



Journal
of the
Native Orchid Society
of
South Australia Inc



NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PO BOX 565 UNLEY SA 5061

www.nossa.org.au.

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

Bodo Jensen:
Telephone 8243 0251

SECRETARY

Cathy Houston
telephone 8356 7356
Email: cathyhn@tpg.com.au

VICE PRESIDENT

John Bartram

COMMITTEE

Bob Bates
Thelma Bridle

Bill Dear
Jan Adams
Robert Lawrence

EDITOR

David Hirst
14 Beaverdale Avenue
Windsor Gardens SA 5087
Telephone 8261 7998
Email: david.hirst2@bigpond.com

TREASURER

Marj Sheppard
Telephone 8344 2124
0419 189 118

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr R. Hargreaves†
Mr H. Goldsack†
Mr R. Robjohns†
Mr J. Simmons†
Mr D. Wells†

Mr. L. Nesbitt
Mr G. Carne
Mr R Bates
Mr R Shooter
Mr W Dear

Conservation Officer: Thelma Bridle

Registrar of Judges: Les Nesbitt

Field Trips Coordinator: Bob Bates 82515251 or 0402 291 904 or bobbates63@hotmail.com

Trading Table: Judy Penney

Tuber bank Coordinator: Jane Higgs ph. 8558 6247; email: jhiggs@activ8.net.au

New Members Coordinator: John Bartram ph: 8331 3541; email: barjd@adam.com.au

PATRON Mr L. Nesbitt

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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY
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JULY 2009 VOL. 33 NO 6

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**The Native Orchid Society of South Australia meets every
4th Tuesday of the months February -November**

NEXT MEETING 28 JULY 2009

Tuesday, 28 July, St Matthew's Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. Meeting starts at 8:00 pm. Doors to the hall will be open from 7:15 p.m. to allow Members access to the Library and the trading table.

The speaker for July is renowned orchid grower John Gay who will be speaking and demonstrating about "Preparing Orchids for Exhibition"

DIARY DATES

August 24th-30th	Victorian and SA combined visit to Yorke Peninsula and Flinders Ranges
19th -20th September	Spring Show
Sunday 29th November	Annual BBQ

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thurs, 30th July at the home of Bodo Jensen. Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.

JUNE MEETING

Plants Benched

Epiphyte Species: none benched

Epiphyte Hybrids: *Dendrobium* Colonial Campo; *Dendrobium* Edda x *speciosum* (=Den., Wasyl); *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon 'Ern'.

Terrestrial Species: *Acianthus pusillus* (2 plants); *Corysanthes dilatata*; *Diplodium concinna*; *Diplodium laxum* (Bungonia NSW); *Diplodium robustum* (3 plants); *Linguella nana*; *Taurantha tenuicauda* (New Caledonia); *Urochilus sanguineus*.

Terrestrial Hybrids: *Pterostylis* x *Conoglossa*; *Pterostylis* x *Toveyana* (2 plants).

Judging Results

Open division Hybrids

1st *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon 'Ern'

2nd *Dendrobium* Colonial Campo

No 3rd

Grower

Bev & John Gay

Bev & John Gay

Second division Epiphyte Hybrids

1st *Dendrobium* Wasyl

No 2nd or 3rd

W & J Thompson

No Epiphyte Species in either Division.

Open division Terrestrial species

1st *Linguella nana*

2nd *Urochilus sanguineus*

3rd *Acianthus pusillus*

M & L Guy

M & L Guy

M & L Guy

Second division Terrestrial species

1st *Corysanthes dilatata*

2nd *Diplodium robustum*

3rd *Acianthus pusillus*

Janet Adams

Bill Dear

R & R Lawrence

Open division Terrestrial Hybrid

1st *Taurodium* x *Toveyanum*

2nd *Pterostylis* x *Conoglossa*

3rd *Pterostylis* x *Toveyana*

M & L Guy

M & L Guy

M & L Guy

Popular vote results

Open division Epiphyte hybrid

Dendrobium Hilda Poxon 'Ern'

