



Journal  
of the  
Native Orchid Society  
of  
South Australia Inc



*Thelymitra*

# NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PO BOX 565 UNLEY SA 5061

[www.nossa.org.au](http://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.*

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**Journal Cost \$2. per issue. Family or Single Membership with subscription \$20.00\***

\*Postal Mail full year \$20.00. Email full year \$15.00.

Pro-rata rates for third quarter \$10.00 and last quarter \$5.00

Students \$10.00 per year. Juniors \$5.00

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**MAY 2008      VOL. 32 NO 4**

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

**NEXT MEETING 27 MAY 2008**

**Tuesday, 27 May**, 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 Peter McCauley:

**DIARY DATES**

**Sat 14 June** Belair N. Park, *Pterostylis cucullata*. weeding  
**Thurs. 26th June** Australian Plant Society S.A meeting. Fran MacGillivray  
**Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup>** Victor Harbour area; '*Diplodium* Special'  
**August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>** South East '*Linguella* Special'  
**20-21 September** **NOSSA SPRING SHOW**  
**30 November** **Xmas BBQ**

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wed, 4<sup>th</sup> June** at the home of Bodo Jensen. Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m.

## APRIL MEETING

### PLANTS BENCHED

**Epiphyte species:** *Dendrobium lithacola* (6 plants); *Den. schneiderae*; *Dockrillia bowmanii*; *Dockrillia lichenastrum*

**Epiphyte hybrids:** *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon; *Den. Wasyl*; *Den. Regal Gilleston*; *Dockrillia* Virginia Jupp x *racemosa*

**Terrestrials:** *Diplodium laxum*; *Diplodium torquatum*; *Diplodium truncatum*; *Eriochilus cucullatus*

### Judging Results

#### **Epiphyte species Open Division**

1<sup>st</sup> *Dendrobium lithacola*

2<sup>nd</sup> *Dendrobium schneiderae*

3<sup>rd</sup> *Dendrobium lithacola*

#### **Epiphyte species Open Division**

1<sup>st</sup> *Dockrillia lichenastrum*

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

#### **Epiphyte hybrid Open Division**

1<sup>st</sup> *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon

2<sup>nd</sup> *Dendrobium* Wasyl

3<sup>rd</sup> *Dockrillia* Virginia Jupp x *racemosa*

There were no Epiphyte hybrids in Second Division

#### **Terrestrial species Open Division**

1<sup>st</sup> *Eriochilus cucullatus*

2<sup>nd</sup> *Eriochilus cucullatus*

3<sup>rd</sup> *Diplodium laxum*

#### **Terrestrial species Second Division**

1<sup>st</sup> *Eriochilus cucullatus*

2<sup>nd</sup> *Diplodium truncatum*

No 3<sup>rd</sup>

There were no terrestrial hybrids benched.

### **Popular vote results**

Epiphyte species Open Division

*Dendrobium lithacola*

Epiphyte species Second Division

*Dockrillia lichenastrum*

Epiphyte hybrid Open Division

*Dockrillia* Virginia Jupp x *racemosa*

Terrestrial species Open Division

*Diplodium laxum*

Terrestrial species Second Division

*Diplodium truncatum*

Plant of the night

*Eriochilus cucullatus*

Grower

Bodo Jensen

Bodo Jensen

Bodo Jensen

Bill Dear

John & Bev Gay

Malcolm Guy

John & Bev Gay

Malcolm Guy

Les Nesbitt

Lesley & Bob Gunn

Bill Dear

Janet Adams

Bodo Jensen

Bill Dear

John & Bev Gay

Lesley & Bob Gunn

Janet Adams

Malcolm Guy

Plant commentary on epiphytes given by Bodo Jensen & on terrestrials by Malcolm Guy.

### **April Speaker**

Darrell Kraehenbeuhl, author of “*Pre-European vegetation of Adelaide*”, spoke on the loss of habitat in the Adelaide region drawing on memories from his early years and showing slides of native vegetation in areas that is now under housing or other development. Many of those areas were home to rare or unusual species that relied on that particular shrubland for survival. Darrell pointed out that some remnant vegetation still remains including that on the Grange Golf Course where *Pterostylis arenicola* still survives and Folland Park among others. One can only wonder at what could have been.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION - NOSSA NEWS

### NOSSA activities

**Sat 14 June** Belair N. Park 9:30a.m. Meet at the information centre. If later than 9:30 proceed to Long Gully as far as the old tank site & make your way up the hill. (For entry through the gate please mention you are attending T.P.A.G. weeding). A weeding activity for improvement of habitat for the threatened orchid *Pterostylis cucullata*. Many people make it a half day activity.

