plant sales. So please keep your plastic bags and bring them along to the meetings for Malcolm Guy.

**This month's journal will be the last for those people who have not paid their subscription.**

## A Thank you from the President: helpers at Native Plant Sale

Dozens of people give up their time for the good of the Society each year and thanking them via the Journal will become a regular feature.

A NOSSA stand was manned throughout the two days of the Native Plant Show on April 30<sup>th</sup>- May 1<sup>st</sup> at Wayville. Many visitors showed interest in various aspects of native orchids and our Society with several new members signed up and others renewing membership.

Those assisting include Bodo Jensen and Graham Guy (especially setting up), Bill Dear (manning stall and taking it down), John and Libby Bartram, Cathy Houston, John and Joan Peace and Susan Secomb. Thanks also to those who helped put the transportable display together over the years

Well done to these people and any others I may have missed.

**Bob Bates**

## Rosa Fiveash Original Paintings

Lauder Scott Rogers is attempting to locate the whereabouts of the original Rosa Fiveash orchid paintings. The aim is to get a digital photo of each painting for a book on Dr RS Rogers and his orchid work including the work of Rosa Fiveash. While the location of some originals is known there are a number yet to locate.

If you are aware of the location of any of the following paintings please contact the Editor, Cathy Houston or Lauder Scott Rogers. People's collections and privacy will be respected.

Fiveash Paintings of Rogers' Orchids that may exist but not found at Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australian Museum, Botanic Gardens of South Australia, or Barr Smith Library Special Collections.

Originally Authored by Rogers	Journal	Volume	Page	Year	Originally Authored by Rogers	Journal	Volume	Page	Year
<i>Bulbophyllum cilioglossum</i>	TRSSA	59	204	1935	<i>Microtis truncata</i>	TRSSA	44	326	1920
<i>Bulbophyllum weinthalii</i>	TRSSA	57	95	1933	<i>Phreatia robusta</i>	TRSSA	54	39	1930
<i>Caladenia alpina</i>	TRSSA	51	12	1927	<i>Prasophyllum acuminatum</i>	TRSSA	51	291	1927
<i>Caladenia audasii</i>	TRSSA	51	295	1927	<i>Prasophyllum constrictum</i>	TRSSA	33	213	1909
<i>Caladenia bicallata</i>	TRSSA	33	17	1909	<i>Prasophyllum ellipticum</i>	TRSSA	44	325	1920
<i>Caladenia bicolor</i>	TRSSA	54	46	1930	<i>Prasophyllum frenchii</i> v <i>tadgellianum</i>	TRSSA	46	153	1922
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>aurantiaca</i>	TRSSA	46	154	1922	<i>Prasophyllum hartii</i> var <i>parviflorum</i>	TRSSA	54	44	1930
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>gigantea</i>	TRSSA	51	13	1927	<i>Prasophyllum lanceolatum</i>	TRSSA	44	323	1920
<i>Caladenia carnea</i> var <i>pygmaea</i>	TRSSA	51	13	1927	<i>Prasophyllum nublingii</i>	TRSSA	51	293	1927
<i>Caladenia cristata</i>	TRSSA	47	337	1923	<i>Prasophyllum ruppii</i>	TRSSA	51	292	1927
<i>Caladenia lavandulacea</i>	TRSSA	51	11	1927	<i>Prasophyllum tadgellianum</i>	TRSSA	47	338	1923
<i>Caladenia pectinata</i>	TRSSA	44	352	1920	<i>Prasophyllum validum</i>	TRSSA	51	7	1927
<i>Caladenia pumila</i>	TRSSA	46	152	1922	<i>Pterostylis allantoidea</i>	TRSSA	64	139	1940
<i>Caladenia radialis</i>	TRSSA	51	296	1927	<i>Rhizanthella gardneri</i>	JRSWA	15	1	1928
<i>Caladenia sigmoidea</i>	TRSSA	62	12	1938	<i>Sarcophilus spathulatus</i>	TRSSA	51	1	1927
<i>Caladenia triangularis</i>	TRSSA	51	10	1927	<i>Thelymitra daltonii</i>	TRSSA	54	42	1930
<i>Calochilus imberbis</i>	TRSSA	51	4	1927	<i>Thelymitra dedmanae</i>	TRSSA	62	13	1938
<i>Diuris fastidiosa</i>	TRSSA	51	6	1927	<i>Thelymitra sargentii</i>	TRSSA	54	41	1930
<i>Habenaria divaricata</i>	TRSQ	32	136	1921	<i>Thelymitra truncata</i>	TRSSA	38	343	1914
<i>Habenaria ovoidea</i>	TRSQ	32	140	1921	<i>Zeuxine attenuata</i>	TRSQ	32	123	1920
<i>Microtis magnadenia</i>	TRSSA	54	44	1930	<i>Zeuxine oblonga</i>	TRSQ	32	121	1920
<i>Microtis oblonga</i>	TRSSA	47	339	1923					

