

Species profiles

Genus *Acianthus*

Mosquito orchids, mayfly orchids

A genus of ~15 species occurring in eastern Australia and New Zealand, with 12 species occurring in NSW and ACT. Terrestrial deciduous orchids with a single, basal, heart-shaped or angular, dark green leaf on a short stem. Flowers 2–14, generally small, greenish to brownish. Dorsal sepal ovate, lateral sepals and petals usually short and mostly slender, rarely long and very slender. Labellum tiny, triangular, with short, raised side lobes and smooth to warty surface. Usually grow in moist, sheltered sites and can multiply vegetatively, sometimes forming large colonies, although often with only a small proportion of plants flowering. Pollinated by tiny flies attracted to flowers by scent and nectar.

with a thick leaf litter layer. Also occurs in Qld, SA, Tas., Vic. **Notes:** Widespread and often common. Can form extensive colonies containing many hundreds to thousands of plants, with leaves often carpeting ground.



Acianthus pusillus

SMALL MOSQUITO ORCHID

Description: Plant to 20 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 8 mm long. Flowers 2–12, tiny, light to dark brown (rarely greenish) with fine purplish stripes. Dorsal sepal narrowly ovate with a short, fine tip and obliquely erect, lateral sepals slender, parallel to narrowly spreading with long outcurved tips, petals short, narrowly triangular and backswept. Labellum mostly smooth with a warty apex. Flowers March–August. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW and ACT, extending from coast to ranges and inland slopes. Altitude: 0–1300 m. Grows in a variety of habitats including coastal scrubs, heathy woodland, open forest and rainforest, in moist, shady situations under shrubs, often



Acianthus pusillus

Most similar to *A. exsertus*, which is more robust with larger, darker, more widely spaced, more widely opening flowers and labellum often appears bicoloured, with a greenish base and dark brown apex. However, large plants of *A. pusillus* can be difficult to tell apart from small plants of *A. exsertus*.

Acianthus exsertus

LARGE MOSQUITO ORCHID

Description: Plant to 30 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 10 mm long. Flowers 3–14, very small, widely spaced, light to dark greenish-brown with fine purplish stripes and a darker green and brown labellum. Dorsal sepal ovate with a short, fine tip and obliquely erect to erect, lateral sepals slender, parallel to narrowly spreading with short, thick, outcurved tips, petals short, narrowly triangular and backswept. Labellum mostly smooth with a warty apex. Flowers March–August. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW and ACT, extending from coast to mountains and inland slopes. Altitude: 5–1300 m. Grows in open forest and woodland. Also occurs in Qld, Vic. **Notes:** Widespread and common on coastal and hinterland ranges, uncommon on inland slopes. Can form extensive colonies with leaves carpeting ground. Most similar to *A. pusillus*, which has smaller, paler, more crowded flowers with a narrower, more uniformly coloured labellum. However, small plants of *A. exsertus* can be difficult to



Acianthus exsertus

distinguish from *A. pusillus*, but where both species grow together, *A. exsertus* is noticeably larger and more robust than *A. pusillus*.

Acianthus exiguus

TINY MOSQUITO ORCHID

Description: Plant to 10 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 5 mm long. Flowers 2–5, tiny, translucent brownish (rarely greenish) with purplish stripes. Dorsal sepal broadly ovate with a long, fine tip, incurved and hooding column, lateral sepals moderately broad, parallel to narrowly spreading, with short, thick, outcurved tips, petals short, narrowly triangular and spreading, usually not hidden under dorsal sepal. Labellum ovate with a pointed apex and slightly granular lamina. Flowers May–June. **Distribution & Habitat:** Coastal NSW between Gosford and Wardell. Altitude: 0–100 m.

but often overlooked due to tiny size, and can be difficult to detect in dense habitat. Flowers are short-lived, especially in warmer weather. Typically has pale pink to dull white flowers, and there is some speculation that populations with bright pink flowers may be hybrids between *C. alata* and *C. carnea* or *C. mentiens*. Also called *Petalochilus alatus*.