### NOSSA Field Trips: 2008-9

These trips are tentative and dates may change.

**1:** 'Diplodium Special' Victor Harbour area, Saturday July 5th, meet Myponga Post Office at 9AM.

**2:** South East 'Linguella Special' August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to Pinnaroo, Bangham, Lucindale, Beachport and the Coorong. Meeting point to be decided.

**3:** Scott Creek Winter Orchids August 9<sup>th</sup>, meet at Almanda Mine 10am and bring a picnic lunch.

**4:** Southern Yorke Peninsula for helmet orchids, greenhoods etc, August 16-17<sup>th</sup>. Meet at Warooka 9AM.

**5:** September Adventure in the South-East looking for new species of orchid, Sat 27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup>. Meet at Keith turn off

**6:** Scott Creek Spider Orchids, Sat October 4<sup>th</sup>, meet 10am at Almanda Mine.

Other excursions will include early November for South-East sun orchids and probably meeting Victorians over the border for a look in the South-west; December 14<sup>th</sup> *Thelymitra cyanea* special Glen Shera; January 3<sup>rd</sup> *Dipodium* around Crafers gardens in morning and Kuitpo Forest in afternoon if cool enough; February 'Spiranthes Special' Tooperang; March 7-8<sup>th</sup> 'Corunastylis special'

#### **Also, we have an invitation from the Australian Plant Society S.A.**

The Australian Plant Society S.A. is having Fran MacGillivray (a recipient of our Kollosche scholarship at Adelaide Uni.) to speak at their meeting on **26th June**. She will be speaking on "Molecular Systematics of *Caladenia* (Orchidaceae)". N.O.S.S.A. members would be very welcome if they wish to attend. Meetings are held at the Unley Citizens' Centre, 14 Arthur Street, Unley at 7.30 p.m.

**Wanted!** NOSSA is producing a CD "Western Australian Orchids" to make use of our members' and friends' many images from expeditions west". We have a dozen or so members who have already offered images but if you have not been approached and have images you would like to see on the CD please contact Cathy Houston or R. Bates in the next 2months.

## FOR SALE

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Glasses with the NOSSA emblem                            | \$7.50 each |
| NOSSA badges   | \$5.00      |
| Posters of 50 orchids within 100km of Adelaide (A4 size) | \$5.00.     |

See Judy Penney at the meetings.

**'Orchid Book Wanted:** anyone with a copy of '*Orchids of South-West Australia*' by Noel Hoffman and Andrew Brown. Revised Second Edition with Supplement. 1998' that they are willing to sell, please contact Margaret Petridis on 83318001 or 0409677385.

## How it is Done

**Reg Shooter**

There were six nice specimens of the species *Dendrobium lithacola* exhibited at the April meeting. These were excellent examples of this species. *D. lithacola* was previously known as *D. biggibum* var *compactum*. It differs from *D. biggibum* var *biggibum* by its short swollen, 10 to 12cms long pseudobulbs & lack of leaves along the bulb only having 6 to 10 typical *biggibum* leaves at the apex of the pseudobulbs. Three to ten variable shaped flowers that tend to droop down are carried on short racemes.

Like *D. biggibum* var *biggibum*, *D. lithacola* has been used extensively over many years in hybridising. Many of the so called "Singapore Orchids" have at least one infusion of this species in their makeup. A search of the computer program Wildcatt shows that it has been used over 3000 times to produce many outstanding, beautiful orchids.

Unfortunately over the past few years many of these hybrids have been appearing labelled *D. lithacola*. Plants with fat, bulbous 30cm tall, fully leaved pseudobulbs having long 30cm racemes of typical *biggibum* like flowers, beautifully grown plants but not *D. lithacola*. Many of these hybrids are made in Asia and arrive in Australia in flask the label indicating that one of the parents is *D. lithacola*. They may pass through a number of hands both before and after de-flasking. One scenario could be that the second parent name could become lost and the orchid ends up being sold to an unsuspecting purchaser who in good faith exhibits it as *D. lithacola*. The problem arises when these plants are exhibited in the Australian Native Species division at a show or meeting. They are such outstanding examples that they invariably beat the genuine Australian native species it is competing unfairly against. The proper place for these beautiful orchids is in the *Dendrobium* section of the schedule where they would invariably win anyway.