## **Additional to Ira Butler & Bill Murdoch Trophies**

Many growers have expressed the opinion that the Ira Butler & Bill Murdoch Trophies that are awarded for Champion Australian Native Orchid Hybrid of the Year & the Champion Australian Native Orchid Species of the Year respectively are becoming expensive at \$15 each. In addition to this three slides per application must be sent.

For this there is just one trophy given, Australia wide, for The Ira Butler Trophy plus about 12 silver awards, the remainder get a printed certificate. For The Bill Murdoch Trophy there is just one Australia wide award the remainder receiving a printed certificate. It is felt among many growers that the competition is in fact a competition of photographic excellence rather than of the orchid.

It is proposed that in addition to these trophies there will be offered to South Australian orchid growers; The Les Nesbitt Award for the Champion Australian Native Species of the Year and the Reg Shooter Award for the Champion Australian Native Orchid Hybrid of the Year.

These awards would consist of a perennial trophy and a personal miniature to the best in the State in both the species and hybrid sections. In addition every entry would receive a laminated certificate depicting a digitally generated picture of the plant showing the name of the orchid and the growers name.

Entry to participate for these awards would be a total of \$5 per award.

It is emphasised that these proposed awards are not a replacement for the Ira Butler & Bill Murdoch nominations but as an addition. Should a grower so wish they could participate in either or both awards.

### What plants are eligible for these proposed awards?

The Champion Australian Native Orchid at any SA show and any Australian Native Orchid receiving an award in SA that year.

To enter, an application form is to be completed accompanied by 3 digital photos showing front, side views of flowers & whole plant. Photos can be sent on floppy disc, computer disc or by e-mail. Application forms will be available from your Club Secretary or Ron Parish. [if you are not into digital please ask another member who can assist you]

A \$5 fee, in cash, should accompany the application.

Completed entries should be sent to Ron Parish, 4 Briardale Rd, Sturt, 5047 to be received no later than 15<sup>th</sup> November. Orchids awarded in November & December will be eligible for the following year.

A committee consisting of judges, from each club wishing to participate will determine the winner.

The overall winner will be announced at the end of November by letter to the appropriate club. All certificates will be sent to the club Secretary nominated on the application form to enable these to be presented to the winners at a meeting of the club.

## How it is Done

Reg Shooter

There were not many plants exhibited at the May meeting but what was there was very good. In the terrestrial section Les Nesbitt benched a lovely pot of *Diplodium reflexum* syn *Pterostylis reflexa* which gained Orchid of the night. This species is found in Southeast Queensland & Northern NSW. It is often confused with *Ptst. revoluta* but has smaller more erect flowers. In its natural habitat it is quite common to find dense colonies on moist slopes in open forest areas. In cultivation it is easy to grow and flower, quickly developing into specimen pots.

There were just eight plants in the epiphyte section, seven hybrids and one species, the species being *Dendrobium bigibbum* benched by a new member, Steve Howard. The label on the plant said it was *Den. lithacola* it was felt among the judges that it was in fact *D. bigibbum*. *Den. lithacola* previously known as *Den. bigibbum* var *compactum* has short, stout pseudobulbs up to 25cms long but averaging 10 to 12cms. Racemes usually carry three to ten flowers often tending to droop forward. The plant exhibited had tall, 35cm tall pseudobulbs with long racemes carrying a number of large, flat open flowers typical of *Den. bigibbum*. But, as the saying goes, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" and the plant benched was a picture having four racemes in flower with another in bud, congratulations Steve.

