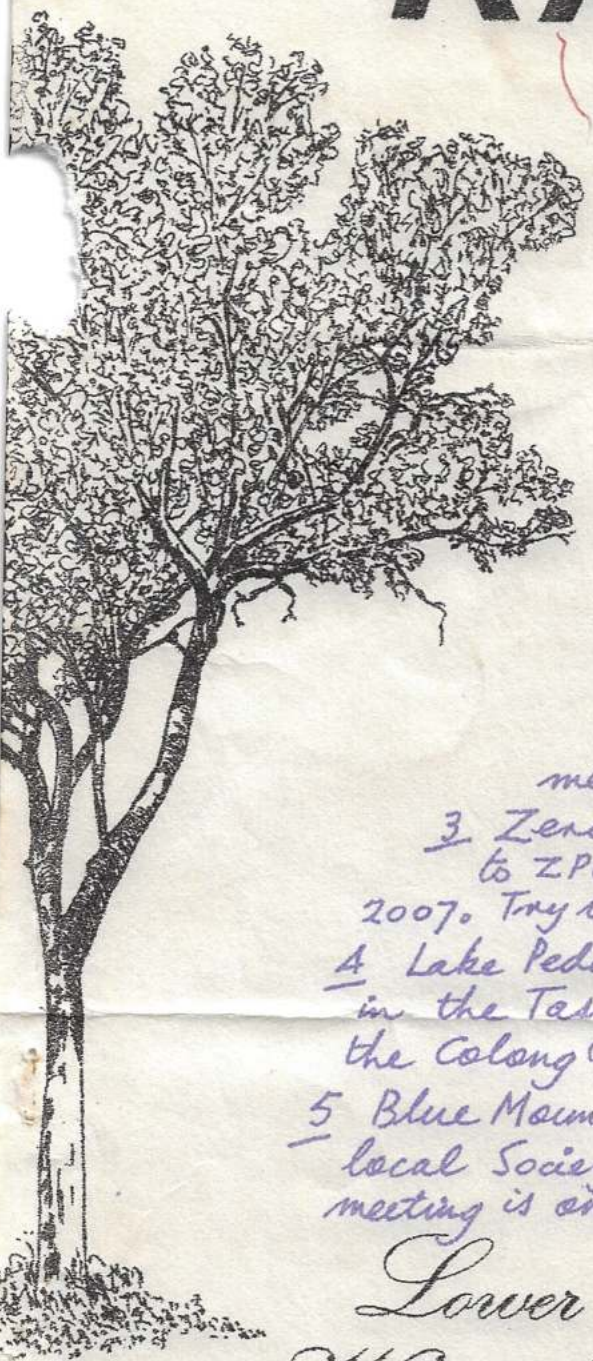
# KALORI

April 1972



Something to keep you occupied during 1972

1. International airport sites — Richmond or Somersby? Make up your own mind which is the least objectonable site.

2. Supersonic Transport (SST). Find out the facts about noise level, fuel consumption etc so that you can tell your friends why Concorde means big fraud.

3. Zero Population Growth. Write for information to ZPG Australia, PO Box 403, Broadway, 2007. Try to be logical about it, not emotional.

4. Lake Pedder. Help conservationists campaign in the Tasmanian election. Send money to the Colong Committee, 13 Neville St, Oatley 2223.

5. Blue Mountains. Attend the meetings of your local Society and have a say. The next meeting is on 14th April.


Lower Blue Mountains

Wildlife Conservation Society

PO Box 58 119 Springwood 2777

Minutes of meeting held on 10th. March, 1972

It was decided to suscribe to the magazine 'Wildlife in Australia' and to affiliate with the following Societies.

National Parks Association
Australian Conservation Federation
Colong Committee
Ecology Action
N.S.W. Conservation Society.
Zero Population Growth.

The affiliation with ZPG was only arrived at after lengthy discussion. It was thought by some members that because of the association of such touchy subjects as abortion law reform with which ZPG is connected, the Society could lose the sympathy of a large group of people; however the majority felt that we should not shrink from being unpopular, and the motion was carried by twelve votes to one.

A letter was received from the Wolli (St.George) Conservation Society asking us to write to the Premier asking that he take steps to protect reptiles in N.S.W.

Because the lock of P.O.Box 58 was broken and could not be fixed for twelve months, we have been allotted a new box. Its number is 119.

The Committee will meet on the Sunday before the ordinary meetings.

The next meeting will be on 14th. April in the Civic Centre, Springwood. It will not be a business meeting. Mr.Peter Lee, an engineer who was with Sir Edmund Hillary in Antarctica and again in the International Geophysical Year, will tell us of life in the last continent (with slides). This should be extremely interesting, and although the Antarctic environment differs slightly from our own, we can deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the Blue Mountains by learning of other areas. Please come.

