

# The North Queensland Naturalist

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## A NEW GENUS (ORCHIDACEAE) FOR AUSTRALIA

By S. F. St. CLOUD and A. W. DOCKRILL

*Tainia parviflora* Schltr, hitherto thought to be confined to New Guinea, has been found in the Babinda district by J. H. Wilkie and S. F. St. Cloud, following in September-October, 1956.

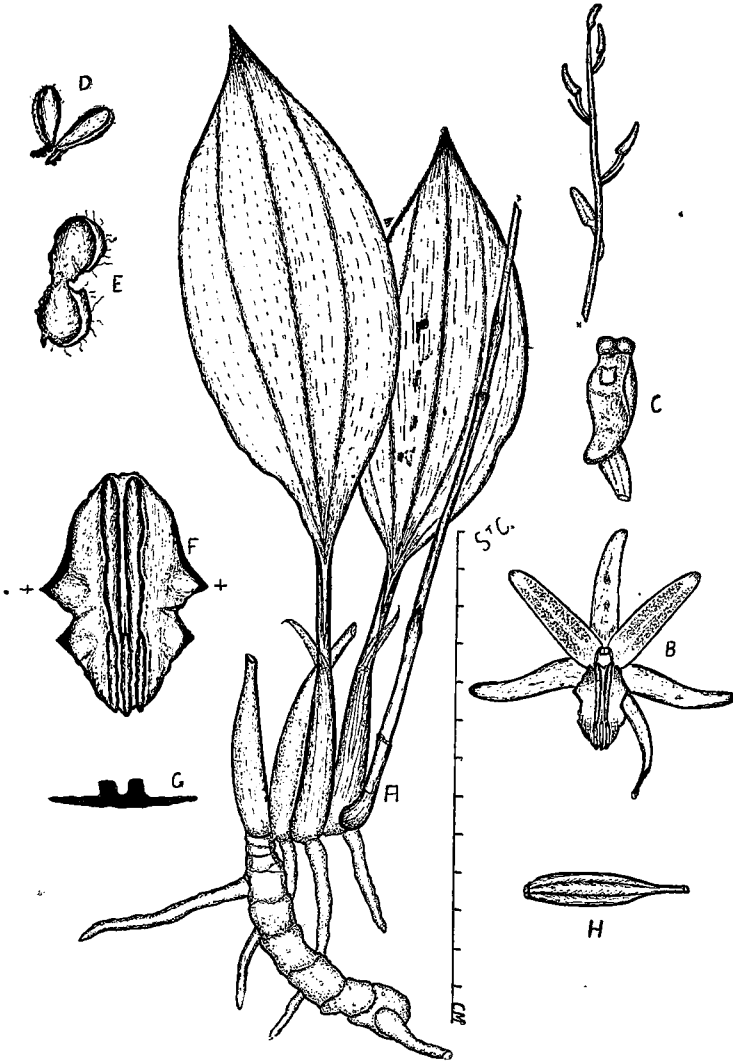
Since this represents not only a new genus, but also a new subtribe (Collabiinae) for Australia, and since neither a description of the species in English, nor an illustration has been published in this country, the following, prepared from the fresh Babinda material, is offered:—

Terrestrial herb consisting of a subvertical subterranean rhizome averaging about 7 x 2 cms., slightly flattened, internodes usually about 1 cm. long (but variable), some of them supporting stout and rigid white roots. At the apex of the rhizome and above the surface of the ground there is a pseudo-bulb which is linear-ovoid, about 4 cms. high by 7.5 mm. diameter at its base and tapering to about 4 mm. diameter at the apex, dull green, clothed with the scarious remains of a single enveloping bract. From the base of this pseudobulb grow a succession of similar pseudobulbs, in the horizontal plane, which are so closely appressed that there is no evidence of a rhizome connecting them, and each having a single root similar to those of the rhizome. Leaves solitary, petiolate, from the apex of the pseudobulb, petiole about 4 cms. long by about 4 mm. diameter, deeply channelled for its entire length; lamina ovate, acute, about 13 cms. long by 5.5 cms. broad, dark green, glossy above and dull below, with a longitudinal central channel above and keeled below, and with two subsidiary prominent nerves, each slightly channelled above and keeled below, dividing the leaf into four more or less equal parts. Inflorescence from the base of the foremost pseudobulb, erect, rigid, 28-32 cms. high, tapering from about 4 mm. diameter at the base to about 2 mm. diameter at the apex; one subacute sheathing bract about 3.5 cms. long at about 2.5 cms. from the base and another about 10 cms. from the base; bracts subtending pedicels linear, acute, about 4 mm. long.