A plant that caught the popular voters eye was *Den. Violet Yamaji* (*D. Midnight* x *D. spectabile*) benched by Edda Viskic & Russell Job. This is an Australasian hybrid orchid. This means it is not wholly Australian but has some species in its parentage that grow within the boundaries of Australasia as determined by the ANOS Constitution. The species in the parentage of this orchid are *D. spectabile* from New Guinea, *D. atroviolaceum* from NG, *D. macrophyllum* from NG.

*D. bigibbum* from Australia & NG & *D. discolor* from Australia & NG. The plant benched was very well grown, a fairly large plant carrying a number of racemes with one in full bloom. The flowers were clear white, large, flat with well-shaped petals and sepals complemented by a flat labellum. Knowing the species in its make up that are, with the exception of *D. bigibbum*, not of a round well filled in shape it is surprising such progeny is produced.

## Kuitpo Karers Kolumn May 05

Les Nesbitt

At our June meeting we should see in flower the first of the orchids rescued from Kuitpo last year. Expect to see pots of the fast multiplier *Acianthus pusillus* in full bloom. From August into spring the number of species in flower should increase monthly reaching a peak in late September-early October. Kuitpo terrestrials should be a feature at our spring show this year.

Many of my rescued plants are up and growing strongly. I wish it would rain so that I do not have to hand water continually. I am sick of watering. You would be too if all you had was a tank and a watering can and a shadehouse full of pots to do three times a week. If no rain falls before the end of June I will run out of tank water.



Some species were not up at the end of May. *Pterostylis foliata* was not showing and neither was the unknown *Corybas* species. Expect these in June. Extra *Caladenia*, *Leptocerus* and *Cyrtostylis* leaves were still appearing late in May. *Thelymitra pauciflora* leaves were the first to grow back in March. They are now very large. As the flowers are self pollinating and rarely open, do not expect to see these at a meeting. *Glossodia major* leaves showed in April well before any of the hairy *Caladenia tentaculata* leaves were seen.

I have already removed several *Disa (Monadenia) bractiata* seedling leaves and destroyed them. This orchid weed has broad pointed leaves that are green on top and reddish purple underneath. They were pulled up with the tiny tuber still attached and crushed on the concrete path with a size 10 boot. Never let these plants flower and set seed or there will be millions the next year. Grasses have also been germinating in the rescued pots. As soon as they are big enough to grab hold of, I pull them out.

## **AOF Awareness Campaign**

### **Mealy Bug**

Mealy bugs are listed to be one of the scale family but these pest do NOT form an armoured scale covering. They are soft bodied and covered in a waxy cottony secretion. They have well developed legs and often retain this power throughout their life cycle.

Like all scale insects, they excrete honeydew in large amounts and this has a great attraction for ants. The females can lay 100 to 200 eggs that can hatch in 14 days time, and then the crawlers disperse to their feeding grounds. The complete life cycle of these pests is estimated to be 10 weeks.

The mealy bug often use below the surface of the potting media for resting or nesting periods, as soon as the new growth or the flower buds begin to develop the bugs become active almost overnight.

**Care...** Inspect under surface of the leaves, any folds, and behind the old bracts which may surround the bulb that can be a good hiding spot.

**Control...** *White oil mixed with Malathion, Rogor or any good systemic insecticide.*

**Warning...** *Use all chemicals only after reading the prescribed doses on the label. Never use these sprays on a dry plant; making sure it is well watered before spraying. Never use these sprays on a hot day or if the plant may be exposed to very strong light as burning may occur.*

## **RECENT CONSERVATION MATTERS**

**Thelma Bridle**

Whilst much of the conservation work carried out by NOSSA involves field work, the following highlights the other aspect of conservation – letter writing.

In October 2004 NOSSA wrote to DEH, Alexandrina Council and Murray Bridge Council with regard to the proposed widening and bitumenising of Ferries McDonald Road and a proposed composting site adjacent to the Ferries McDonald Conservation Park.

The composting site is currently on hold pending a Council submission to the Environment Protection Authority due to contamination concerns.