Bev & John Gay

Second division Epiphyte Hybrids

1st *Dendrobium* Wasyl

W & J Thompson

Open Division Terrestrial species

Urochilus sanguineus

M & L Guy

Second division Terrestrial species

Corysanthes dilatata

Janet Adams

Open division Terrestrial Hybrid

Pterostylis x *Conoglossa*

M & L Guy

Plant of the night

Dendrobium Hilda Poxon 'Ern'

Bev & John Gay

Plant commentary on Terrestrials given by Les Nesbitt & on Epiphytes by Noel Oliver

FOR YOUR INFORMATION - NOSSA NEWS

N.O.S.S.A. FIELD TRIPS

Yorke Peninsula / Alligator Gorge Native Orchid Field trip

Peter McCauley

The N.O.S.S.A. group is planning to join with our Victorian colleagues on this field trip. After much discussion at our planning meeting it was decided the best approach would be to start on Yorke Peninsula and then work up to Alligator Gorge. Yorke Peninsula has several areas round Minlaton that will provide orchids of interest and we can then venture further south to Innes National park for some more species. I suggest three days on the Peninsula moving up to Wilmington as a base for Alligator Gorge on the fourth day. One Department of Environment and Heritage staff member has a "Bush Block" on the lower end of Yorke Peninsula and we will try to gain access to this. A survey last year by N.O.S.S.A. members showed it to be rich in orchids.

Orchids likely to be seen on Yorke Peninsula: *Caladenia brumalis*, *C. conferta*, *C. latifolia*, *C. deformis*, *C. intuta*, *C. bicaliata*, *C. capillata* (as well as hybrids between some of these species) and *Diuris palustris*.

Orchids likely to be seen in Alligator Gorge: *Caladenia gladiolata*, *C. flindersica*, *C. saxatilis*, *C. woolcockiorum* and hybrids between some of these species.

Accommodation:

I suggest Minlaton or Port Vincent as the base. Minlaton has a caravan park with some cabins: Minlaton Caravan Park (08) 8853 2435 and Port Vincent has two Caravan Parks; Port Vincent Foreshore Caravan Park (08) 8853 7073 Fax. (08) 8853 7316 and Seaside Flats and Caravan Park (08) 8853 7011 0418 814 669 Fax. (08) 8853 7355. As a fall back Stansbury is only 12 kms from Port Vincent and has a Caravan Park, Self Catering Apartments and motel.

I suggest we all meet at the Minlaton Caravan Park at 09:00am each morning. Should some people be staying at Port Vincent then a short 25 km trip will be required. Likewise if anybody chose to stay in Stansbury.

Suggested program

Day 1 Visit Ramsay Park Fauna Reserve and Mulbura Flora Reserve (These are both in the Port Vincent area)

Day 2 Visit Brentwood and the south to a private property near Foul Bay. This will involve travel of approximately 65 km each way from Minlaton.

Day 3 Visit Innes National Park. Park admission fees apply

Day 4 With a little luck see *Caladenia macroclavia* at the Mooloowurtie Roadside Conservation Reserve then on via Port Wakefield, Balaklava to Halbury to see the recently named *Oligochaetochilus lepidus* (Previously known as *Pterostylis* "Halbury"). From here via the Clare Valley to Wilmington. I suggest people set their own pace once leaving Halbury. Wilmington is a small town with a local supermarket, Hotel that serves meals and not much else. People may like to pick up any special requirements in Clare on the way through to Wilmington.

Day 5 Meet at the Alligator Gorge / Main North Road Corner at 09.00am to go into the gorge. Park admission fees apply. Look at several spots within the park making Blue Gum Flat the base for the walk round the ring route track.

Day 6 Subject to Gate Key availability travel the Pines Track to see *Caladenia woolcockiorum* & *Diuris*.

Following this people may wish to go on to Carapsee Hill south of Kimba (Eyre Peninsula) and look for *Caladenia*. This has been a very rich area for 'Green comb species'. It is some 200 km further west from Wilmington via Port Augusta and Iron Knob.

