

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE ORCHID JOURNAL



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From the Chair: Gael Donaghy



Kia ora tatou

A Correction

I have to apologise – I told lies in my last From the Chair when I said I would ask members about venues for the 2025 AGM. I asked some members and

decided to revisit the King Country. We last had our AGM and Field Days in this area in 2010 – you can have a look back at what we got up to then in Journal 119, pp48-50. This is available for download from the NZNOG website : https://www.nativeorchids.co.nz/site/assets/files/1985/nznoj_119.pdf

We are planning to go mid-October this time in order to catch the *Corybas* and *Pterostylis*. It is a large area of limestone and sandstone, which is a good substrate for terrestrial orchids. I will put information up on the Facebook page about this event as it comes to hand. Those of you who don't have access to this page can email me and I will send the information to you directly.

The general pattern will be arrival Friday night, field trips on Saturday and Sunday and an optional trip on the Monday. There will be no associated tagalong this year but local coordinators will be advertising shorter trips in their areas throughout the year so keep your eyes peeled for notices in the Journal or on Facebook.

In hunting out the information about NZNOG's last visit to the King Country, I revisited the journals of that time. It reminded me what a wealth of information there is on our website, and even though I have all these journals on the bookshelf, I am reminded how easy it is to search the Journal Archive to find what you want. Just

go to the NZNOG website à Publications à NZNOG Journal Archive, and type your search term in the query box. All references to that will then be listed. You can click Download and look in the Table of Contents, scroll down to the relevant page or go to your bookshelf and find that journal. Many thanks to Bill and Robin for the fantastic website, and to Graeme for all the time scanning and indexing everything!

Graeme and I have recently arrived home from a trip looking at orchids in Southern Portugal and Sicily. Although there is no overlap in the genera we saw, there is plenty of discussion of what the name of many of the orchids are, with different people favouring different taxonomists! So the question "What is the name of this orchid?" will often be answered with "It depends on whose interpretation you follow". The big taxa are Marsh orchids (*Dactylorhiza*), Bee orchids (*Ophrys*), Orchis and Tongue orchids (*Serapias*). There is incredible variation within each of these genera, and in each species. Interestingly, there is only one genus Aotearoa shares with Europe (and Asia, the Pacific Islands and North and South America) and that is *Spiranthes*.

It is now May, and "orchid spring"! In the weekend we were up the Coromandel Peninsula helping with a vegetation survey. One of the NZNOG's best orchid spotters, Indy, who lives nearby, came along to help. He found *Acianthus sinclairii* almost in flower, and told us of *Pterostylis brumalis* already in flower nearby. He also found *Earina autumnalis* still in flower on a fallen log, the latest I have seen it in flower.

The inbox

Spiranthes australis



Gael Donaghy

January 2025 / Northland

Volcanic Plateau 2025 Wetland Orchid Survey

Bill Campbell

In early January 2025 four keen native orchid enthusiasts (Bill Campbell, Robbie Graham, Brett Payne and Gill Payne) converged on Ohakune for a planned three day survey of Volcanic Plateau wetlands for threatened native orchid species. Target species were *Prasophyllum hectorii* (Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable), *Pterostylis micromega* (Threatened – Nationally Critical) and *Pterostylis paludosa* (At Risk – Declining).

Unfortunately, enthusiasm about what might be discovered was tempered by a weather forecast indicating heavy rain and even unseasonal snow at higher altitudes during the three day period. The good news is that a couple of productive outings were able to be slotted in during breaks in the weather.

The known colony of *Prasophyllum hectorii* at Erua was checked out and a reasonable number of plants were located, with a couple in full flower for those keen enough to be taking photos in the light rain that was falling while we were there. Hayden Jones and a friend joined the group for a visit to this site. No further colonies of *P. hectorii* were located over the course of the survey, although similar habitat was searched in a couple of locations.



A search of a location between Waimarino / National Park and Whakapapa yielded orchids after quite a bit of searching, but after some deliberation it was concluded that these were *Pterostylis montana*. None of the target species were observed at this site.