Flowers about six, widely expanding, about 1.5 cms. diameter; greenish-white, with the perianth segments having a faint reddish purple centre line. Perianth segments subsimilar, narrow-oblong, but lateral sepals slightly dilated towards the base, not acute; petals projecting forward, over and embracing the column. Labellum whitish, with ridges of the disc stained deep purple and slightly raised areas of lateral lobes flecked with purple, not spurred, oblong, with four broad-deltoid lateral lobes, the two lobes nearest the base (at about the middle of the segment) a little larger than the two nearest the apex; apex with two notches; lamina with two prominent longitudinal parallel ridges from the base for about two-thirds the length of the segment (and are widest and thickest at the base and taper slightly towards the apex), thereafter three ridges to the apex, which are higher than the other two, attaining a height of 1-1.5 mm. and are beset with rounded teeth on top. Column white, about 3 mm. long, winged; foot at about 120 degrees to the column, about 1 mm. long; wings translucent white, broad deltoid. Anther readily detached, white with faint reddish-purple flecks, slightly flattened on top, two celled, each cell showing four indentations. Pollinia four in two pairs, each pollinium rather deeply

cleft, light golden, mealy, sticky; caudicle very short and stout. Stigma prominent, scutiform, the lower margin slightly raised. Rostellum resting on top of the stigma and consisting of a projecting platform which is sharply rounded at its apex.

The plants were found growing in almost total shade amongst leafy undergrowth on well drained but moist bank of Babinda Creek.



Key to plate:—

- A. plant; B. flower front; C. column; D., E. pollinia;
- F. labellum from above; G. labellum section at X;
- H. seed capsule.

Plant natural size to cm. scale; all other figures variously enlarged.

## NOTES ON THE GENUS VARANUS

(Continued)

By WILLIAM IRVINE

## NO. 2 VARANUS GOULDII (Continued)

On Saturday, 15th February, this monitor was not seen so a search was made by Mr. Frank Bower and myself. It was thought it was in a hole and that the hole had caved in, so every likely area was carefully dug up, without success.

The next day, Sunday, it was observed in the pit and ate some meat which was placed alongside it.

On Sunday morning, 2nd March, this monitor had been in the water dish, as it was wet when I inspected the monitors at 11.15 a.m. I think that this specimen spends quite a lot of time in the water, and I have seen it in the water more times than the entire collection of varius.

## NO. 3 VARANUS VARIUS (Continued)

On Saturday, 15th February, this monitor was found dead, and as it appeared to have died a few days previously, it was buried.

## NO. 4 VARANUS VARIUS (Continued)

Saturday, 15th February, whilst digging up the burrow to remove a dead specimen, the monitor charged at me, missed, and went for Mr. Frank Bower, who was with me. Mr. Bower sidestepped the rush and forced the monitor to the other end of the pit, where it paced up and down in a very aggressive mood.

This monitor was observed on Sunday, 2nd March. On seeing me he hissed violently and adopted a very aggressive attitude, took a few steps forward then stopped.

## NO. 5 VARANUS VARIUS (Continued)

Saturday, 15th February, the specimen was removed from a shelter hole and immediately attacked Mr. Bower and myself. It did this repeatedly until we could drive it to the other end of the pit, where the other aggressive monitor was situated.