N.O.S.S.A. folks any other comments welcome.

Peter McCauley Tel; 08 8337 6181 Mobile 0438 376 181

The Next NOSSA judges meeting will be **Saturday 18 August** at 18
Cambridge St Vale Park at 9.30am.

Terrestrial Tips for August

Les Nesbitt

Day length is increasing and the sun is rising higher in the sky. We might not notice much difference but our plants respond. There are lots of buds and more flowers open with each passing week. The more colourful spring flowering species start to perform. In Adelaide spring starts in mid August.

Deflasking of terrestrials can start from the middle of the month and should be completed by the middle of September to give the baby plants time to make tubers before summer. Slugs and snails are still active as are woolly caterpillars and grubs. Aphids may appear on flower stems so get rid of them as soon as they are seen.

Drag out the wanted list and update it with the desirable plants seen at winter shows and meetings. Cash is always short so prioritise the list if it is too long. The spring shows start at month's end. Start grooming your show plants. Give them the best spot in the house and remove any dead leaves. Keep blackbirds away. A wire mesh cage may be necessary as these compulsive scratchers are very persistent when they have babies to feed.

Remember to take photos when the flowers are in peak condition. These can help fill in the long dry months of summer when there are only bare pots to look at.

I was pleased to see new *Caladenia tentaculata* seedlings in my mother pots. I hope that many more seedlings follow them over the next 2 months. The tiny seedling leaves are about 1mm wide and up to 10mm long at the time of writing. I probably have as many seedlings as mother plants already. The buds on the larger mother plants are rising up out of the leaves now. I have brought a couple of pots down from the hills onto the plains to hopefully get some flowers out in time for the NOSSA show this year. On my hills block *Caladenia tentaculata* flowers from mid October through to early December.

ARTICLES/ITEMS FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL

Closing date is Friday 7th August

FIELD TRIP to MOUNT BILLY CONSERVATION PARK

6 June 2009

Cathy Houston

Nine enthusiastic members met at Mt. Billy after having braved the taunts of family and friends; “you’re mad”. The forecast was for rain and we had already driven through plenty. It became steadily heavier as we went further south and light levels dropped to those well below any decent camera levels. The rain had just eased by the time we met but still looked threatening, especially when Kris checked on the radar and said the next “wave” would hit us in about half an hour. Our target was to find the threatened Hindmarsh Valley greenhood and photograph one or two before the rain set in again. There was no time for morning cuppas and general chit chat. We had only just crossed the road all kitted out in our best looking rain wear when members were calling out about species found. Before we were in the park we had a list consisting of *Acianthus pusillus* in magnificent flower, *Linguella (Pterostylis) aff. nana* “Hills” in bud with plenty of white hairs, a tired *Eriochilus cucullatus* flower together with leaves, *Cyrtostylis* sp. and *Thelymitra* sp. leaves.

In heavy leaf litter and moss were dozens of rosettes. Debate continued for a while; were they *Pterostylis pedunculata* or were the leaves too “frilly”? It was eventually concluded they were *P. nutans*, there being plenty of crenulate leaves and advanced buds, anything up to 10cm high. Some will certainly be open in a relatively short time; definitely not the buds one would expect on *P. pedunculata* in early June.

Walking down the rapidly over-growing track (yes, another one being allowed to over-grow) some photographers were pleased to find *Olearia ramulosa* in good flower. Tiny orange fungi accompanied us down hill. Here were leaves in abundance of *Glossodia major* and our emblem, *Leptoceras menziesii*. Across the creek (no water) and it was time to look for *Diplodium (Pterostylis) bryophilum* among the grasses and rock ferns. Eventually three flowers were spotted together with a bud nearby. The photographers were busy hoping to get a decent picture before the next rain. Persistence was the name of the game for those who were seeing this species for the first time. A lot more ground was covered before many more flowers were found, including one which had a bud growing up and covering the face of an open flower. Double headed flowers of this species are extremely rare. Later we thought we had another double headed flower as two flowers faced each other in the grass, but on closer examination there were two stems leaning in towards each other. It didn’t matter, because they made a lovely picture anyway. Trying to discern what were the rosettes of this species was difficult because, as one member remarked, this is *Pterostylis* heaven. *P. curta* rosettes were seen and *P. pedunculata* was intermingled with other *Pterostylis* rosettes.