The best returns were from a site nearer Whakapapa. Initially, the group headed east towards the mountain and it wasn't long before a number of plants of *Pterostylis paludosa* were located. These were well past flowering, but it is hoped that some of us can get back there this year to catch them in full flower. *Thelymitra cyanea* was common in this area and there were a few plants of *Thelymitra pulchella* present also.

The following day two of the group headed west from the same access point and were eventually rewarded with a find of 16 plants of *Pterostylis micromega* over a relatively short distance, with one in full flower offering good photo opportunities. This colony consisted of both juvenile and adult plants, with a number in bud. The other group members were able to get to the site later to see this species for themselves.

Due to the adverse weather conditions, far less time was spent in wetland habitats than had been hoped for, but the initial survey results were still encouraging enough for some of us to want to return and carry on the survey this coming summer, hopefully in better weather conditions.

Further details will be available later in the year, so keep an eye out!





Prasophyllum hectorii
Robbie Graham



Pterostylis micromega
Brett Payne

The inbox

Aporostylis bifolia



Rebecca Bowater

January 2024 | Gertrude Saddle, Fiordland

Does size matter?

Gordon Sylvester

Or are there other reasons.

In my role at the Allan Herbarium, I recently noted several genera with 'enormous' leaves. For example *Chiloglottis cornuta*. Leaves 8cm + wide ,but there is no change in flower size.

On the 1 January, yes I know, New Years Day, I noted a *Chiloglottis* with diminutive leaves and flower. The whole plant was about 25mm tall. The flower was sitting above the leaves; about 25mm long.

The question arises; is this a climatic event or is some other force somehow involved.

The site was Greyney's Track in Arthurs Pass at approximately 680 m a.s.l.

While I have no information relevant to the details of the older *Chiloglottis* specimen. I can confirm I have viewed the quoted sample recently.

Other *Chiloglottis* specimens at this site are also very small. Both flowering and non-flowering specimens.

Is this a result of altitude? The acknowledged start of the track is at 672m. So colony Number One lies at 672 m and colony Number Two lies at 680m; 400m apart.

Having said this. I have also noted a serious drop in size (leaves) over the years, I have been recording my observations.



The inbox

Caladenia variegata



Matthew Turner

November 2024 | Kaipūpū Sanctuary, Picton

Dendrobium kingianum in New Zealand

Ian St George

iNaturalist had, in September 2024, eleven reports of the Australian pink rock orchid *Dendrobium kingianum* dating from 2015 (Henderson Bay, Far North), 2016 (Manukau, Auckland), 2019 (Whakapara, Northland), 2020 (Marlborough), 2022, 2023 & 2024 (Coromandel), 2024 (Rodney 1; near New Plymouth 2, Taupo 1). I have also heard of a colony on the Ngatiawa river cliffs near Wellington.

Presumably all were growing in the wild and at least some are “garden escapes”, reflecting our habit of dumping garden waste where we shouldn’t.

Is it now a New Zealand wild orchid? Perhaps: certainly it is no longer just “in cultivation”. Is it a native? “native” implies “born here” but botanically means indigenous (Oxford: “originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native”). Could it be said *D. kingianum* is occurring naturally? Perhaps not—at least not in the way Australian vagrants like *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* are.

The original description is usually cited as “*Dendrobium kingianum* Bidwill ex Lindl., Edwards’s Bot. Reg. 30, 11 (1844)”, referring to Bidwill’s Latin description in Lindley’s editorial in the *Botanical Register* in 1844.

18. DENDROBIUM Kingianum.

Bidwill MSS.

D. (*Desmotrichum*) *Kingianum*; pseudobulbis ovatis in collum longum extensis apice bifoliis, foliis ovalibus emarginatis, pedunculo terminali (2-floro foliis æquali ?), sepalis ovatis mento emarginato, petalis obovatis apiculatis duplò brevioribus, labelli trilobi pubescentis laciniis lateralibus acutis intermediâ paulo longiore transversè rhombeâ angulis lateralibus rotundatis apiculi acuto axi elevatâ trilineatâ apice tridentatâ.

