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NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS' CLUB

Meets at Cairns Public School, Abbott Street, Cairns,
usually on second Monday in March, June, September,
and December, at 8 p.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MONDAY, 20th SEPTEMBER, 1943.
BUSINESS: Election of Officers, etc.

BOOK REVIEWS.

20.—**Emergency Food Plants and Poisonous Plants of the Islands of the Pacific.** Written by Dr. E. D. Merrill, Administrator of Botanical Collections and Director of the Arnold Arboretum and published by order of the Secretary of War, U.S.A., for the information and guidance of all concerned. This Technical Manual, TM 10-420, is dated 15th April, 1943, and gives in 149 pages an account of the various foodstuffs found in the Pacific, each plant being given its vernacular and botanical names, as well as the various native names, being illustrated by 113 simple and easily recognisable hand drawings. As a great many of the plants are also found in North Queensland it will be found of great value to all troops and civilians, who may at some time or other be in a position to have to subsidise in an emergency an ordinary food ration. A good index is very helpful.

are native to Australia as well as to the islands to the north. Under the heading of the vernacular name of the plant together with its "pidgin" and Mo'u'in equivalent, the plants are described, but in the absence of botanical names—in many cases these are not at all easy to recognise with certainty. Moreover, the absence of an index detracts from the value of the pamphlet.

21.—**Friendly Fruits and Vegetables.** Prepared by the General Staff L.H.Q. Australia and issued under the authority of the Commander of the Allied Land Forces S.W.P.A. Notified in G.O.'s dated 31st May, 1943, 71 pp., 37 illustrations, several being in colour. Most of the plants described

22.—**A Doctor in Paradise.** By S. M. Lambert, M.D., 421 pp., 24 full page photographic illustrations, published by Geo. Jaboor, Melbourne, for J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, treats of the author's experiences on account of the Rockefeller Foundation, particularly of treatment of the hookworm disease in Papua, Fiji, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Tonga, Samoa, New Hebrides, Cook Islands and Solomon Islands, of his first treatment with carbon tetrachloride, and of his efforts—ultimately crowned with success of providing a school for the training of native medical practitioners. It provides not only much interesting information concerning the natives and especially of hookworm disease, but it possesses a charm and humour that is particularly appealing and entertaining.

DENDROBIUM DICUPHIUM F. Muell.

By the Rev. H. M. R. Rupp, Northbridge, N.S.W.

Bentham describes this tropical orchid as having stems strongly ridged and furrowed, "sometimes 3 to 4 inches long"; but it must be remembered that he worked on dried material only, and a limited supply of that. As a matter of fact, in the fresh state the plant resembles a very stout and well-nourished *D. Phalaenopsis*, with similar leaves, and the stems vary from a few inches to over a foot in height. The "furrows" are very shallow, but doubtless would be deepened in starved or dried specimens. The racemes are normally terminal; but a plant received by Dr. H. Flecker from Groote Island, and sent to me a few years ago, has just come into bloom for the first time, and the single raceme has developed a small aerial growth on the side of the tallest stem. It is nearly a foot long, and has nine flowers.

It is not a showy species. The flowers are small, the sepals and petals being about half an inch long, or a trifle more. All segments are approximately equal in length, but the petals are very much broader than the sepals. The colour is a very pale green outside; inside cream, with the lower part of the labellum, and its lateral lobes, stained a rich maroon. The labellum is very acute and somewhat reflexed at the tip; its disk is ornamented with three longitudinal fringed or crested ridges. The lateral sepals form the usual pouch at their base, but also have a rather deep hollow obtuse spur below this, so that the flower is two-spurred as in *D. bigibbum*. Bentham gives as the localities of the specimens he examined, the Liverpool River and Port Darwin; but in all probability the species extends into Queensland at least in the Cape York Peninsula.

RECORDS OF TWO SAWFLIES.

(Hymenoptera, Tenthredinidae)

By Maurice F. Leask, Memb. F.N.C.V.; Memb. Anthr. Soc., Vic.

Collecting in the field in new localities has yielded some interesting details concerning sawflies, belonging to the *Tenthredinidae*.