## No. 6

SPECIES	Date of Capture	Length ft. ins. mm.	LOCALITY Moree	SITUATION In a Tree
Varanus varius	26/1/58	4 3½ 1308		

This brightly colored monitor was presented to me by Mr. Wal Lorking. I received it on Tuesday night, 4th February, 1958.

Due to the specimen rubbing its nose on the bag in which it was contained it had a mild dose of canker, which was treated with sulphamezathine in 33 per cent suspension.

On Saturday, 15th February, the specimen was cured, and placed in the monitor pit.

The specimen is extremely quiet and when I go into the pit it stays still and lets me stroke it and pick it up. This has helped considerably in settling the other monitors, as I can now go into the pit without the others running for their burrows. They still run a little, but instead of going down the holes, they stop and look around.

Sunday, 20th April. I observed the monitor lying with its head and forelegs resting on the side of the pit, with the hind legs and tail on the ground. I handled the specimen for a few minutes, then it went slowly up to the shelter hole and went in. The time was about 9.15 a.m. and it was raining very lightly. The specimen is just beginning to slough around the sides of the neck.

## CHECK-LIST OF BIRDS OF THE ATHERTON TABLELAND

Personal Observation over twenty years by James Bravery, R.A.O.U.  
Classification and annotation by John Orrell, F.R.G.S.A., R.A.O.U.

NOTE.—This Check-list is in approximate alphabetical order, and is tabulated as follows:—

**Column One:** The LOCAL name of the bird—that is, the name by which it is known on the Atherton Tableland.

**Column Two:** First Line—Scientific name of the bird. Following Lines—Names by which the bird is known in other parts of Australia.

**Column Three:** Numbers in this column indicate the page on which reference may be made in Cayley's "What Bird is That?"

1. BUTCHER-BIRD, Pied	Cracticus Nigrogularis. Black-Throated Crow-Shrike, Black-Throated Butcher Bird, Organ Bird, Piping Crow-Shrike, Varied Crow-Shrike, Flute Bird, Singing White Crow.	(51)
2. BUTCHER-BIRD, Grey	Cracticus Torquatus. Collared Butcher-Bird, Collared Crow Shrike, Derwent Jackass, Tasmanian Jackass, Whistling Jackass.	(50)
3. BOWER-BIRD, Black Satin	Ptilonorhynchus violaceus. Satin Bower-Bird.	(14)
4. BOWER-BIRD, Tooth-Billed	Scenopoletes Dentirostris.	(20)
5. BROLGA	Megalornis rubicundus. Native Companion, Australian Crane.	(5)
6. BUSTARD	Eupodotis Australis. Plain Turkey.	(4)
7. BEE-BIRD	Merops ornatus. Bee-eater, Rainbow-bird, Spinetail, Sandpiper, Pintail, Kingfisher.	(77)
8. CASSOWARY	Casuarius Casuarius.	(4)
9. CAT-BIRD, Spotted	Aluroedus Melanotus.	(19)
10. CHOWCHILLA, Northern	Orthonyx Spaldingi. Spalding's Spinetail, Northern Log-runner.	(44)
11. COCKATOO, White	Kakatoe Glaerita. Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo.	(139)
12. COCKATOO, Red-Tailed Black	Calyptorhynchus Banksi. Banks' Black Cockatoo, Banksian Black Cockatoo.	(139)
13. COOT	Fulica Atra.	(232)
14. CORMORANT, Black	Phalacrocorax Carbo. Black Shag.	(238)
15. CORMORANT, Little Black	Phalacrocorax Ater Little Black Shag.	(239)
16. CORMORANT, Little Pied	Microcaeo Melanoleuchus. Little Black-and-White Shag.	(239)
17. CORMORANT, Pied	Phalacrocorax Varius. Black-and-White Shag.	(239)
18. CROW	Corvus Cecillae. Hazel-eyed Crow.	(56)
19. CRAKE, Marsh	Porzana pusilla. Little Crane.	(220)
20. CUCKOO, Horsfield Bronze	Chalcites Basalis. Narrow-Billed Bronze Cuckoo.	(70)