These are my views but how we decide on what action to take in resolving this anomaly I have no answer.

## ARTICLES/ITEMS FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL

Closing date is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June

*Eriochilus cucullatus* is the botanical name for Parsons Bands, a tiny orchid that always flowers in April. It gets its common name from the two white petals that are the most prominent feature of the flower. They point forwards and downwards and resemble the old fashioned minister's white collar. The single heart shaped leaf develops after the opening rains and is usually not visible at flowering time.

This year these orchids have been more numerous and widespread on my property than ever before. There would have to be at least 100 flowering plants. They have shorter and thinner stems than usual probably due to the dry spring last year. They are all on the slashed areas, fire tracks and rocky outcrops in exposed sunny and windy positions. Like most orchids they do not grow amongst the dense understorey bush. Three plants flowered in the grid. A fair number of plants, maybe 5%, have been pollinated naturally and I have hand pollinated a few in areas where I want them to grow. I have been hand pollinating this species for some years and obviously seedlings have resulted to mature to flowering size this year. But that does not explain the clusters of plants on rocky outcrops where I have not seen flowers before. Perhaps I have not been in the right place at the right time.

This species has no roots so is probably fungus dependent. As the plants seldom multiply, propagation is from seed. It does well in cultivation and is easy to raise from seed around mother plants. The pods ripen in June, drop the seed immediately, and seedlings appear in Spring. A flowering size dormant tuber is spherical, about as big as a pea, is pearly white and has a distinctive silky white pointed sheath over the dormant shoot. With good cultivation over several years in pots, the tubers can get as big as a grape and assume a kidney shape. A robust plant can have two flowers or rarely 3 but in the bush usually the plants have a single flower.

It is a good species to try out fungus dependent cultural practices. These include not repotting until plants get crowded, say every 5 years, no fertilizer and annual replenishment of the topping of sheoak needles in summer.

### The Reg Shooter Trophy for Australian Native Hybrid

2007

The results of the Reg Shooter Trophy for 2007 is as follows;

Jim & Eve Cuming was the recipient of the Perpetual Trophy, miniature & certificate for 2007 with a large plant of *Dendrobium* Andrew Persson 'Surprise'.

#### **Participation certificates were awarded to;**

Geoff & Lucy Spear for *Dendrobium* Lisa Turner. South Coast Orchid Club.

David Cammack for *Dendrobium* Alick Dockrill. South Coast Club.

David Cammack for *Dendrobium* Anne's Rainbow Surprise. South Coast Orchid Club.

David & Pat Harmer for *Dendrobium* Graham Hewitt 'Dee Pee'. Orchid Club of South Australia.

M & P Hockey for *Dendrobium* (Graham Hewitt x Rutherford Starburst). Orchid Club of South Australia.

John & Bev Gay for *Dendrobium* x *Gracillimum*. Native Orchid Society.

John & Bev Gay for *Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon 'Ern'. Murray Bridge Orchid Club

John & Bev Gay for *Dendrobium* Bardo Rose 'Pink Delight'. Murray Bridge Orchid Club.

Congratulations to all participants.

## **NOTES FROM THE DISCUSSION ON SCALE IN ORCHIDS.**

Reprinted from ANOS Vic. Group Bulletin.

Commentator Dick Thomson

Recorder Peter Krake

Scale is common in both Dendrobium and terrestrial-orchids: It can appear and spread to other plants before we are even aware of its presence. The evidence of a scale infestation in our orchids will be obvious. Plants tend to become yellow; flower rates are reduced and the plant can even die in more extreme cases.

This year appears to be a bad year for scale infestation in orchids grown in Melbourne, particularly among the Dendrobiums. This may be related to the very dry conditions over the past few years and the autumn drought.

