

## Orchids from the Kimberly

Last year I received a letter from a friend in WA with an article from the West Australian, dated 12/2/00, telling of the discovery, made by botanists from Kings Park, in the Prince Regent river area of the Kimberly, of several different orchids, including one which grows under Spinifex and attracts pollinators by mimicking the scent of female wasps.

According to the plant science director, Kingsley Dixon, the Spinifex Orchid (*Arthrochilus* sp.) is a small green orchid, with up to 12 flowers, each about the size of a 10c coin. It grows to a height of about 30 cm. The party had noticed leaves they could not identify, and, on parting a clump of Spinifex that grew among the rock ledges discovered this unique orchid, the first that has been found growing in Spinifex. He commented that that is probably why it hasn't been found before - Spinifex not being the most friendly stuff to be poking around in!

Only two other related specimens were known, and those are from the Northern Territory.

The hinged lip of the Spinifex Orchid imitates the shape, colour and scent of a female wasp, so male wasps land on it. "The male then tries to fly off with the decoy female, but the lip is hinged in such a way that the wasp is lurched through 180° smack bang into all the pollen," Dr. Dixon told the paper. He also said that the Kimberly was one of the world's last botanical frontiers, but it was very difficult to get around the very rugged terrain.

Rita Mills

## Observations

- Brenda Envall reported having found a dead Tawny Frogmouth, possibly a juvenile, in Kaweka while taking part in a working bee. There was no sign of how it had died; it didn't appear to have been attacked by a cat. Ern and Lesley Perkins have Kaweka as part of their Bird Atlassing area, but they had not seen them there before, though George Broadway says he has seen them on the nearby golf course.
- Brenda also has been hearing a male Pallid Cuckoo calling in Harcourt since the beginning of September. She also has had a pair of Eastern Rosellas flying around, and the White-faced Heron is back.
- George Broadway reported that at the end of August, in their garden in Wheeler Street, a Fantail Cuckoo was calling, and later, a Horsfields Bronze-cuckoo and Shining Bronze-cuckoo.
- Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos - 30 seem to be resident in Kalimna Park. Maureen Dredge (also reported by Tony Morton)
  - A flock has been roosting in Eucalypts at Little Bendigo for three weeks before the general meeting, and feeding in





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