21. CUCKOO,	Lamprococcyx plagosus.	
Golden Bronze	Broad-billed Bronze Cuckoo.	(70)
22. CUCKOO,	Lamprococcyx Lucidus.	
Shining Bronze		(70)
23. CUCKOO, Rufous	Lamprococcyx russatus.	
Breasted Bronze		(69)
24. CUCKOO, Oriental	Cuculus optatus.	(75)
25. CUCKOO, Fantail	Cacomantis Flabelliformis.	
	Ash-coloured Cuckoo, Storm-bird.	(69)
26. CUCKOO,	Scythrops Novae Hollandae.	
Channel-billed	Fig-Hawk, Hornbill, Toucan, Giant Cuckoo, Storm - Cuckoo, Floodbird, Rainbird.	(60)

(To be continued)

## LIST OF SNAKES RECORDED FROM CAIRNS AND HINTERLAND

Wm. HOSMER\*

### Family TYPHLOPIDAE

Typhlops proximus Waite  
Typhlops unguirostris Peters  
Typhlops broomi Boulenger  
Typhlops torresianus Boulenger  
Typhlops wiedii Peters  
Typhlops ligatus Peters

### Family PYTHONIDAE

Morelia argus variegata Gray  
Aspidites melanocephalus  
melanocephalus (Krefft)  
Liasis amethystinus kinghorni  
Stull  
Liasis childreni Gray  
Liasis fuscus fuscus Peters

### Family COLUBRIDAE

Sub-family Acrochordinae—  
Acrochordus granulatus  
granulatus (Schneider)  
Sub-family Colubrinae—  
Natrix mairii mairii (Gray)  
Stegonotus modestus (Schlegel)  
Stegonotus plumbeus (Macleay)  
Ahaetulla punctulata punctulata  
(Gray)  
Ahaetulla calligaster calligaster  
Gunther  
Sub-family Boiginae—  
Boiga fusca (Gray)  
Boiga irregularis irregularis  
(Merrem)  
Sub-family Homalopsinae—  
Enhydris polylepis Fischer

### Family HYDROPHIIDAE

Laticauda colubrina (Schneider)  
Hydrophis elegans (Gray)  
Hydrophis ornatus ocellatus Gray  
Acalyptophis peronii (Dumeril)  
Lapemis hardwickii Gray  
Astrotia stokesii (Gray)  
Pelamis platurus (Linnaeus)

### Family ELAPIDAE

Aspidomorphus harriettae (Krefft)  
Aspidomorphus diadema (Schlegel)  
Demansia psammophis  
psammophis (Schlegel)  
Demansia olivacea (Gray)  
Demansia torquata (Gray)  
Demansia textilis (Dumeril and  
Bibron)  
Demansia nuchalis (Gunther)  
Pseudechis australis (Gray)  
Pseudechis porphyriacus (Shaw)  
Denisonia signata (Jan)  
Denisonia carpentariae (Macleay)  
Denisonia nigrostriata (Krefft)  
Denisonia pallidiceps (Gunther)  
Denisonia suta (Peters)  
Hoplocephalus bitorquatus (Jan)  
Acanthophis antarcticus  
antarcticus (Shaw)  
Brachyuropis campbelli  
(Kinghorn)  
Rhinelaps warro (de Vis)  
Oxyuranus scutellatus (Peters)  
Vermicella annulata (Gray)

The present list of 47 species and sub-species are recorded from the files of the writer's private collection, and from notes compiled from local sources where the specimen has been positively determined.

\*University of Melbourne, Victoria.

## NOTES ON THE DEATH ADDER

By J. McLOUGHLIN

No doubt most people can relate some strange experiences concerning the humble snake. Casting my mind back about four years, I can recall a very interesting tale concerning a large death adder.