Bird activity up the creek line was amazing. Thornbills and other small unidentifieds flitted across our path as we made our way further in. At last we found a small collection of flowers suitable for a group photograph. Here the momentum stalled and everyone was once again very busy, both with cameras and tongues! It was time to turn back and consider what to do after lunch. We had made it through the whole morning without any rain! Members agreed it was a very successful excursion, after which they spread in four different directions.

Four members then made their way to Waitpinga where they lunched overlooking the surfers and

a lovely clear view all the way to Kangaroo Island. We speculated what orchids would be present in the low coastal heath and limestone behind us; *Caladenia latifolia*, *Cyrtostylis robusta*, *Corysanthes (Corybas)* sp., and even perhaps *Jonesiopsis (Caladenia) bicalliata*. Then on to Newland Head Conservation Park for another *Diplodium* species reported to be in flower. All the time the weather was improving to the point where we were now in sunshine. We meandered down through the mallee broken up with open patches of sand dominated by tassel rope rush, *Hypolaena fastidiosa*. It was here that the *Urochilus sanguineus* were in abundant flower, once again a photographers delight. Tired flowers of *Leporella fimbriata* were still scattered through the area, together with *Pyrorchis* leaves. *Acianthus pusillus* were in profusion and tiny *Linguella* aff. *nana* 'Mallee' rosettes continued to accompany us as we moved down the hill. It was here we saw the first hairy leaves of *Arachnorchis (Caladenia)* sp. They were not very large, presumably having not long emerged from the ground. However, rosettes and flowers of *Diplodium* sp. eluded us.

Crossing the road into more open Mallee/heath we found beautiful specimens of *Correa pulchella* hung with dozens of pink bell-shaped flowers. Here at last were flowers of *Diplodium* sp. 'Newland Head' among loads of smallish rosettes. These wide topped, wide mouthed, olive-green flowers with their red-brown augmentation contrasted markedly with the bright green flowers we had seen at Mt. Billy.

Our final destination for the day was Chookarloo at Kuitpo Forest. A letter in *The Advertiser*, dated Wednesday 3rd June, and entitled "Paradise lost" lamenting the clearing of half the area, had raised our concerns about the state of this popular spot. We were relieved to find the Eucalypt area intact; only the pines south of the picnic area had been felled. As we drove back into town the rain started again! We must consider ourselves lucky to have both rain and a dry excursion.

	Mt. Billy C.P.	Newland Head C.P.
<i>Acianthus pusillus</i>	f, p	f
<i>Arachnorchis</i> sp.		l
<i>Cyrtostylis</i> sp.	l	l
<i>Eriochilus cucullatus</i>	f, l	
<i>Glossodia major</i>	l	l
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>		fo, l
<i>Leptoceras menziesii</i>	l	
<i>Microtis</i> sp.	l	l
<i>Diplodium bryophilum</i>	b, f	
<i>Diplodium</i> sp. 'Newland Head'		f, l
<i>Linguella nana</i> 'Hills'	b, l	
<i>Linguella nana</i> 'Mallee'		l
<i>Pterostylis curta</i>	l	
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	b, l	
<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i>	l	
<i>Urochilus sanguineus</i>		f, l
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>		l
<i>Thelymitra</i> sp.	l	l

b = bud, f = flower, l = leaf, fo = flower over

FERTILIZERS AND MAGIC WATER. The right results for the wrong reasons.

By Alvin Bryant.

If you have been fired with enthusiasm over the articles on fertilizers you have been reading lately, that is good. If you have tried them and have had good results, that is even better, it will be better again if the fertilizers have been fitted into the cultural excellence as we shall see.

