A NEW CORYBAS SPECIES FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

by

D. L. Jones* and R. C. Nash†

ABSTRACT

A new species of Corybas (Orchidaceae) from South Australia is described and illustrated. The new taxon has affinities with both C. diemenicus (Lindl.) H.M.R. Rupp and C. dilatatus (H.M.R. Rupp and W. H. Nicholls) H.M.R. Rupp. A table setting out the contrasting characters between these three species is provided.

Corybas despectans D. L. Jones and R. C. Nash, spec. nov.

ex affinitate C. dilatati et C. diemenici, sed a priore differt tubo labelli
laminam aequanti et a secundo marginibus labelli expansis (nunquam
incurvatis) distinguitur; a his ambobus recedit sic—sepalo dorsali
nec late spatulato nec cucullato, callo labelli costis parallelibus
depressio praedito (nec integro nec dentibus brevibus scabridis
instructo) atque auriculis in tubo labelli inconspicuis (foramen
minutum facientibus).

Holotype: Lower Coorong, South Australia. R. C. Nash, 8.viii.1967 (AD 96815018).


Leaf 8–25 x 12–30 mm, cordate to orbicular, occasionally lobed, apiculate, green on both surfaces. Flower 7–12 mm long, reddish-purple, dominated by the lamina of the labellum, sessile or almost so. Ovary 3–5 mm long, narrow, subtended by a small narrow bract. Dorsal sepal 6–11 x 3–4 mm when flattened out, greenish-grey with some purple striations, spatulate-oblong, concave, carinate, erect in the lower half then curving gently through about 60°, the apex acute or obtuse, often irregularly notched. Petals about 2·0 x 0·8 mm, slightly falcate, winged

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at the base where they join the column, then tapering to filiform points, often notched. Lateral sepals about 5 x 0·8 mm narrow acute, connate at base, tapered from base to extremity, apex entire. Labellum longer than dorsal sepal; labellum-tube 4–5 mm long about equal in length to the lamina, erect for about 4 mm then abruptly decurved through 180° and greatly expanded into an almost circular lamina; lamina 7–8 x 9–11 mm reddish with conspicuous venation, its margins slightly denticulate; boss flat, almost triangular inconspicuous; callus consisting of about four raised divergent plates, occasionally adorned with minute teeth. Auricles extremely small directed downward with a minute opening hidden by the base of the lateral petals. Column about 2·5 mm long, narrow, of nearly equal width throughout, minutely winged. Stigma ± 1·5 mm in diam., ± rectangular concave. Anther 1–1·5 mm long, entire. Pollinarium 1·0 x 0·8 mm, consisting of 4 pollinia in two pairs, attached directly to a reniform viscidium 0·5 mm long. Pollinia mealy.


Flowering Period: July–August.

Distribution: At present known from south-eastern and southern South Australia in low Mallee or open eucalypt forest under bracken. An extension into Victoria is to be anticipated as it occurs very close to the border.

Discussion: The distinctiveness of this orchid was first recognized by Mrs. M. J. Beek of Naracoorte, who found it at Desert Camp, South Australia in 1966. Field trips and examination of specimens in the State Herbarium have shown it to be a fairly widespread species. It has been found growing close to the sea or inland with the habitat varying from light sandy soil in low Mallee to eucalypt forest (often over limestone). In common with most Corybas species it grows in large colonies.
Fig. 1.—a—flowering plant from side, to indicated scale; b—flowering plant from front, to indicated scale; c—labellum from front, to scale x 3; d—dorsal sepal from side, to scale x 4; e—dorsal sepal flattened out, to scale x 4; f—longitudinal section of flower, to scale x 4; g—column and lateral sepals from side, to scale x 5; h—base of labellum tube showing auricles, lateral sepals and lateral petals from front, to scale x 8; i—polinarium, to scale x 10; j—column, lateral sepals and lateral petals from front, to scale x 5.
Corybas despectans has affinities with both C. diemenicus and C. dilatatus however it can be readily distinguished from both by the small flower and very short non cucullate dorsal sepal. Further differences are listed in Table 1.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corybas dilatatus</th>
<th>Corybas diemenicus</th>
<th>Corybas despectans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorsal sepal broadly spatulate, cucullate</td>
<td>Dorsal sepal broadly spatulate, cucullate</td>
<td>Dorsal sepal narrow-spataulate to oblong, non-cucullate</td>
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<td>Labellum-tube longer than lamina</td>
<td>Labellum-tube equal to lamina</td>
<td>Labellum-tube equal to lamina</td>
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<td>Labellum margins spreading, denticulate</td>
<td>Labellum margins incurved denticulate</td>
<td>Labellum margins spreading, slightly denticulate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labellum callus entire</td>
<td>Labellum callus of short scabrid teeth</td>
<td>Labellum callus of parallel flattened ridges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labellum auricles conspicuous, widely opening</td>
<td>Labellum auricles conspicuous, widely opening</td>
<td>Labellum auricles inconspicuous, minutely opening</td>
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Table 1.—Contrasting Characters.