The first capture is noteworthy as it supplies evidence of the extended range of one of these insects. On 24-XII-42 two specimens were taken together on low scrub growing on the crest of the Astrolabe Range, Papua, at an altitude of 2,500 feet. These two were adults, identified by Mr. H. Hacker (Queensland Museum) as a *Platypsectra* coming very close to *P. leachi* Kirby, a Queensland insect. Indeed Mr. Hacker has been unable to separate it from that insect, and advises me that the capture is of great interest, as this sawfly has not been previously recorded outside Queensland.

The second specimen taken drew my attention as the larvae were feeding on a food-plant new in my experience. In Victoria, personal observations during the breeding of sawflies up to Specimen

No. 150 (1) showed the food-plant to be some species of *Eucalyptus* only.

Towards the end of May, 1943, several larvae were observed in the Herberton district (North Queensland) to be feeding on one of the "native raspberries." From the description supplied by the North Queensland Naturalists' Club, the plant is obviously *Rubus rosaefolius*, with leaves like those of a rose.

Fortunately one of the adults was taken on a leaf adjacent to some of the larvae. Mr. H. A. Longman, of the Queensland Museum, states that the larvae and adult are identical with specimens named as *Philomastix nancarrowi* Froggatt. He adds that Dr. A. J. Turner kindly informs him that this species (or a closely allied one) feeds on a wild *Rubus* in the McPherson Range, S.E.Q.

The specimens described herein are retained by the Queensland Museum, and I am indebted to that institution for valuable assistance in determinations.

(1) This is the form of designation used (Natural History), London.

in reports to the British Museum



DENDROBIUM DICUPHIUM F. Muell.

KEY TO FIGURES.

- A. Typical Pseudo-bulbs with raceme of blooms.
- B. Column Head from side. Anther removed.
- C. Callous ridges Labellum Mid-lobe.

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THE BRUSH TURKEY.

By Leslie Pearson, age 9 years.

One day when I was in the scrub, I found a turkey's nest. I began to dig into the heap of rotted leaves.

After digging down about three feet, I came across two young turkeys. Thinking that there might be more young birds, I continued to search amongst the leaves.

A few minutes later I found another young turkey. I put these three young birds into a bag to take them home. I put them in a coop and twice a day I fed them on scraps, wheat and the like.

The father bird scratches up a heap of dry leaves, and on a wet day opens it up to let the rain in. Then he covers the nest over again. When the mother bird is ready to lay an egg, the father bird opens up the nest again.

The father bird takes about three weeks to make the nest.

The brush turkey lays about twelve eggs in a season. If anybody interferes with the nest, the father bird covers the nest up again so that the eggs will keep warm.

When the chicken comes out of the egg, it is covered with down, like any other chicken, but it feathers quickly and works its way out of the nest.

It can fly as soon as it comes out of the nest.

The nest is very hot inside and it takes about three weeks to heat sufficiently to hatch the eggs.

The nest is full of leeches and ticks, grubs and other insects, and I think that the young turkey feeds on them.

The chickens have protectors over their eyes; this is a sort of skin which covers their eyes, and keeps the dirt out.

These birds which I brought to Cairns are now four months old and half grown, and are out at the Zoo at Edge Hill in the care of Mr. Les. Wright.

In three days' time the chickens' wing and tail feathers had grown

enough to enable them to fly, although the rest of their bodies were still covered with down.

Cairns, 3rd May, 1943.

Neville W. Cayley in "What Bird is That?" describes (p. 38) the nest as "A large mound of earth, leaves, and sticks and debris raked together from the surrounding surface of the ground. These natural incubators vary in size according to age or to the number of birds occupying them; a new mound usually measures from 7 to 10 feet in diameter, by about 3 feet in height; an old one may measure as much as 30 feet in diameter by six feet in height. Nesting mounds are repaired (scratched over) and added to each breeding season. The eggs are deposited on end (the larger end uppermost) in holes about 18 inches to two feet deep, and are then covered over. The young are fully fledged when hatched, and fight their way out of the mound unassisted."

The Secretary,
Naturalists' Club,
Cairns.

Dear Sir,—

I have in my possession photos taken by myself of a brush turkey chick, which I hatched under a domestic hen (a common practice years ago). One photo was taken within two hours after hatching and another twenty-four hours later. These two photos are close-up and support "Leslie's" view that the wing feathers develop quickly after hatching. Chicks are very active when hatched, and within an hour, allowing for the chick to dry, they can run and flutter, that it is difficult to catch them if there is any cover or brush about. They can fly short distances on the second day.

S. J. FRENCH,
Cairns.

19th June, 1943.