Over the years most of us will have seen a number of instances where a grower has made the resolve to "feed" his orchids properly and substantial improvements have resulted. Always however there has continued the search for a better fertilizer, or the better compost, and so we see the never-ending cycle of change and enquiry.

In all this endeavour, there is a contradiction. Doesn't it seem odd that some growers have been consistently obtaining superb results over time without having used that latest fertilizer? Is that grower using something he is not talking about, or is it something else? Why is it that reputable growers can report growth advantages each time a new fertilizer is tried? Is it that the newer fertilizers are better or is it something else?

If you observe what happens when a grower tries out a new fertilizer, or resolves to regularly "feed" his orchids a common factor emerges. In each case where the improved result occurred you will find the grower had to give methodical attention to his watering in order to apply fertilizer. Further, if you check any of the growers who have an outstanding record you will find they have given meticulous attention to their watering. If water is the common factor to outstanding culture, and a particular brand of fertilizer is not, then it is the water we should be looking at, and not so much the fertilizer. If this is true then the right results have been gained for the wrong reasons.

If you want top results in culture then it is classical and simple, further, it can be easily understood so you do not have to blindly follow what some-one else is doing. You might think, of it as the (magic water) formula, to put the emphasis in the right place, or if you know what water does, then you know the classical pathway to plant perfection.

When a grower talks of feeding his orchids and is referring to fertilizing then he has taken the first wrong step, for the bulk plant food is carbohydrate. This is made from carbon dioxide and water - not the fertilizer.

It is not uncommon to see this type of thinking elsewhere in our culture. How many people try out numerous different composts when all that is needed is some sand and a little understanding? In fact it is possible to gain optimum results using any one of a whole range of fertilizers or composts.

The (magic water) formula has two parts, the first is concerned with maximizing carbohydrate formation, and the second is with maximum use of that carbohydrate. Here is the formula with reasons.

For carbohydrate formations (1) sunlight (2) air and (3) "magic water". The sun is the energy source and its actions on the chlorophyll in the leaf enables two actions to take place (1) the water taken up is broken into hydrogen and (2) the carbon dioxide taken in is combined with this hydrogen to form carbohydrate (In this process think of some of the sun's energy being locked into the carbohydrate for future release).

Plants should have sunlight on them for as long as possible during the day to optimize the energy available for carbohydrate formation. The maximum leaf area should be exposed, so care should be taken not to have them to close together. A common method for pot spacing is to have a pot space between each pot. Add to this the special property of orchids in that they do not like full sunlight. Further, light travels in straight lines and it is not enough to think a plant is in a well-lit situation. Check it out by observing if the

sun's rays would actually reach the plant with only the presence of a filter between the sun and the plant (a figure of 30% to 50% is often given to the Sydney region). This gives the cultural rules whereby a plant should have filtered sunlight on the maximum leaf area for as long as possible during the day.

The next cultural rule is the one about which this article hinges, for there can be no carbohydrate manufacture without the water and carbon dioxide. Assuming air movement is adequate, then the carbon dioxide supply will be adequate. It is the adequacy of the water supply however where I believe most growers fall down. A continuous supply is necessary or the plant has to stop its carbohydrate manufacture. Orchids do not show this as other plants do, and it is a good idea to have a few Coleus plants in with the orchids as indicators. If you try this you will be surprised how often you will see them wilting.

The second cultural rule is now self-evident for it can only be to ensure that adequate air movement is present.

If I could put the next step into small print I would do so; as fertilizer is only needed in minute quantities in relation to the air and water. This should be balanced with the fact that even the most minute cultural requirement if ignored becomes limiting to the plant. Fertilizer can be released from the organic material in the compost or from chemical application.

If the plants are to be grown under controlled conditions then it has to be chemical application with leaf analysis to make sure the rate of uptake can be monitored and varied to ensure it meets the predetermined optimums.