Caladenia curtisepala

SHORT FINGERS

Description: Plant to 15 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 12 mm long, petals and lateral sepals to 15 mm long. Flowers 1–2, small, dull white to pale pink with broad, sharply pointed sepals and petals with dorsal sepal distinctly shorter than lateral sepals and lateral sepals and petals sometimes partially overlapping. Labellum with straight clubbed calli, broad, erect side lobes and a broadish mid-lobe with 1–3 pairs of short, slender teeth reducing to irregular serrations. Flowers August–September.

Distribution & Habitat: NSW Central Coast between Sydney and Hawkesbury River. Altitude: 10–150 m. Grows in heathy woodland on sandy soils over sandstone.

Notes: Poorly known and best identified by distribution and usually single, small, pale flower with dorsal sepal noticeably shorter than lateral sepals. Uncommon and mostly occurs as single scattered plants. Almost certainly overlooked or mistaken for



Caladenia curtisepala

C. carnea, which has dorsal and lateral sepals all of similar lengths. Also called *Petalochilus curtisepalus*.

Caladenia fuscata

DUSKY FINGERS

Description: Plant to 15 cm tall, sepals and petals to 12 mm long. Flower single, small, dull white to deep pink with short, broad, bluntly pointed sepals and petals, lateral sepals and petals not overlapping. Labellum with straight, clubbed calli, broad, slightly incurved side lobes with projecting pointed to bluntly rounded front margins, and a narrowish, sharply recurved mid-lobe with 2–6 pairs of short teeth reducing to irregular serrations. Flowers August–October. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern and c NSW and ACT, extending from coast to ranges and inland plains. Altitude: 5–1000 m. Grows in a variety of habitats, especially drier open forest and woodland, less commonly in moist coastal



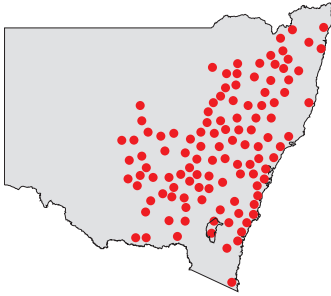
and foothill forests and woodlands. Also occurs in Qld, SA, Tas., Vic. **Notes:** Very widely distributed and common throughout much of its range. Flowers prolifically in years of good winter rainfall, although flowering is greatly curtailed in dry years. Buds are distinctly striped. Most likely to be confused with *C. carnea*, with which it often grows and has larger flowers with short, rounded front

margins on labellum side lobes and usually flowers 2–3 weeks later than *C. fuscata*. Also called *Petalochilus fuscatus*.

***Caladenia* sp. aff. *fuscata* (large)**

LARGE DUSKY FINGERS

Description: Plant to 20 cm tall, petals and sepals to 17 mm long. Flower single, relatively large, dull white to deep pink with fairly long,



Caladenia fuscata



Caladenia sp. aff. *fuscata* (large)

brownish-red. Lateral sepals narrowly spreading and deflexed. Labellum broad, with minutely serrated margins rarely with short hairs, and a rounded, slightly upcurved apex. Flowers December–February. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW and ACT north to Ebor, extending from coast to ranges and inland slopes. 10–1300 m. Grows in heath, woodland and open forest, occasionally on margins of swamps and watercourses. Also occurs in SA, Tas., Vic. and New Zealand. **Notes:** Widely but sporadically distributed and generally uncommon. Flowers are tiny, often poorly opening and only last a few days, so species is probably self-pollinating. Like many midge orchids, undoubtedly overlooked or mistaken for pollinated plants of other midge orchid species. Somewhat similar to *C. backhousei* ms, which has even smaller, barely opening flowers. Also called *Genoplesium nudum*.

Corunastylis pumila

GREEN MIDGE ORCHID

Description: Plant to 25 cm tall, lateral sepals to 3 mm long. Flowers 5–25, crowded, yellowish-green, often with variable reddish tones. Lateral sepals broad and obliquely deflexed. Petals ending in fine, characteristic ‘S’-shaped points. Labellum broad, lacking hairs, with irregularly serrate margins and a bluntly pointed, usually upturned apex. Flowers January–May. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW, extending from coast to ranges. Altitude: 5–900 m. Grows in heath and heathy woodland. Also occurs in Qld, Tas., Vic. and New Zealand. **Notes:** Widely distributed and sometimes locally common. Flowers open green and fade to yellowish-green with age. Flowers are self-pollinating and in some populations rarely if ever open. Will colonise open sandy ground such as along tracks and in disused gravel pits. Variable in flower form, colour, number and propensity



Corunastylis pumila

for flowers to open. Probably a complex of several similar taxa, with name *C. buftonianum* possibly applying to forms with a red labellum margin. Also called *Genoplesium pumilum*.