Treatments for scale infestation varied tremendously; some preferred soapy water and the vigorous application of an old toothbrush. Others used commercial products such as white oil with different degrees of success. The systemic pesticide Rogor® had been tried by at least one member with a low level of success. Another member had tried Mortein™ barrier spray which seemed to work without obvious harm to the plants. Perhaps the deterrent was to the ants that help spread the scale from one plant to another. Anti-Scale® available through Bunnings is readily obtainable and appears to be effective against scale.

Many points were raised by members with some experience of scale infestations of their orchids. The following commentary is an inadequate summary of part of the discussion: Crowding of your orchid plants can create problems by increasing the chances of scale spreading from one plant to another. This is particularly true of plants sited towards the back of the bench where it is sometimes difficult to detect the early evidence of a scale infestation.

White oil can be hard on some plants. It acts to smother the scale, but does it get rid of the crawling stage? The winter formulation of white oil may be harsher on plants? What do we know of the different formulations available? Very little it appears at this stage.

Removing scale by hand with a toothbrush works but it is recommended that affected pots be removed from the shadehouse before treatment to avoid spreading the infestation.

Eco-Oil has been used and appears to be very effective. It is based on Melaleuca oil and seems relatively harmless to humans.

It was suggested that it would be prudent to first try any new treatment on a single pot and then leave it for a while, making observations over a period of time.

Repotting an orchid allows all parts of the affected plant to be treated for scale at the same time.

Newly purchased plants should be kept separated from the main collection for a period of time to ensure that no new diseases or insect pests are introduced into the orchid house. Getting rid of ants from your orchid house is important. Not only do they actively spread scale they also change the growing conditions in a pot when they set up a colony in what are ideal conditions for them.



## Notes on the Cultivation of *Sarcochilus hirticalcar*

By Darryl Smedley

(This article originally appeared in *The Orchadian* Vol. 12 No.9 September 1998 and copied here from the ANOS Newcastle Bulletin February 2007.)

*Sarcochilus hirticalcar* was described by Alick Dockrill (Dockrill 1967) from material discovered by Malcolm Brown the previous year in the southern part of the Mcllwraith Range, Cape York Peninsular, Queensland. It was initially described by Dockrill in the new genus *Parasarcochilus*, transferred to *Pteroceras* by Garay in 1972 (cited in Clements 1989) and then the last movement to *Sarcochilus* by Clements & Wallace in 1989 (Clements 1989). This last combination seems to have gained ready acceptance with orchid growers. The International Authority for the Registration of Orchid Hybrids retains the name *Parasarcochilus hirticalcar* for hybrid registration purposes.

*S. hirticalcar* is a very attractive and desirable small-growing species. It flowers for a long period over summer when few other native species can be relied on to produce a reasonable display. The flowers are produced progressively along a pendant inflorescence; nineteen per raceme being the highest count on my largest plant. This plant has eight leaves with a maximum spread of 14 cm and carries up to four inflorescences at a time. The smallest plants with two or three leaves reliably produce 4-6 flowers at a time. I have even had it flower in the bottle!

For a species endemic to a very restricted area of North Queensland, it has proved very easy to grow and produces no special challenges to the most average of cultivators.

*S. hirticalcar* is, by definition a tropical species, the type locality being only 14°S from the Equator. However, experience has shown that *S. hirticalcar* does not need tropical-type conditions to be successfully cultivated. For quite some years I have successfully cultivated it outside year-round in a shadehouse in western Sydney. This comes as no surprise when the habitat at the type locality is considered.

Lavarack (1980) indicates that the type locality is in vine forest along Lankelly Creek, at a place which he records is known locally as "Mulingar". This place is in the southern part of the Mcllwraith Range at an approximate altitude of 400 m AMSL. The Mcllwraith Range is a relatively high-altitude plateau (maximum altitude 824 m) with no other area in Australia at this latitude reaching this elevation. Rainfall is also high, estimated to be as much as 2000 mm per annum. Winter night time temperatures are in the order of 12-14°C minimum with day temperatures exceeding 30°C (Lavarack loc. cit.). The species has also been recorded along Pandanus Creek at approximately 700m where the minimum night temperature would be expected to be somewhat lower.

So, here we have a 'tropical' species that, because of its restricted high altitude home range, can quite happily cope with at least a Sydney winter. I have a couple of dozen plants of this species and all have spent their lives outside under 50% shadecloth. The shadehouse receives maximum winter sun and is shaded by trees in summer from about midday to 5pm. They cope with winter minimums of down to -2°C on occasions and have been up to 49°C in high summer.