I was about to retire one Saturday night after visiting the local movie theatre, when my pleasant thoughts of a good night's sleep were interrupted by a loud knock on the front door. Wondering who could be calling at this late hour, I answered the door to find my nocturnal visitor was a young lad of about 10 years of age.

"G'night, mister. You the snake bloke?" he queried.

"Well-er-yes, I suppose you might call me that," I replied, somewhat taken aback by his unorthodox introduction.

"Good! Here's a snake," the youngster returned solemnly, holding out a bulging paper bag.

Now I might mention that the bag was of about four pounds capacity and in rather bad shape. Definitely not the sort of thing one would place any variety of wild life in and expect it to stop there. However, I invited the lad in and proceeded to open the bag. I was more than a little surprised when a large death adder slithered lazily out on to the floor. When I later measured it, I found it to be 2 feet 4½ inches in length.

I motioned toward the snake and the paper bag. "Do you often do this sort of thing?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" he replied. "Mum would have a fit if she knew!"

He then took his leave, my warning about handling death adders so nonchalantly having little effect. His story concerning the capture was that he had seen the snake on the road while on his way home from the pictures. He then found a short stick, and after eating his few remaining grapes, he pushed the sluggish reptile into the now empty paper bag.

I kept the snake for three weeks before I was able to entice it to eat in captivity and the occasion was, I think, interesting enough to warrant a description.

About six o'clock one evening, which is the time death adders normally move from hiding in search of food, I placed a large striped skink lizard in the glass case housing the snake. For a few minutes the lizard rushed hither and thither looking for some means of escape. Finding none it soon quietened down and began exploring its new surroundings. Now I must mention that all the while the adder lay in one corner of the varium, its body in a semi-circular position, with just the end of its nose and the tip of its tail visible above the sand.

Soon I was surprised to see the lizard walking very warily in the snake's direction. Looking at the latter, I noticed that it had slowly moved its tail about 1½ inches from its nose, and that the yellow coloured tip of the tail was convulsing slightly, giving the appearance of a worm in great distress.

The lizard had by now stopped about one inch from the now desperately convulsing "worm."

Throwing caution to the wind the lizard made a dash at its prey. With a flurry of sand the adder struck, its short but very efficient fangs entering just below the surprised lizard's head. In five minutes' time, all that remained of the once inquisitive lizard was a very full and contented look on the face of one death adder.

## THE QUEENSLAND GIRDLE SNAKE

[RHINELAPS WARRA (DE VIS)]

A rare snake found only within a radius of 20 miles of the Mareeba area of North Queensland at an elevation of from 2000 feet to 2500 feet, and, as far as the author is aware, only four specimens exist in collectors' hands, the author having two of these. Undoubtedly others have been seen or killed from time to time without having been identified.

This snake, known by the vernacular name of **Queensland Girdle Snake** and the technical name of **Rhinelaps warra (De Vis)**, is nocturnal in its habits, living mostly under soft soil where it burrows and spends most of its time. Its food consists of small insects, worms, etc.

**COLOURATION:** The colour is light reddish brown above, being darkest on the mid-dorsal line, varying to pinkish brown on sides, and yellowish brown on the Ventral surfaces. There is a dark black mark on the neck seven scales wide, the head is also light black from the snout to the mid Parietal with a gap of approximately 5mm. between the two marks.

**SCALATION:** The ventral scales number 146, sub caudals 20, all being paired, anal scale divided, scales around body number 15 at the largest diameter, all scales having darker edges giving the impression of a reticulate pattern, temporal scales, four. The eye being 1 mm. in diameter same distance from mouth.

**DEFINITION:** This snake, being poisonous but not deadly, has fangs one mm. in length with an inter-fang measurement of two m.m. With such small fangs and such a small quantity of venom this snake can be considered as being harmless.

Both specimens in the author's collection are 136 mm. in length with the tail being 14 mm. long in each case, a very short tail being approximately one-tenth of the length of the snake.

