



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 362 - October, 2020

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

### Orchids of Inverleigh With Ade Foster

Inverleigh Nature Conservation Reserve is 1000Ha of remnant grassy woodland, near the town of Inverleigh, about 30km west of Geelong. Completely surrounded by farmland it is a tiny oasis of bush, and an important place for orchids in our region.



The predominant tree species are *Eucalyptus viminalis* and *E. camaldulensis*, with an understory of *Acacia* – *A. melanoxylon*, *A. implexa*, *A. pycnantha* and *A. paradoxa*. *Acacia paradoxa*, the Hedge Wattle, has become quite a problem, dominating large tracts of the reserve and creating a very thorny barrier to human movement.

There is some interesting flora to be found at the reserve, with many small plants with a restricted range found there. Bird-life is prolific, particularly the honeyeaters, and Frank Scheelings and I have spent many happy hours sitting by a local waterhole, photographing the birds as they come in to drink.

There are good numbers of Eastern Grey kangaroos, Swamp Wallabies and Echidnas. We saw Sugar-gliders there some years ago, but the Banksias where they fed were destroyed in a fire about ten years back, and I'm unsure if they are still found there.

But it is its large numbers of orchids, some very rare and found nowhere else, that makes Inverleigh NCR a really special place for me.

Greenhood orchids – *Pterostylis* sp. – proliferate, with *P. nana*, the Dwarf Greenhood, *P. nutans*, the Nodding Greenhood, *P. concinna*, the Trim Greenhood and *P. pedunculata*, the Maroonhood being very common. The Large Autumn Greenhood, *Pterostylis ampliata* is one of the more spectacular greenhoods, flowering in March/April.



### *Pterostylis ampliata* - Large Autumn Greenhood

There are also a few small colonies of *Pterostylis curta*, the Blunt Greenhood.

The Diuris or Donkey orchids are well represented on the reserve. The most prolific is *Diuris sulphurea*, the Tiger Orchid, which in a good season forms vast colonies of flowers on spikes 90cm tall. In one small

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section of the reserve is the rare *Diuris punctata* – the Purple Donkey-orchid. It is a small plant, growing among some stiff, sedge-like grasses in an area that was probably swampy ground when the rainfall was different.



***Diuris punctata* – Purple Donkey-orchid.**

Among the other rare species found on the reserve is the Woodland Leek-orchid.

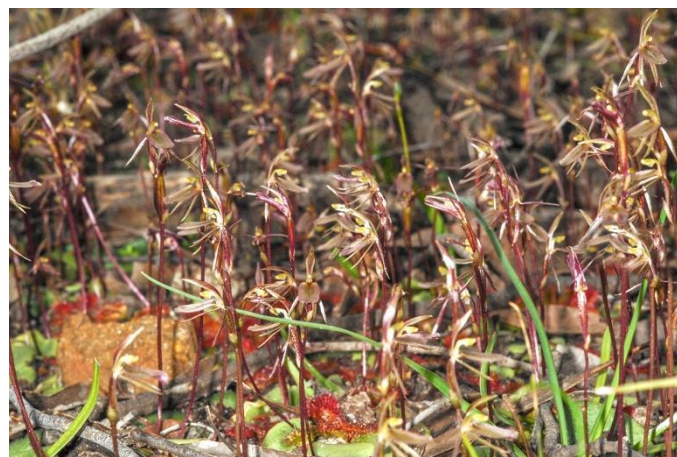
In the wetter areas of the reserve, and often associated with bracken, are the Helmet-orchids, *Corybas* sp. There are two found at Inverleigh, *C. incurvas*, the Slaty Helmet-orchid and *C. diemenicus*, the Stately Helmet-orchid. Both are found in colonies, sometimes very large and dense. They have a small, ground-hugging bright green leaf, about the size of a twenty cent piece, with a small almost spherical flower. Most years, they just produce leaves, with only one or two flowers in the colony. In other years, like this one, they flower in huge numbers.