FIELD TRIPS FOR 1972

| | |
|---|---|
| April 9 | Long Neck Lagoon |
| May 13 | Nepean National Park |
| June 10,11,12 | Colong Caves |
| July 8 | Tour of Windsor Swamps |
| August 26 | Gravel workings, Nepean River |
| September 16,17 | Dharug National Park |
| September 2 | Narrow Neck |
| Sep 30, Oct 1,2 | Myall Lakes |
| October 28 | Mount Banks |
| November 4,5 | Barren Grounds |
| November 11 | Splendour Rock |
| December 2,3 | Boyd Plateau |
| To be fixed | Blue Mountain sewers |

Leaders are needed for these expeditions. If you know any of these areas well enough to guide some visitors to them, contact Michael Smithson.

# ORCHIDS

by I Bowden. Continued from the February issue.

## Seeds

Now all these devices are to produce fertile seeds. The one distinguishing feature common to all orchids is the three chambered capsule containing enormous numbers of fine dust-like seeds. Orchids are grouped with the monocotyledons, but they are unique in having no cotyledon. No stored food exists to nourish the plant in the usual way. When ordinary seeds are planted we commence at once to watch for leaves which will with the aid of chlorophyll provide food for the growing plant. No orchids can do this.

In nature the seeds must be attacked by soil fungus which penetrates the cells. In a counterattack the microscopic seed consumes some of the micorhiza, obtaining nourishment in the process. The fungus is thus confined within certain limits, and if the precarious association is maintained the seed will not produce roots and leaves (not yet) but will become a micorhizome, this tiny structure consisting o seed and fungus gradually increases in size by the addition of annual rings until it looks like a small grub. Finally true roots are produced from the end of the micorhizome and a true green leaf appears. This growth in some British orchids is thought to take as long as ten years and even longer for flowers to appear. However some species certainly do not take so long.

The curious thing is that plants which have gone to so much trouble to ensure pollination and produce seedlings very often depend mainly on vegetative means to ensure the production of new stocks of plants. I think this must mean that over geological time these plants are having to adapt to a new set of circumstances. Food storing devices are present in most plants; tubers, rhizomes, swollen stems and pseudo bulbs. Scientific research which has revealed these facts has also made it possible for horticulturists to devise means of raising seedlings under sterilized conditions providing the necessary nourish-ment artificially, thus avoiding loss through the micorhiza killing the developing plant. Plants and flowers are produced relatively quickly and new hybrids are constantly reaching the market, in an ever expanding industry.

Some orchids remain dependant on micorhiza throughout their life, for example, two local species are Dipodium and Gastrodia.

Another interesting saprophytic plant not yet found here but common on the coast is Galeola cassythoides.

I recently found a plant climbing up an introduced pine tree. The question which suggested itself was, was the fungus on the pine roots introduced with the pine or was it one which might normally be found in the bush?

Darwin estimated that a small capsule of a field orchid contained over 6 000 seeds. An accurate count was also made by astronomers at Greenwich of the seeds in the capsule of a large tropical orchid. It contained 3 770 000 seeds. Yet the seeds of each species are distinct, bearing their own recognisable imprint.

Names

Like other plants orchids have been systematically studied and described, receiving suitable scientific names, some of which are euphoneus as well as descriptive. But it is the astonishing number of common namse, usually referring to some distinctive characteristic, or linking strange new forms with those previously understood, that both the strangeness and popularity of orchids can best be understood. There are bee orchids, butterfly orchids, man and lizard orchids and ladies tresses. There are silver ladies slippers and pink mocassins, sparrows eggs and monkey faces. In South America, the early Spaniards, awed by the beauty of Peristeria, named it the flower of the Holy Spirit.

There is something rather jaunty about some of the Australian names. Kings in a carriage, beardies, rabbit ears, dancing sailors and spiders are a few. Names which spontaneously come into use are often most appropriate But common names can never be successfully invented. Scientific ones are doleful enough sometimes!

Poor Mr.W.H.Nicholls told me of his predicament when he accepted the task of preparing the orchid section of the Sun nature supplement. He was asked to provide common names for every Australian species. He had just two weeks to prepare that masterpiece and had difficulty enough in having his own name included anywhere

Collection

Where plants are to be closely studied there is no alternative to the collection of specimens, but this should never be done to the detriment of the plant community.

Some observations can be made in the field. I remember watching the developing leaves of a group of orchids unknown to me at the time. The leaves were large for ground orchids - over ½ inch wide by ten indhes or more long. I imagined a fine spike of future flowers, and watched the bases of the almost horizontal leaves with interest. Nothing happened, then one day I discovered the spike appearing from the back of the leaf several inches from its base.

To be continued.

"Man is faced with the difficult and complex problem of finding out how he can fit into his environment so that it will not deteriorate but will continue to provide what he needs."

R.G.Downes

Kalori is published by and for the members of the Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society.

The aims of the Society are, briefly, to:-

1. Educate the public and civic leadership towards a better understanding of environmental conservation.

2. Work for the dedication of areas of natural environment and for the maintenance of their values in perpetuity.

3. Carry out research into the distribution and population of wildlife in the Blue Mountains.


President
Mr.M.Dark
58 Emu Rd.,
Glenbrook 2773
Telephone 391764

Secretary
Mr.D.Pain
8 Rickard Rd.,
Warrimoo.2775


THE NEXT MEETING WILLBE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, SPRINGWOOD, ON 14TH. APRIL, AT 8.00 PM.