

on the day. In the case of other subtribes, genetic analysis is given as the key deciding factor. Again if considerable distinguishing features are evident it would be a relatively simple matter to identify the specimens; but if a recourse to genetic analysis was required and a microscope and gene analysing equipment brought along by the poor overburdened person, a lot of the pleasure of the excursion would be lost. In any case, as far as genetic analysis is concerned, chromosome counts were at one time hoped to be the answer, but if my memory serves me correctly, subsequently it was found to be not completely reliable as again variations, in the manner of some quite strange and unexpected readings, cropped up

from time to time. As far as other branches of science are concerned, it may be possible to prove that different taxa show different readings (and indeed DNA "fingerprints" vary from one individual to another), but again what degree of differences is necessary to separate things at the genus level?

Dr Bower's statement, on the strength of his experiences with only *Pterostylidinae* and *Caladeniinae* and in particular *Chiloglottis*, that "there is no reason to think that the situation with epiphytes is any different", is hardly the scientific approach. And I still believe that it would be well for "new taxonomists" to look also at relationships and not to be obsessed with finding new species. ✱

YES! WE DO GROW EPIPHYTES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Reg Shooter

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Whenever I'm in orchid company away from home and I mention that I am from Adelaide the inevitable retort is, "oh, you grow those terrestrials don't you?"

Well it's true we do grow terrestrials and very well, but we also grow a large number of epiphytes, particularly the dendrobiums, *Sarcochilus* and cymbidiums. In fact there are many more epiphytes than terrestrials in cultivation in growers' collections in S.A.

We have to work at it a bit harder than the eastern states, basically because of the climate. In the eastern states the summers are warm and wet with cool and dry winters. In S.A. the opposite occurs. Hot, dry summers and cool, even cold with the occasional frost, wet winters. However, with attention to detail, conditions can be easily created without too much expense.

A simple shadehouse with 50% shade at one end and 70% at the other with facilities for providing a solid plastic cover during the wet winters would be ideal. An overhead misting system for creating humid conditions in the summer months also helps to duplicate their natural habitat.

Much has been said about the quality of Adelaide water, comments such as, "you don't

have to fertilise in Adelaide, all the fertiliser you need is in the water." Well this may have been the case several years ago but with the filtration, etc., the water today is quite acceptable. I find that by filling a container from the tap and leaving it open to the air overnight, any of the purifying chemicals, such as chlorine seems to dissipate. Now I'm not a scientist and this may not be the case but it appears to do so and I use nothing but tap water on my shadehouse plants with no harmful effects.

I have attended many shows in most of the states and I may sound a little parochial but I feel that we in Adelaide present the orchids on the showbench in much better condition than many other states. I think the reason for this is that we have to try that much harder to produce flowers that we tend to look after them a little more. Leaves are cleaned and trimmed, old flower racemes removed along with dead and shrivelled back bulbs.

By far the largest number of dendrobiums exhibited in S.A. are species and hybrids from the section *Dendrocoryne*. The majority grow very well in the shadehouse throughout the year, just bringing them under cover in the winter months to prevent them getting marked,

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when racemes are developing.

Quite a number of growers have glasshouses with some heat. These are required if some of the more tropical species are grown. They can be housed in the shadehouse during the summer months then brought into the protection of a glasshouse for the winter. Failing to do this will not kill the orchid but flower bud drop is guaranteed while the plant sits and sulks until late spring when it again produces new growths.

After the dendrobiums the next most popular genus would be *Sarcochilus*. *S. hartmannii* grows very well here in the shadehouse. Many specimen size plants are held in collections, it is by far the easiest of the species to flower. *S. fitzgeraldii*, *S. falcatus* and the rest are a little more difficult, however, when any or at least most of the species are

used as parents the progeny do very well.

S. ceciliae does require a little more care but many growers cultivate it successfully.

Of the three *Cymbidium* species, *C. canaliculatum* is seen the most. It thrives and flowers quite satisfactorily if kept dry during the winter months. *C. suave* will also flower consistently if given the right conditions but *C. madidum* is rarely seen on the benches and when it is they are rather poor specimens.

So as you can see we do grow epiphytes in S.A., in addition to terrestrials and growers right across the state are busy cultivating their plants ready for the Third Native Orchid Conference to be held in Adelaide in September, 1996. Why not register and see what we produce.

Further details can be obtained by writing to the Hon. Secretary, N.O.S.S.A., P.O. Box 565, Unley, S.A. 5061. ❀

BEECHWORTH SURPRISES!

A group of friends recently journeyed to Victoria to spend a leisurely few days partaking of the good things of life. Good company and conversation, good food and wine and of course, beautiful scenery and orchids!

The Beechworth area is a lovely part of the country, especially after the abundant rains of recent times. It is an old gold mining town set amongst granite hills and there are many beautiful old buildings from last century built of the local honey-coloured granite. There are a number of other picturesque old towns (villages) in the surrounding area as well; there are plenty of things to see and do. Numerous old trees, naturalised bulbs and iris and a general feeling of peace and well being.

What I had not expected to find were orchids. But, sure enough, there they were (terrestrial types) in quite large numbers amongst the granite in the open forest areas. Considering the amount of digging which was done in the old days and the clearing of most of the trees for firewood and construction, it is surprising there were so many orchids more or less readily visible.

Jean Deane

The first one noticed was the demure *Pterostylis nutans* with its bowed head. Nearby was a *Corybas* species with a round flat leaf which hugged the ground. We found one in flower, it was *C. incurvus*. There was another plant with a slender hairy leaf which looked like a *Caladenia* species and so it proved to be. The flower was a small version of the much larger *C. dilatata* complex, which I have seen in the Warrumbungles — *C. parva*. the green sepals with a narrow, deep red stripe down the middle and the deep red, knobbly, pointed front on the labellum made a good looking flower. Wal Upton has illustrated it (Fig. 3).

Another day whilst walking we saw more *Corybas* and *caladenias* as well as a *Cyrtostylis* (probably *C. reniformis*) with a heart-shaped leaf at ground level. Other finds included a *Pterostylis* of the "rufa group", a *Lyperanthus* species and what was probably a *Chiloglottis* but, they were not flowering at that time. What a pity I can't go back this month to see just what they really were!

So, the Beechworth — Rutherglen area is well worth visiting. There are many different types of "surprises" to be found! ❀



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