It is here the hobby grower is disadvantaged, for he will have to rely on observation and trust that the fertilizer will do what is claimed of it. As a rule of thumb (and I restrict this to cymbidiums) there seems to be a consensus among growers that fertilizers for growing should have about twice the nitrogen level of fertilizers than for flowering, and fertilizers for flowering should have about two percent of the dry weight of the leaf. If N.P.K figures are meaningful then a fertilizer with 13:5:18 listing should be looked at carefully for flowering cymbidiums, and recommended application strengths should never be exceeded.

Of course I must insert another barb at this point in mentioning that only the fertilizer that is dissolved in water is taken up by the plant, so once again water is the limiting factor.

It can be seen that water, the magic component of the bulk of plant food could not work its magic unless sunlight and carbon dioxide were also considered. Now there will still be no magic unless the plant can use the carbohydrates.

Both plants and animals have a respiration process in which the carbohydrates are broken down. In this the earlier process is virtually reversed for oxygen is combined with the hydrogen to form water, and carbon dioxide is given off. The energy trapped from the sun is released, and this enables living organisms to function. For a plant however, the rate of respiration increases with the rise in temperature, this is why growth can be accelerated by rising temperatures, and retarded by lowering them. Experiments on record show quite clearly how the application of cold water can retard growth. As the respiration rate of plants and animals is a continuous process through day and night, it is obvious that a plant must produce enough carbohydrate in the day time, to last it through the night. If temperatures are raised too high in the night time, this reserve can be exhausted. A good example of this can be seen when cymbidium

growers bring their flowers in early with heat, but to excess the flowers are small, soft and have no shelf life.

This gives the next cultural rule whereby, plant growth can be accelerated by raising temperatures to better utilize carbohydrate reserves.

Now when my attention focused on the "magic water" I was faced with a problem. How could a continued supply of water be guaranteed to a plant without interfering with respiration. It seemed a very fine balance between maintaining air spaces for respiration and continual and adequate water particle size. The gravel culture techniques seemed to be most promising for there was no reason why a plant could not be grown in a pot using the same principles. I disciplined myself for several reasons and grew several benches of plants, with each bench of plants having a different compost. The sand compost and the straight peat moss composts came out equally on top, so I switched to sand compost.

To my surprise however, another bench not in the test did even better than the test benches. These plants were growing in sand, and the galvanised top had sagged so that the pots were continuously in about one and a half inches of water. I pulled the plants out of the pots and the roots were all perfect. Their continuous immersion had not affected them. Here was a cultural bridge I should have put together long ago. In true hydroponics, roots live under the water because controlled oxygen is carefully maintained, and their respiration process can continue. What had inhibited my thinking, and no doubt that of others, was the text book situation where growing techniques must be put forward for soils; here because of organic content dissolved oxygen is lost and roots die if there is too much unchanged water. With pot culture however both the amount of organic material and the frequency of the water change can be controlled. As a result the cultural rule for different conditions can be formulated.

(1) With organic composts the traditional techniques hold up, namely keep the plant moist but not wet. Providing the pot drains adequately, oxygen should be available.

(2) If the pot is too wet then there is competition for the available oxygen between the roots and the decomposing organic matter and the roots may die.

(3) If however the watering is frequent enough, the roots may not die because the existing water is replaced with fresh oxygenated water.

With organic potting material however, it is much simpler, the pot may be kept wet, for there is no competition for the dissolved oxygen in the water, and the water (with fertilizer) may be changed readily. The cultural rule then is to keep an optimum, both the respiration and the water uptake. If you think about it the understanding of the dissolved oxygen is the bridge of understanding between the soil and the soil-less or inert composts cultures. If you can also see water not just as a word but as "MAGIC WATER" and take the time to understand it, then you have the formula for cultural excellence.

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Andrew Paget -Terrestrial Orchid Propagation work

The following request has been received from Andrew and briefly explains his work. If anyone is interested in supplying Andrew with seed I have a copy of his 'Guidelines for Terrestrial Orchid Seed and Fungus Donations' which you will require as the methods to unsue succesful propagation are rather exacting. Alternatively you can contact Andrew for details. I also have another leaflet titled 'Wildwood Flora Orchid Propagation Update' which provides details on the work Andrew is carrying out. Let me know if you require a copy of either of these and preferred format (PDF, mailed or pick-up.) Editor.