Corunastylis densa

DENSE MIDGE ORCHID

Description: Plant to 7 cm tall, lateral sepals to 4 mm long. Flowers 6–30, very crowded, reddish-brown with variable greenish tones. Lateral sepals strongly deflexed and narrowly

*Corunastylis densa*

spreading, tipped with minute glands. Labellum long and narrow, lacking hairs, with smooth margins and a bluntly pointed apex. Flowers December–February. **Distribution & Habitat:** Ranges of se NSW north to Blue Mountains. Altitude: 100–1000 m. Grows in heathy and sparsely shrubby woodland, sometimes growing up through prostrate shrubs. Also occurs in Vic. **Notes:** Sporadic and generally uncommon although easily

overlooked due to tiny size and habit of often growing within low shrubs. Most similar to *C. ansata*, which has much smaller, less crowded flowers with a more bluntly pointed labellum. Also similar to *C. nichollsiana*, which has more spaced flowers on longer ovaries. Also called *Genoplesium densum*.

Corunastylis ansata

CROSS MIDGE ORCHID

Description: Plant to 12 cm tall, lateral sepals to 2.5 mm long. Flowers 15–20, crowded,

*Corunastylis ansata*



Dendrobium fairfaxii



considerable confusion in identification between this species and *D. dolichophyllum*, which has yellowish flowers. Also confused with *D. teretifolium*, which has smaller, more numerous flowers and pointed spurs on stem nodes. Also called *Dockrillia fairfaxii*.

Dendrobium teretifolium

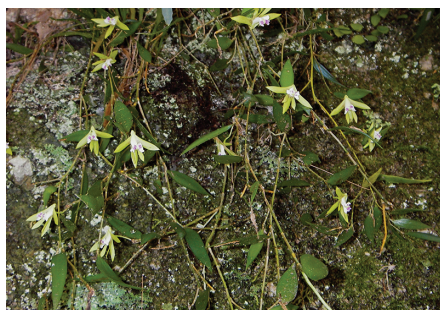
THIN PENCIL ORCHID

Description: Leaves to 60 cm long, sepals and petals to 25 mm long. Plant large and



Dendrobium teretifolium

pendulous, with pointed spurs on stem nodes. Leaves terete, long, straight, ungrooved, rather sparse, hanging vertically. Racemes short, with 3–15 moderately large, slender, scented, creamy white flowers with variable purplish stripes towards centre. Sepals and petals long and slender. Labellum long, slender, curved, creamy white with red spots. Flowers September–November. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW north from Bega, extending from coast to ranges. Altitude: 0–700 m. Grows on trees, especially Swamp Sheoak *Casuarina glauca* along coast and in lowland swamps. Grows on a variety of trees in wet sclerophyll forest and rainforest in ranges, occasionally on rocks. Also occurs in Qld. **Notes:** Widespread and locally common. Although growing to a large size, plants growing on sheoaks can be surprisingly inconspicuous unless in flower. Similar to *D. dolichophyllum* and *D. fairfaxii*, both of which have fewer larger flowers and lack spurs on stem nodes. Hybridises with *D. linguiforme*, *D. mortii* and *D. striolatum*. Also called *Dockrillia teretifolia*.