Ferries McDonald Road runs along the eastern border of Monarto Conservation Park, and for 2km of its length through the middle of Ferries McDonald Conservation Park  
NOSSA objected to a major road for heavy lorries being created through an area already set aside for its conservation value. In particular NOSSA was concerned about the destruction of native orchid populations during the widening and sealing process, and the subsequent smothering of further orchid populations by increased amounts of dust swirled up by faster and heavier traffic.

The proposal has to go to the Development Assessment Commission with approvals required from the Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) and the Development Act (1993). NOSSA will be making a submission to the Development Assessment Commission in due course. If you have any concerns you would like included in the submission, please contact me.

In February 2005 NOSSA wrote to DEH and the Coorong and Tintinara Councils regarding the proposed installation of a fertiliser distribution facility, just outside the township of Tintinara. The small roadside site proposed for development supports 27 species of native orchids, identified by NOSSA members, usually during coffee breaks whilst travelling east, including one conservation-rated species in relatively weed-free bushland. NOSSA felt this area was an important example of remnant native vegetation that would once have been common in the area. I would be happy to supply a copy of the orchid list to interested members.

NOSSA is very pleased to report the Development Assessment Commission upheld arguments against the development and the proposal was refused. NOSSA hopes to liaise with DEH on possible future management of the site.

---



Judges at work

Photo by Robert Lawrence

**Book Review: Census of Vascular Plants of South Australia  
Barker & Barker, Jessop and Vonow eds.**

**Bob Bates**

This much awaited census was published March 2005 and lists all plants native or naturalised in SA by region, with synonyms and is most useful for anyone interested in SA plants and needing to know what species we have and which names are accepted by the state herbarium.

The authors have taken a most conservative approach with the Orchids accepting only one of the recent new genera of Jones and Clements, Szlach and Hopper and Brown, that being *Pheladenia deformis* to replace *Caladenia deformis*.

All the other new genera are included as synonyms so it is acceptable to use any which have not been shown to be superfluous or invalid.

For that reason I recommend that NOSSA continue to use all the new segregate genera *Anzybas*, *Bunochilus*, *Corunastylis*, *Corysanthes*, *Diplodium*, *Hymenochilus*, *Hydrorchis*, *Linguella*, *Microtidium*, *Nemacianthus*, *Oligochaetochilus*, *Pheladenia*, *Plumatochilos*, *Speculantha*, *Taurantha* and *Urochilus*.

Indeed these names are used in other orchid journals and the most recent newly described WA species has been published as *Hydrorchis* in the Orchadian.

The new Census lists about 240 species of South Australian orchids and I am aware of the existence of some sixty other un-named species in this state. This means that we now recognise some 300 species of orchid occurring in SA.

This is quite a dramatic rise from the less than 120 species listed in the Flora of SA third edition in 1978, although that edition did have a lot of 'varieties' listed.

Some of the orchids listed in the latest census are unpublished so that we are given tag names only, the number of tagged species which could have been included would have been about 100... such a large number that it seemed too overwhelming to include them all.

Conservation ratings are given at a state level for most of the species requiring them, however these ratings were omitted for many species.

These will be included in the next quarterly electronic update of the Census along with further tagged species. My hard copy from the Botanic Gardens, electronic version available at the Botanic Gardens website.

ARTICLES

Many thanks to those members who have recently forwarded articles for the journal.  
Please keep up the good work as it makes for a full and interesting journal each month.

In the forest, nobody hears a tree fall.

For over 2000 years the Antarctic Beech had stood tall. Born before the birth of Christ it had endured many changes and challenges and had survived. A relic from the past when our climate was much colder the species is now restricted to a few high altitude areas of our eastern rainforests. The Beech tree can no longer reproduce due to the warming climate. There will be no more. They are facing certain extinction. In a torrential downpour and gusty wind the soil that had given it life for so long gave way and the giant crashed to the earth. It did not go without a fight and on its way to earth collected all and sundry around it, leaving a gaping hole in the forest canopy.

We arrived only a short time after. The brilliant light shining through to the ground alerting us to the find. We never spoke. The scene was reminiscent of the equatorial rainforests to our north where indiscriminate forest clearing is a daily occurrence only this was much worse. Those trees to the north will grow back; the Antarctic Beech will never have the chance. Standing next to a tree that was around before Christ gives you a strange feeling. You realise how small and insignificant we are and how life is so short.

