

Short Notes

Cannington Swamp R.I.P. (Born about the time of the dinosaurs. Died 1981)

by

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Cannington Swamp is situated about 30 km S.E. of Perth. The land is typical swamp flats and heath on a few rolling hills. In the summer when the swamp is bone dry, the water table is approximately 60 cm under the ground. The nature of the soil is basically white silica sand and leaf mould.

Cannington Swamp has always, in the past 12 years, been for me the most rewarding area for the most number of wild flowers found in one spot. Twenty different types of native orchids are to be found here, not to mention the thousands of different native plants, from Banksias to gums, and, of course, the plants I'm nuts about — CP.

The wildest things to be found, though, are the signs which read, "Don't pick the wild flowers." It seems they don't apply to bulldozers. Half of Cannington Swamp is now a housing and shopping complex. Another two years will see the end of this great flora area.

On my last trip to Cannington Swamp with fellow CP nut Robert Oliver*, last winter, we went exclusively to collect as many different types of CP as we could find.

Byblis gigantea has a very strong hold in Cannington Swamp. *Byblis* grows standing in water in neat clumps, bush-like, approx. 75 cm high. *Drosera gigantea* is everywhere, standing up to 90 cm tall, branches arranged in the shape of a triangle, longer branches on the bottom of the main stem, smaller to the top. The shield-shaped traps occur in three's along the branches. At the end of every branch is a flower spike made up of small white flowers, a truly splendid sight. The tubers of this plant are found about 30

cm under the ground. It took me nearly 30 minutes to dig out the complete plant. I found the easiest way to collect *D. gigantea* was not on the dry ground but in the swamp itself. I found I could work my hand down more easily through the sand and mush underwater to the tuber, then with a little movement around the tuber loosen the plant and ease the plant out the mush. This method took only a few minutes and a lot less sweat.

Drosera nitidula is in abundance along with *D. pulchella*. I also found Steve Rose's find (giant *D. nitidula*) a couple of years ago, which were 5 cm across, beautifully red in colour in a neat compact rosette.

Utricularia menziesii were to be found in clumps up to 10 cm across right in the heart of the swamp on little elevated islands. Many clumps were in flower. Their vivid red blooms against their deep green leaves made a very attractive sight. *U. menziesii*, I believe, has three types of traps: One bladder type at ground level (sitting on the ground), one trap radiating out sideways into the soil, and a different trap below. The trap on the ground level along with the shape of the leaves, gives me the impression of a small *Cephalotus* plant. It's a pity the overall visual effect is so small.

Drosera erythrorhiza covers the ground like a carpet around the base of every *Banksia* tree, mostly back up from the swamp on higher ground. The two *Polympopholox* species grow right in the water. There must have been millions; I couldn't walk anywhere in

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the swamp without trampling them under foot.

Drosera stolonifera — what a sight! A bush fire had been through this part of the swamp the year before. Every *D. stolonifera* was in bloom. From each rosette at ground level four to five branches grew, with a rosette of traps every four to five cm along the stem, up to a height of 30 cm. Each branch was topped with a spike of white flowers — the flowers' perfume was out of this world! *Drosera zonaria* I found on the higher ground up from the swamp. Pure white silica sand with no leaf mould is where these plants love to grow. They don't carpet the ground like *D. erythrorhiza*, but confine themselves to small groups here and there in numbers up to 20. The fan-shaped leaves are green with the margins of the leaves a vivid red. The fan-shaped leaves are arranged in a perfectly balanced circle.

Drosera menziesii with their pink flowers up to 4 cm across on totally red coloured plants

grew almost weed-like.

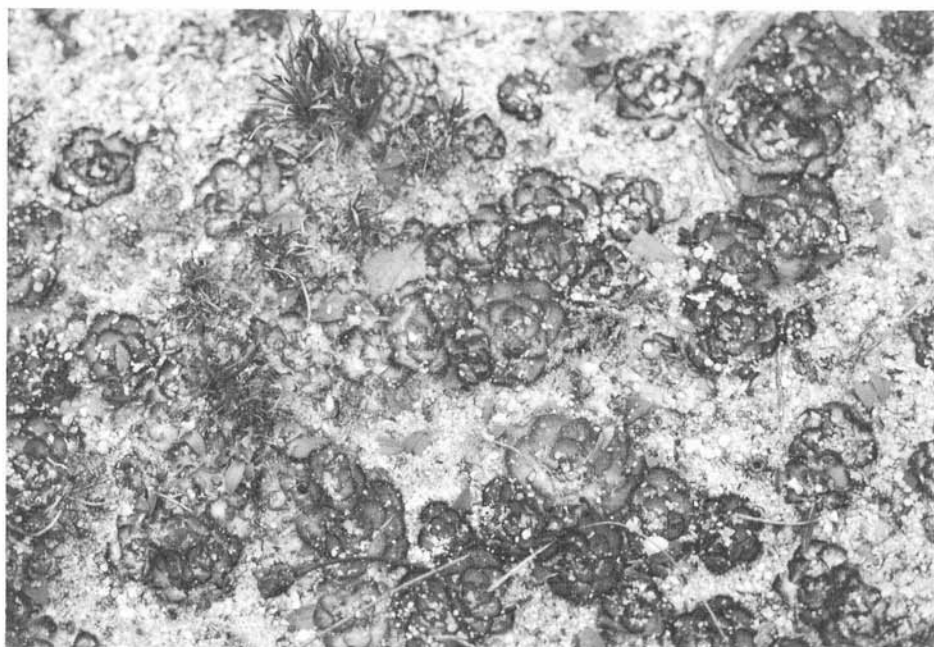
Drosera stricticaulis with its upright appearance and shield-shaped traps, topped with pink blooms, were scattered here and there throughout the swamp.

Drosera macrantha and *pallida*, the big climbers up to 1 m long, curled their way up through every shrub. With the sun shining behind them, they look magnificent.

Drosera glanduligera was in abundance. Truly a beautiful *Drosera* with its *D. burmanii* type leaves and its vivid metallic orange flowers. It's a pity this plant is an annual.

Robert Oliver and myself collected quite a few CP on this trip, and I'm happy to say most of these CP are scattered across Australia and the USA in CP growers' collections, where they will be propagated. It is hoped that these species will be saved.

* Robert Oliver will be living in California from May '79 for approximately two years. Maybe some CPNers will want to make contact. Robert will send me his address when he is settled.



Drosera zonaria in habitat - Ongerup, W. Australia on Sept. 18, 1972.

Photo by W. Stoutamire.