Dendrobium pugioniforme

Dendrobium pugioniforme

DAGGER ORCHID

Description: Leaves to 70 mm long, sepals and petals to 12 mm long. Plant large and pendulous although rather straggly. Leaves ovate, thin and sharply pointed. Racemes short, usually with a single, small green flower with variable brown stripes towards centre. Sepals and petals short and triangular. Labellum curved and white with purple bands. Flowers September–November. **Distribution & Habitat:** Eastern NSW north from Bega, extending from coast to mountains. Altitude: 5–1300 m. Grows on a variety of trees in open forest and rainforest, also on rocks, sometimes on fairly exposed sites. Also occurs in Qld. **Notes:** Widely distributed and locally common. Old plants

growing high in trees can be very large, sometimes reaching two metres or more in length. Although occurs down to sea level, most common in mountains and favouring sites with good air movement such as ridge tops, on escarpments and along streams. Hybridises with several *Dendrobium* species including *D. fairfaxii*, *D. linguiforme*, *D. mortii*, *D. schoeninum* and *D. striolatum*. Also called *Dockrillia pugioniformis*.

flower in most years in open areas such as along tracks. Has been included in *P. affine*, *P. fuscum* and *P. uroglossum*, but now generally regarded as a separate, distinct species. Also called *Paraprasophyllum appendiculatum*.

***Prasophyllum* sp. aff. *keltonii* (Long Plain)**

LONG PLAIN LEEK ORCHID

Description: Plant to 60 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 9 mm long. Flowers 12–25, medium-sized, moderately crowded, green to reddish-brown with faint darker stripes. Labellum broad, slightly recurved, with a wide lamina with smooth margins and a broad, short, prominently raised, grooved, green and pink callus plate extending to just beyond bend. Lateral sepals free and narrowly spreading. Petals narrow and spreading. Flowers January–February. **Distribution & Habitat:** Snowy Mountains of se NSW near Kiandra. Altitude: 1350 m. Grows in moist grassland.

Notes: Only discovered in January 2021 by Ben Brown. Highly localised and known from a single population of several hundred plants. Most similar to *P. keltonii*, which occurs further west, flowers earlier and is shorter with a more erect, sharply pointed labellum apex and narrower, less prominently raised callus.



Prasophyllum sp. aff. *keltonii* (Long Plain) Gavin Phillips

Prasophyllum keltonii

KELTON'S LEEK ORCHID

Description: Plant to 30 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 9 mm long. Flowers 12–22, medium-sized, spaced, usually unscented, green to reddish-brown with faint darker stripes. Labellum moderately broad, slightly recurved, with a widish lamina with smooth margins and a narrow, short, slightly raised, grooved, green callus plate extending to just beyond bend. Lateral sepals free and narrowly spreading. Petals narrow and spreading. Flowers December–January. **Distribution & Habitat:** Mountains of se NSW and ACT. Altitude: 1100–1300 m. Grows in moist grassland. **Notes:** Highly localised and rare, known from just two sites with several hundred plants. Given disjunct distribution, possibly occurs

*Prasophyllum keltonii*

elsewhere in rugged mountainous region. Plants at site in ACT were initially identified as *P. canaliculatum*, but have recently been redetermined as *P. keltonii*. Very similar to *P. canaliculatum*, which has more widely spaced flowers with broader petals and a shorter, broader labellum with shorter callus. Also similar to *P. sp. aff. keltonii* (Long Plain),

which occurs further east, flowers later and is taller with a recurved, more bluntly pointed labellum apex and broader, prominently raised callus. Also called *Paraprasophyllum keltonii*.

Prasophyllum canaliculatum

CHANNELLED LEEK ORCHID

Description: Plant to 40 cm tall, dorsal sepal to 9 mm long. Flowers 5–25, medium-sized, moderately crowded, unscented, greenish-brown to reddish-brown with faint darker stripes. Labellum moderately broad, slightly recurved, with a wide reddish lamina with smooth margins and a narrow, short, slightly raised, grooved, green callus plate extending to just beyond bend. Lateral sepals free and narrowly spreading. Petals moderately broad and spreading. Flowers December–January.

Distribution & Habitat: Mountains of se NSW between Countegany and Wadbilliga. Altitude: 1000–1200 m. Grows in dense sedge swamps and damp grassland. **Notes:** Highly localised and rare, known from just a few sites and low numbers of plants. Very similar to *P. keltonii*, which has more crowded flowers with narrower petals and a narrower labellum with longer callus. Plants from ACT previously identified as *P. canaliculatum* are now considered to be *P. keltonii*. Also called *Paraprasophyllum canaliculatum*.