After 2000 years you get a few hitchhikers attaching themselves to you and this tree was no different. The main casualty was *Dendrobium falcorostrum*, some still attached to their host and others lying prostrate on the ground. They will never thrive in their new location. Despite many suffering little damage the fact that they are now on the forest floor will be their downfall. One would think that if the root system were in tact then they would survive. After all they were on their original host and in the same location. Wrong. Factors such as sunlight, air movement and the comparative safety from predators had changed. Temperature and humidity levels were also drastically different. They will soon die, like so many we saw from trees that had suffered the same fate previously. Death however, would be a slow process. The roots would be the first to go. Over wet and unable to dry out periodically they soon rot. The plant reacts by growing new roots only to be eaten by the local bug population. The older canes shed leaves and die. Then in a final attempt to survive, the plant would send out new growths each getting smaller and smaller until there was nothing left. I wondered why grow our natives close to the ground where air movement is restricted and predators abundant? If they can't survive their native habitat then what chance in cultivation. So many lessons learnt in such a short time.

There was more. Tiny *Bulbophyllum exiguum* covered the trunk, some masses covering a square meter or so. Each mature bulb carried the daintiest of flowers, each with the sweetest perfume on a hair like stem that danced in the faint breeze. What would they be like next year. Time would tell. Another casualty was *Den. speciosum* variety *tarberi*. Some of these would be lucky, landing where they could continue life part epiphytically, part terrestrial. This showed us the wonderful adaptability of this orchid. Their life too, shortened by the grim reality that the forest canopy will soon close and block those precious few hours of sunlight that was now reaching the floor of the forest. *Dockrillia teretifolia* var. *fairfaxii* and *Dock. pugioniforme* were an abundant plant in the area and on the tree. It was unlikely that the loss of this tree would have an effect on the local population. *Bulb. shepherdii* and *Liparis coelogenoidies* too were relatively abundant and were found on many different hosts in the area. But we felt for *Den. falcorostrum* which really only has the one major host tree. It is no wonder that bush collected plants are rare nowadays as is the Antarctic Beech. One can only hope that the line breeding applying to this species and others will ensure its future survival.

We spent quite some time at the site, disappointed at the carnage we saw but that's Mother Nature. The rest of the walk yielded a futuristic look at what we had stumbled upon. Clumps of rotting plants and masses of bare roots that were once magnificent specimens were a common sight on the older fallen trees. It didn't help fill that empty feeling we experienced. It only confirmed our predictions.

We left the forest, a camera full of images of what we had seen and a greater knowledge of our native species. As I jumped into the car the trees swayed and the rain began to fall. A few hundred miles away Cyclone Grace was moving in. Nature can be so cruel.

**Footnote.** Antarctic Beech is one of several walks in the Border Ranges National Park located in far north-eastern New South Wales, just west of Murwillumbah. It is home to one of the last few remaining stands of the Antarctic Beech. This park is without doubt one of the most magnificent world heritage listed parks we have in Australia and a must for any enthusiast interested in native epiphytic orchids. The sheer numbers have to be seen to be believed. I could only imagine what it was like 200 years ago.

## **ORCHID GRID – May 2005**

**Les Nesbitt**

Autumn has been extremely dry this year with no opening rain at the time of writing (25 May). The last significant rain was in mid February. At the grid site I recorded 13mm for March, 9mm for April and so far in May only 2.5mm. These readings were the sum of several barely readable rainfall measurements in my rain gauge. The last such dry Autumn that I remember was 1982 when June was dry also. In June there were dry sunny days and very cold frosty nights. I lost all the flowers on my winter greenhoods at the then nursery at Kersbrook and pots smaller than 125mm froze solid killing the orchids in them completely. Terrestrials in larger pots survived but suffered damage to the leaves. At home on the plains my *Cattleyas* in the shadehouse went tea coloured and after a week all the leaves dropped off. Another species to suffer was *Cymbidium madidum* which lost all the leaves and the tops of the bulbs. The survivors took several years to recover. I will move such plants under cover if it stays dry this year.