VINCENT M. REILLY

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## CLUB'S ACTIVITIES

Since our last Annual General Meeting, all members have taken a keener interest, and the various sub-committees are functioning well.

The financial position of the Club is at present sound, due mainly to the untiring efforts of our Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. John Orell, who has been writing a weekly article for publication in the Cairns Post, and, of course, the membership continues to grow.

Our President, Mr. A. A. Read, was finally induced to accept a small allowance as a "token" payment for unavoidable expenses incurred by virtue of his office.

The President, at a general meeting, presented our Secretary, Mr. John Orell, with the Thompson Foundation Memorial Medal, on behalf of the Geographical Society. Only two such medals have ever come to North Queensland, and each has been awarded to a Club member. The first was a posthumous award to the late Dr. Flecker.

Special thanks must be given to our Librarian, Mr. Eric Fielder, who has done a magnificent job in cataloging our many books and periodicals, according to the Dewey system.

Of our many guest speakers special reference must be made to a distinguished naturalist from overseas, Dr. J. von Frankenberg, of Hanover, who gave a most colourful and informative address to members. By judicious use of colour transparencies, he displayed some very fine exhibits

of shells, studies in the Orders of Arachnids, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, and Lepidoptera, with some excellent closeups of various piscatorial studies. Mammalia exhibits were also included.

We are certain that the members benefited greatly from the Professor's instructive talk and excellent photography.

We are happy to report that we are now well established in our new meeting place, in the Jaycee Rooms on the Esplanade, and our sincere thanks go out to that body for their gesture in allowing these rooms to be used, and for their co-operation and support of the Club's activities.

Our Amenities officer, Mr. Stan. Dean, has done a sterling job in, amongst other things, organising our monthly field days, and since we last went to press, visits have been made to Pebbly Beach, Brampton Beach, Mount Mulligan and Davies Creek. Our specialists in the natural sciences, in particular Marine Biology, Botany and Geology, and members generally have derived great benefit from these visits.

"Operation Chirone" has continued to be a major club project, and some fine marine specimens have been collected and identified, and as investigations and research continue, many interesting facts have been brought to life.

It is hoped that all members will continue to show their enthusiasm and take part in all the Club activities. Remember, it is your Club, so help to expand it, by sharing some of the responsibilities associated with its organisation.

JOHN CASTLE

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED

Membership has shown a decided increase and since our last publication the following have been admitted as members:—

- |                    |                       |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Miss A. Swain      | Mrs. Cassells         | Mr. K. Wadsworth    |
| Mr. F. J. Renouf   | Master I. S. M. Orell | Miss M. L. Emmanuel |
| Mr. J. Bravery     | Master R. G. Fisher   | Mr. L. V. McFarlane |
| Mr. J. O. Kelly    | Mr. Charles Lee       | Mr. A. J. Cassells  |
| Dr. I. L. Harrison | Mr. J. P. O'Shea      | Master G. M. Fisher |
| Mr. B. Connolly    | Mrs. O. C. Mole       | Master D. Fisher    |
| Dr. T. J. Hansen   | Mr. L. Gane           |                     |

Several new nominees for membership are yet to be balloted for.

The Club meets in the Kuranda Barracks, our new meeting place, on the second Tuesday evening of each month at eight o'clock. Visitors are always welcome.

PUBLICATIONS BY N.Q. NATURALISTS' CLUB

1. CHECK LIST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND ORCHIDS ... PRICE 1/-
2. MARKETABLE FISH OF THE CAIRNS AREA ... PRICE 1/-
3. CHECK LIST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND FERNS ... PRICE 1/-
4. EDIBLE PLANTS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND ... PRICE 2/-
5. LIST OF BIRDS OCCURRING IN NORTH QUEENSLAND ... PRICE 2/-
6. LIST OF AUSTRALIAN DRYOPIDAE ... PRICE 6d
7. CHECK LIST OF NORTH QUEENSLAND ORCHIDS  
(Second Edition) ... PRICE 2/6