In the 1990s I was doing experiments into the propagation of terrestrial orchids from seed. Since then I have shifted 4 times, bought and set up property and built a house. So, I have been busy, but am now at a point where I have a little spare time and space to be able to start doing some terrestrial orchid propagation again. In 1998 I did develop a self-sterilising orchid media which does not require autoclaving or sterile procedures and during 9 months of 1999 I produced 46,000 exotic orchid seedlings using this procedure. I gave these away to orchid clubs around Melbourne when I shifted from Victoria. I did some limited work with terrestrials at that time, but am keen to test this method more widely. I also developed in the late 1990's a simple parent pot-sowing method which was producing 20-30 seedlings per pot, so I am also keen to trial that method further too.

I am making contact to ask for the support of your members in helping me to start up my experimentation again. I am particularly keen to obtain any seed your members may have to spare.

My wish list of things I have had good results with in the past so am particularly keen to obtain seeds of is as follows:

Thelymitras - antennifera, rubra, luteocilium, mucida, cyanea-venosa, nuda, etc

Pterostylis - big rufa group one, baptistii, coccinea, furcate, barbata-turfosa, grandiflora, sanguinea etc

Diuris - punctata types, sulphurea, corymbosa types, etc

Glossodia major

Caladenias - for trials, as these are difficult to deflask & get to produce tubers

Spiranthes

Others for experimentation

I do intend joining your group so I can obtain some tubers from the tuber bank next summer. Again, any support your members can provide for this work would be much appreciated.

Andrew Paget PH 6556 9092. Email: ww_flora@tpg.com.au

Postal address;367 Koppin Yarratt Road, Upper Lansdowne NSW 2430



Dendrobium Hilda Poxon 'Ern'



The Trading Table

Below:
Dendrobium Colonial Campio



Dendrobium Wasyl



Pterostylis x conoglossa



Above: *Taurodium x Toveyanum*



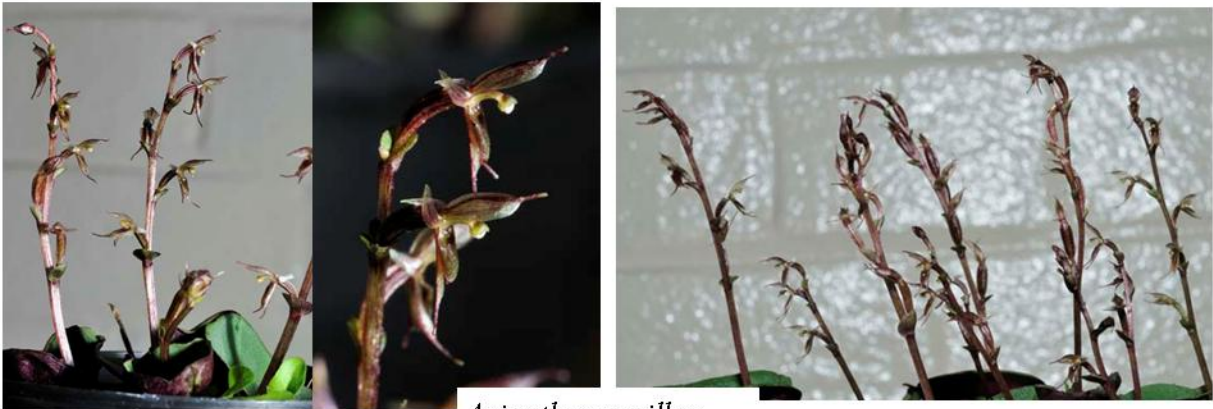
Above: *Taurodium x Toveyanum*



Taurantha tenuicauda



Urochilus sanguineus



Acianthus pusillus



Corysanthes dilatata



Above & Below: *Diplodium robustum*



Diplodium laxum



Linguella nana