Despite the dry ground some orchids have appeared. Several *Caladenia*, *Diuris* and *Thelymitra* are showing in the grid but there is no sign of any greenhoods. Those that are showing have thin leaves and can only be growing from the moisture stored in the tubers. All the *Dipodium* seed has dispersed. Unless we get rain soon, 2005 will be a poor year for orchid flowers.

For those who are new to this saga the orchid grid is a patch of ground 11m by 6m divided into 1m squares on my bush property near Bridgewater in the Adelaide Hills. I am attempting to grow as many Adelaide Hills species as I can in the grid. So far about 30 species have been tried, not always successfully. Three species were already there when the grid was marked out in 2003. Three additional species have appeared and flowered on their own without my help. Plants and dormant tubers have been planted out, seedlings have been deflasked directly into the ground and dry seed has been sprinkled around. The orchids have had to content with snails, scratching birds, kangaroos and now lack of rain. Plants and flowers are recorded each month as they appear. Each December the grid is slashed to a height of 100mm to open up the grid to the sun and wind and encourage the growth of orchids.

The Electronic journal includes a number of photographs that are not featured in the printed journal due to space restrictions.

PLANTS BENCHED AT MAY MEETING

Photos by Robert Lawrence



*Dendrobium bigibbum*



*Dendrobium Colonial Campio*



*Dendrobium Violet Yamaj*



*Dendrobium Esse Banks*



*Dendrobium Esse Banks*



*Urochilus sanguineus*



*Pterostylis Ruckman*





PLANTS BENCHED AT APRIL MEETING

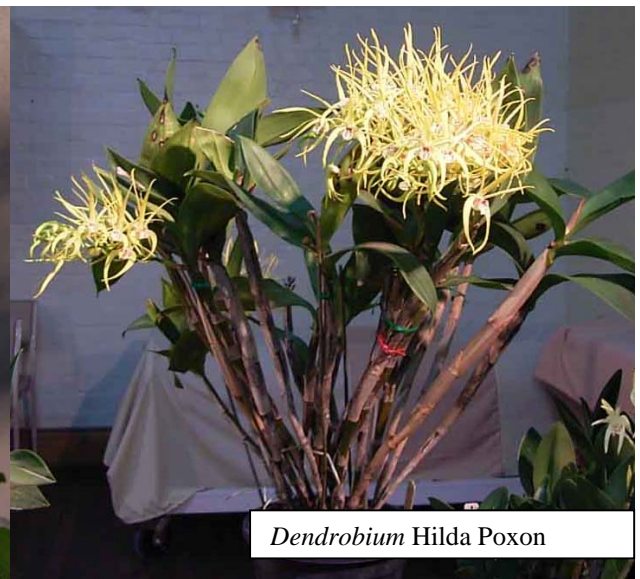
Photos by Robert Lawrence



*Dendrobium Annes Rainbow Surprise*



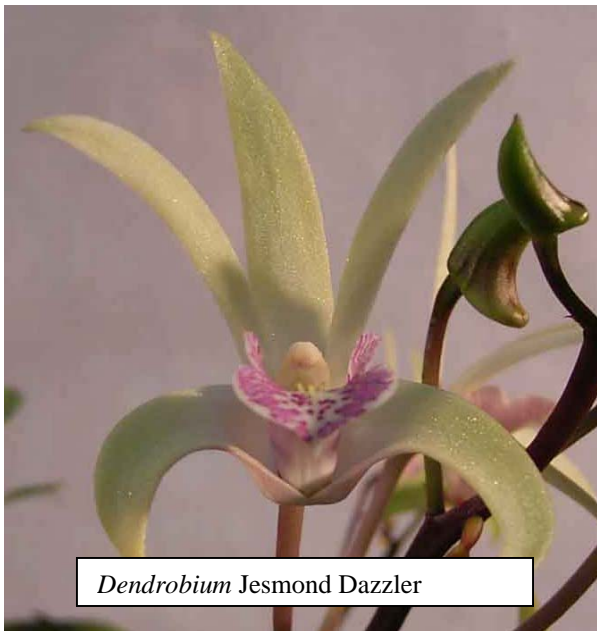
*Dendrobium Esse Banks*



*Dendrobium Hilda Poxon*



*Dendrobium Hilda Poxon*



*Dendrobium Jesmond Dazzler*



*Dendrobium schneiderae*