This curious epiphyte was bought by the Messrs. Lodiges at the sale of Mr. Bidwill’s New Holland Plants. It has pseudo-bulbs between four and five inches long, tapered from an ovate base into a very long and narrow neck, on the top of which stand two oblong emarginate dark-green rather wavy leaves. Between these is a flower-stalk having two pink flowers gaily spotted with crimson in the inside. It will probably flower more profusely when in better health, and will then be a plant of considerable interest.



Fig. 1 *Dendrobium kingianum* by Sarah Ann Drake.



Fig. 2 Sarah Ann Drake ▲

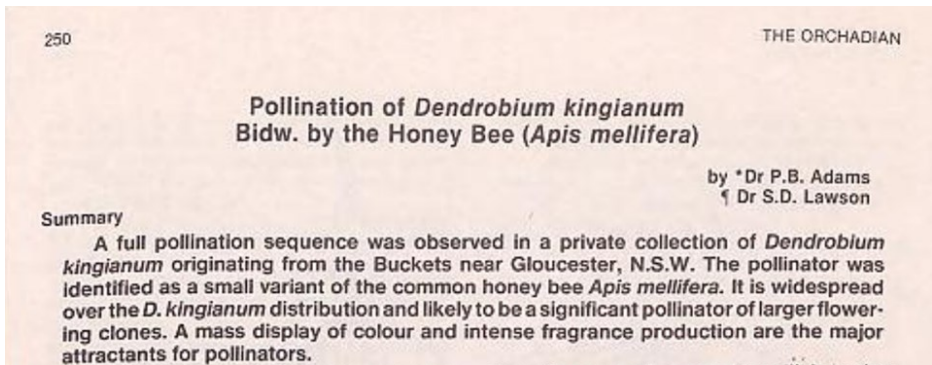
Fig. 3 Philip Parker King, unknown artist, State Library NSW. ▼



An illustration accompanied the text (**Fig.1**) and it bears the inscription “Miss Drake delt”, so was made by Sarah Anne “Ducky” (well, of course) Drake 1803–1857. She was sketched by Sarah Lindley or Barbara Lindley (**Fig.2**). Drake was a schoolmate of Lindley’s sister Anne and lived with the Lindleys in London. She was John Lindley’s principal botanical artist from 1832 to 1847, producing 1160 plates.

Bidwill named the orchid for Captain (later Rear Admiral) Philip Parker King (**Fig.3**) and he has a Colenso connection, for it was King who urged Colenso to write to Sir William Hooker. King, too, found and forwarded an unopened letter to Colenso he found in the dead Alan Cunningham’s pocket in 1839 (“This letter was found by me in Mr. Cunningham’s pocket after his death – the pocket of his Dressing gown he wore when he died....”).

For *Dendrobium kingianum* to become established in the New Zealand wild it would need its pollinator. The *Orchadian* of June 1987 carried an Australian report of pollination by a small (introduced) honey bee (<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/60942187#page/256/mode/1up> pollination by honey bee).



But elsewhere writers suggest pollination may be by a small native Australian bee.



Fig. 4 a small native bee carrying a pollinium on a *Dendrobium kingianum* flower (www.mepainc.org.au/d-kingianum).

I suspect the nonproliferation of *D. kingianum* in the wild in New Zealand means its specific Australian pollinator has not made the Tasman crossing. But we do have honeybees and possibly they are at work here too.



The inbox

Drymoanthus adversus



Archer Tarn

September 2024 | West Coast

Dendrobium kingianum

The Cast Iron Orchid

Gordon Sylvester

At an Orchid Conference (exotics) in 1980 George Fuller of Pukekura Park, New Plymouth commented that he had distributed several parcels of *D. kingianum* around the park as well as another location nearby.

Nothing has been mentioned about this since and when George died so did any interest in the progress of this species.

Tauranga Orchid Society members and Bruce Irwin were involved with the conversion of a quarry near Tauranga into an orchid site, planting exotic orchids outdoors. I now wonder how successful this experiment was / is.

Again there has not been any mention of this in our August Journal (J174).

I know that *Epidendrum ibaguense* / crucifix orchid has been successfully grown outdoors at Wainuiomata and on the coast near Paraparaumu.