Last decade you could sometimes get this species from a Queensland nursery but in no great numbers. Rumours persisted that it was virtually wiped out along Lankelly Creek and returning orchid travellers regularly reported that they had great difficulty in locating the species. Perhaps it was never really common in the wild. However, it has recently been found in reasonable numbers in another part of the Mcllwraith Range. Fortunately, seedlings were raised from the wild-collected plants. It is from these that the plants in cultivation today are descended.

The species carries its capsules for a very long time. The capsules reach dehiscence at 14½ months after pollination and, like *Plectorrhiza tridentata*, it is usual for the plant to be in full bloom and still carrying last year's capsule(s). Dry seed germinates after 6-8 weeks and the protocorms are ready to replant a few months later. They grow in-vitro relatively quickly for a *Sarcochilus* and are large enough to deflask about 12 months after sowing. A mature flask of *S. hirticalcar* looks quite funny as all the roots grow up as if they're doing everything possible to escape out the lid without touching the media in the bottom of the jar. Sibling crosses have a high degree of fertility, it seems that in selfings the germination rate is very low.

Plants can be deflasked onto a mount without any special treatment. I have not attempted pot culture for *S. hirticalcar*, even though most of its hybrids are grown this way. Descriptions of its growth habit indicate that its relatively large and fleshy roots ascend and descend its host for some distance without entering moss pads or burrowing into the bark. They are exposed to the elements all the time, much in the manner of the more common *S. olivaceus*, *S. australis* and *P. tridentata*.

I choose a mount as long as manageable as it's important to give this orchid a good root run, 30 cm is adequate for a single seedling but if you're planting multiples on the one host go to 50 cm long. Width is not critical, some of mine are on mounts only 1 cm in cross-section. I have used dressed hardwood, sawn red cedar and *Cyathea* tree-fern with great success. No pad of backing material such as sphagnum moss or tissue paper is necessary. The seedlings are tied directly onto the mount with fishing line or narrow stocking strips. The stocking is a little better as the roots of the seedling need to be forced down onto the host and fishing line can cut into them.

The rapid growth of seedlings on tree-fern indicates this is a preferred host in cultivation, especially where the trunk has been cut vertically and the orchid's roots can run along in and out with the fibres. It seems that the extra moisture retentive properties of the tree-fern suits *S. hirticalcar*.

After mounting the totems can be hung in a low, cool, shady part of the shadehouse for a few weeks then moved a bit higher for better light and air movement once the green root tips have started to grow again. Water as with the rest of your collection, they can take lots of it. The species doesn't seem to be as susceptible to S.S.D.S. (Sudden Sarc. Death Syndrome) as other members of the group but it's certainly not immune, very occasionally one of mine will succumb.

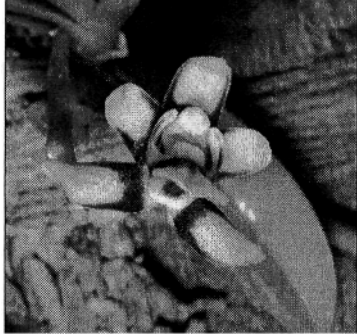
There appears not to be much variation in the colour and markings of the flowers from clone to clone. As the flowers are only of moderate size, about 12 mm diam., there is not a lot of potential for difference. Sometimes the yellow of the segments can be more intense. Some clones have a broader band of purple, russet or red around the basal parts of the segments and some have small blotches of these colours below the band on the labellum. Selective line breeding should be able to stabilise some of these characters.

Most collections that house a variety of cool-growing orchids should be able to cope with a few *S. hirticalcar*. It requires no special treatment, can be fertilised or not as the case may be with the rest of the collection (although I do recommend fertilising mounted plants as they do not benefit from the inevitable breakdown of media in potted plants, fertilised or not), doesn't need much space, flowers quickly ex flask and in summer, grows cold and produces some terrific colours in its hybrids.

It's a shame it's not grown and exhibited more often but I guess lack of availability or a misunderstanding of its cultural requirements has been the problem. It has proved easy to grow and there are lots of seedlings coming along from flasks so look out for it and give *S. hirticalcar* - the "Harlequin Orchid" a go.