***Corybas diemenicus* - Stately Helmet-orchid.**

One of the most prolific orchids on the reserve must be the Dainty Bird-orchid, *Chilogottis trapeziformis*. These tiny, green/brown flowers can be found in huge colonies across much of the reserve, their leaves so tightly packed together that you can't see the ground between them. One colony that I know of would easily cover the foot-print of my house. Neil Anderton, in his

address at the Greater Geelong Flora Lecture, told of one that was 20m wide and extended for about 200m! *Cyrtosyllis reniformis*, the Gnat-orchid, is also a very common and densely colonising little orchid. Like the *Corybas*, its leaves are small and round and hug the ground, and like the *Chiloglottis* the flowers are small and brown and not easily seen were it not for the proliferation of bright green leaves.



**Gnat orchids in a dense colony**

In Spring the reserve is alive with Sun-orchids – *Thelymitra* sp.- and we have photographed eight species there including a rather beautiful hybrid between *Thelymitra carnea*, the Pink Sun-orchid and *T. antennifera*, the Rabbit Ears.



Caladenias, both the 'fingers' type and the 'spider' type are to be found on the reserve. There are two very rare spider-orchids which are found there and nowhere else.

Caladenia 'Inverleigh' is a large, attractive spider orchid which, I believe, grows only on Inverleigh Common. The colony is managed and has been surrounded by a rabbit/kangaroo proof fence. Numbers of this plant are increasing and there are some 200 within the fence. There are a number which are established outside the barrier and these are protected with sturdy cages to stop marauding kangaroos. The other endemic spider orchid is *Caladenia pumila*, the Dwarf Spider-orchid,



and it is a miracle plant. First discovered on the Bannockburn Bush lot in 1916 it is a small, pearly white orchid with pink edges and calli on the labellum. It was officially named in 1923. It was last seen in 1936 and considered extinct, until 2009 when two plants were discovered on the Inverleigh NCR. Luckily the discoverer knew that it was something different and notified the ANBG. Together with Parks Victoria, steps were taken immediately to protect this little orchid.



Seeds were taken from the plant and germinated with great difficulty at RNBG. The total population of this plant now numbers twelve, two 'in the wild' at Inverleigh and ten at RNBG. A very special orchid indeed.

The entire talk was recorded and those who would like to hear and see more of the orchids of Inverleigh NCR can view it here .....

<http://apsgeelong.org/webinars.html>

#### VIRTUAL PLANT TABLE

We tried a plant table for this meeting with, I think, mixed success. With a little more planning and practice, I'm sure we can make our virtual table as wonderful as our physical table at the general meetings.

We first tried holding plants in front of our computer cameras, and while it wasn't ideal with wobbles, bad light and focus issues, we did see some interesting plants.

John Bell showed us *Grevillea* 'Bulli Beauty' a cultivar from the Illawarra *Grevillea* gardens. A large shrub at about 4m x 4m, it produces its 150mm red/pink flowers on the end of long branches held above the shrub.



***Grevillea* 'Bulli Beauty' – Photo (C) Sebastian Tesoriero**

Sheila showed us with some beautiful Waratah's from the 'Shady Lady' group. Roger has three plants with over seventy blooms at the moment. They need protection from direct sunlight and lots of water to thrive.

Frank showed us a couple of *Thryptomenes*. One was compact and bushy with white flowers, the other with long, arching branches and white flowers. Both came up as seedlings and have continued to flower after the 'planted' ones have long finished. Ha also had *Myoporum*, and some late-flowering *Correas*. Cruelly, he flaunted his *Grevillea* 'Peaches'n' Cream'.

Sheila and Tina had a bit of a 'yours is bigger than mine' battle with their *Dendrobium* orchids.

Some members sent photos through to be included in the flower table. I wish to apologise to Roger and Peter whose submissions were over-looked. I plead old-age and corona virus, and will include them next month.