What else has been contributed to our orchid family especially in the Auckland area?

Lisa Bennett

May 2023 | *Coromandel* | [iNaturalist](#)



The inbox



Gael Donaghy

December 2024 | Tagalong tour

▼ *Corybas hatchii*

Thelymitra nervosa ▲

Archer Tarn

September 2024 | West Coast



News

You may have noticed that there has been a delay in the printed journals at the end of last year. **The NZNOG is moving to a new system where the printer posts journals directly to members.** Please let us know if there are any issues with this new system by contacting caralisa95@gmail.com — NZNOG Journal Editor

The Te Papa Tongarewa blog has published numerous articles on native orchids this year already. These include research into [Corybas “Pollock”](#), a [new species](#) of leek orchid (*Prasophyllum*), and more on Hayden Jones’ [Thelymitra research](#). These articles and more can be found at <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/>.

Greater Wellington has developed an app to assist those carrying out track maintenance in regional parks in avoiding detrimental impacts on orchid populations. This includes considerations around locations of known populations and the orchid life cycle.

NZPCN has been seeking photos of specific plants which are currently lacking images to improve their website. Thank you to those who have contributed images already. If you have good images of orchids, and would be willing for these to be used on the website, below is a list of additional species with only one image (or none). Please get in touch with info@nzpcn.org.nz to submit these for the website.

Bletilla striata

Corybas papillosus

Epidendrum ibaguense (none)

Microtis arenaria

Nematoceras panduratum

Pterostylis irsoniana

The NZNOG Annual General Meeting and Field Days will be held in Mid-October 2025. It will be based in the South Waikato area, probably around Ōtorohanga. This year, the AGM and Field Days will go from Friday night until Sunday, with a shorter trip on Monday on your way home. It will not be followed by a week-long tagalong event. Do keep your eyes peeled for local events throughout the year such as ‘Ngā Tapuwae ō Townson’ in December (see the back page of this journal). If you want to attend the AGM and Field Days, please register your interest with Gael at gaeldonaghy@gmail.com and join the Facebook group to receive regular updates.



The inbox

Thelymitra “orange top”
T. pauciflora variant



Gael Donaghy

November 2024 / Tauranga

Upcoming Events

7 June 2025

Canterbury Botanical Society
Annual General Meeting, Christchurch.

1—7 September 2025

Te Wiki Tiaki Ao Tūroa / Conservation Week

October 2025

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand Inc.
EIANZ Annual Conference, Perth

Mid-October 2025

New Zealand Native Orchid Group
AGM and Field Days, King Country

20 November 2025

New Zealand Ecological Society
Annual Conference, Online and local “hubs”

6—7 December 2025

New Zealand Native Orchid Group
‘Ngā Tapuwae ō Townson’ Field Trip, Westport.

30 November—4 December 2026

New Zealand Ecological Society & Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO)
Annual Conference, Auckland (AUT)

Do you know about an upcoming event that the NZNOG may be interested in? Let me know by email:
caralisa95@gmail.com

Tips and tricks for finding New Zealand orchids with Mark Moorhouse

Your list of expected species at a site needs to take into consideration flowering times.

The inbox

Editor's top picks from recent *iNaturalist* observations

John Barkla

February 2025 | Ōtepoti | [iNaturalist](#)



▼ *Earina autumnnalis*

Thelymitra cyanea ▲



Ed Wilson

March 2025 | Ōtautahi | [iNaturalist](#)

‘Ngā Tapuwae ō Townson’

Footsteps of Townson



6—7 December 2025

Join your NZNOG West Coast regional contacts for a weekend based out of Westport, following in the footsteps of William Townson. Explore the Denniston Plateau and surrounding area and meet other members of the group. For more information on William Townson, see Ian St George’s recent biography, “A most delightful pursuit”. You can get a copy here:

<https://onadmiralroad.co.nz/william-lewis-townson/>

Further details will be communicated via the NZNOG Members Facebook group, or if you do not have Facebook, get in touch with Melanie (meanieb1@gmail.com) to register your interest.



Denniston Plateau