## References

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- Dockrill, A.W. (1967). *Australasian Sarcanthinae*. A Review of the Subtribe Sarcanthinae (Orchidaceae) in Australia and New Zealand (The Australasian Native Orchid Society. Sydney).
- Garay, L. (1972). "Bot. Mus. Leaflet.", cited in Clements, M.A. Catalogue of Australian Orchidaceae. *Australian Orchid*
- Lavarack, P.S. (1980). Cape York Orchid Project. *Orchids of the McIlwraith Range* (Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. Brisbane).



### From ANOS Victoria Group May 2005

There is no doubt that this delightful small epiphyte has colourful, boldly marked flowers.... but there is some confusion about its name which seems to be currently swinging between *Sarcochilus hirticalcar* and *Parasarcochilus hirticalcar*. We are not buying into this argument, so call it by whichever name takes your fancy. As a matter of interest, its common name is Harlequin Orchid and we agree it does remind us of that colourfully dressed comic character! *S.* (or *P.*) *hirticalcar*' is endemic to the McIlwraith Range in north-eastern Queensland where it occurs in the rainforest. It also grows on the red flaky bark of Red Beech (*Dillenia alata*) trees in the more open vegetation of small stream floodplains. A readily recognisable species with waxy, bright yellow flowers marked with distinctive reddish-brown bands. Its unusually shaped labellum has large lateral lobes and a flat, hollow chin that thrusts forward in an aggressive manner. Plants are similar in appearance to *S. falcatus*. Although our references claim it may require a heated glasshouse in cooler climates, our plants haven't read the books and grow quite happily, all year round, under shadecloth. Doug Lee, who benched this plant at the March meeting, doesn't have a heated house either. He is successfully growing it in one of his solid-roofed shadehouses.

## Fossil pollinator dates orchid family

B. Gravendeel

### Summary

A 20 million year old piece of amber, found in a mine in the Dominican Republic, revealed a well preserved extinct stingless bee, *Proplebeia dominicana* (Wille & Chandler), carrying orchid pollinia. Shape, size and composition of the pollinia placed the orchid in the Goodyerinae. The fossil was described as *Meliorchis caribea*. By combining this information with dates from related fossil plants, a new age estimate was obtained for the origin of the Orchidaceae. This estimate rejects the common assumption of a rather recent origin for orchids and suggests, instead, that they already originated around 80 million years ago.

[the summary (provided in English) is taken from the following journal]

*Entomologische Berichten* 68(2):42-44, 2008. B. Gravendeel, Nationaal Herbarium Nederland - Universiteit Leiden Einsteinweg 2, 2333 CC Leiden. gravendeel@nhn.leidenuniv.nl



LEFT & ABOVE:  
*Dockrillia (Virginia  
Jupp x racemosa)*

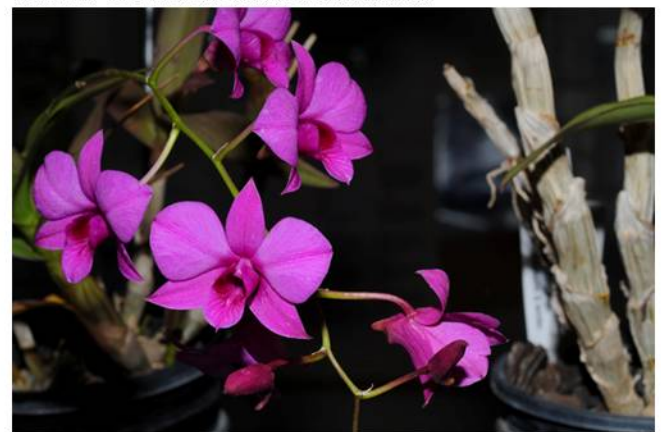
RIGHT:  
*Dockrillia bowmanii*



ABOVE: *Dockrillia lichenastrum*



BELOW: *Dendrobium lithacola*





ABOVE:  
*Dendrobium* Regal Gilleston



LEFT :  
*Dendrobium* Wasyl

BELOW:  
*Dendrobium* Hilda Poxon



BELOW: *Dendrobium schneiderae*





ABOVE:  
*Diplodium laxum*

RIGHT :  
*Diplodium torquatum*



BELOW:  
*Diplodium truncatum*



BELOW & RIGHT: *Eriochilus cucullatus*