Chris Walker-Cook sent along a couple of photos of *Aphanopetalum resinosum* – the Sun Vine or Gum vine, a rain forest species which has dark green leaves and creamy-white star shaped flowers. He also showed us a magnificent *Eremophila*, a hybrid of *E. maculata* x *E. viscida*.



**Chris's *Eremophila maculata* x *E. viscida*.**

Carmel sent in a range of plants in flower in her garden. Many of Carmel's plants are cuttings taken from the specimens brought along to our regular meetings. Tonight's treasures included *Correa* 'Catie Bec', a lovely pink *C. alba* hybrid; *Eucalyptus priessiana*, a small mallee with large lemon, yellow flowers; a beautiful *Banksia media*, which she rather heartlessly described as 'that common Banksia'; *Gastrolobium celsianum*, the Swan River Pea and a beautiful *Grevillea* which she bought as *G. magnifa*, but whose ancestry was questioned with suggestions that it me *G. petrophiloides*, based on flower and foliage colour.



**Carmel's contentious *Grevillea***

Di Royce sent us a few from their garden in Grovedale, including *Eremophila nivea*, thriving in a pot; *Olearia homolepis*, with large mauve daisy flowers; a large unidentified hakea with pink flowers; *Melaleuca fulgens*, with bright red flowers; *Chorizima cordatum*; *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess' and a *Eucalyptus*

*maculata* x *E. pyriformis*. Joy Sutton sent us pics of *Eremophila glabra* ssp *tomentosa* and another Silver Princess. Ade showed us a small *Acacia drummondii* which is in flower at the moment.

Matt Leach had some flowers from his Dad's garden at Inverleigh including *Banksia coccinea*, *Dryandra formosa* and a lovely deep purple *Boronia* 'Purple Jarod'.



***Banksia coccinea***

Jennie showed us a little *Ptilotus* sp., a small shrub about 300mm with the typical fluffy flower heads of the genus. I did a quick online check and discovered that there are almost 120 recognised species of *Ptilotus*! Jennie *Acacia* cognate is in flower now as is her *Eremophila santalina* and *E. 'Summertime Blue'*.

**PLANT OF THE MONTH**

***Darwinia oxylepis*  
By Ade Foster**



*Ade Foster*  
FaunaCrispImages



*Darwinia oxylepis* is flowering in my garden as I write. Known as Gillam's Bell, *D. oxylepis* is a rare plant, known from the Stirling Ranges, north of Albany in Western Australia. It is found on the low hills, around Red Gum Pass, in the far west of the range.



It is a dense, compact shrub to about 1.2m – 1.5m in the sub-group of Darwinias known as 'Mountain Bells'. They are found growing mostly on the higher slopes and all have large, colourful bracts hanging, like bells, from the ends of the branchlets. What appear to be the red flowers are, in fact, these brightly coloured bracts, with six or seven flowers concealed within. The petals of the flowers are quite small but the styles and their pollen presenters are very prominent, often peeking out from the bells.



My plant is three years old, and has only really shown any growth in the last six months – perhaps a result of the extra rain we have had this year? It is about 300mm x 300mm and covered in the red bracts. I hope, now that is established, that it will continue to grow and add more late winter, early spring colour to its corner of my garden.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 20<sup>th</sup>

Our Annual General Meeting will be conducted online, via Zoom, on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. You should all have received an email from our Secretary, Peter Nuzum, with the official notification.

## MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE

Annual subscriptions are due, and a new Membership form is attached to this newsletter, or can be downloaded from our website –

<http://www.apsgeelong.org/join.html>

We understand that we cannot provide all the things one generally receives from membership of APS Geelong. However, our fees are so low when compared to other clubs, that we think you will still get value for money. And remember, you can't vote at the AGM unless you are a financial member.

## PHOTO COMPETITION

We usually have a photo competition at the AGM, and we'll be doing an online one this year. The idea will be for you to send in your entries via email. We'll collate them and put them online for you to view. Then you vote, and we announce the winners at the AGM. Watch for an email with all the details soon!

## THIS IS ALL OF US

Don't fib ... you know it's you 😊

