



## Spider orchids protected in latest BFL sites

Another successful Bush For Life workshop season was run this year with 185 people attending the 20 workshops that were held.

Workshops were held all over the state from Meningie in the south through Gawler and Mallala and as far north as Clare.

Eleven enthusiastic people attended the workshop at Clare, the first we have ever held in the area. As a result we were able to establish our first sites in the Clare district.

We welcome the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council to the Bush For Life program.

The two sites established in Clare have been set up to protect the White beauty spider orchid (*Caladenia argocalla*), a beautiful yet nationally endangered orchid.

Doug Bickerton, of the Department of Environment and Heritage, had this to say about the orchid in the Parks & Wildlife magazine, October 2001.

“*Caladenia argocalla* is one of the most attractive spider orchids, and also one of the rarest.

During the dry months spider orchids are dormant as underground tubers, and during winter they produce a single long hairy leaf.

In late winter-spring, they form a single flower stalk (occasionally two or three), and the flowers generally stay open for 1-2 months.

The white beauty spider-orchid is larger than most, standing 30-45 cm high. The flower can be 10-12cm across and 15cm vertically, mostly white with red tips on the sepals and petals.

The labellum (tongue) is also white, sometimes with red fringes and calli (the bumps on the labellum surface).

This species is endemic to the Mount Lofty Ranges. Records as early as 1904 verify

that it was once found on Fleurieu Peninsula, in the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and around Clare.

It has not been recorded south of Adelaide since 1926.

Now, fewer than 1000 flowering plants are known from six sites, mostly within a 10km<sup>2</sup> area near Clare.

*Caladenia argocalla* occurs in grassy woodland communities, but this type of vegetation has been extensively cleared for agriculture.

Populations of *C. argocalla* are small and fragmented. Grassy woodland remnants are readily invaded by weed species with which the orchids cannot compete.

An increase in weeds also results in a reduction in habitat suitable for the orchid's specialist pollinators.”

Since the above article was written, two more populations of *C. argocalla* have been confirmed closer to Adelaide: one is on a Bush For Life site near Mt Pleasant and the other, near Kersbrook, is the most southerly recorded population.

Phone calls into the office commended the work of two of our Bush For Life Officers, Peter Tucker and Andrew Allanson at the Clare workshops.

“It was the best workshop of its type I have ever been to. Everyone at the workshop enjoyed it.”

“Peter and Andrew were very entertaining and I learnt a lot.”

These are the sorts of things we love to hear about, similarly we would like to know if we have missed something that you would like to hear about, or if you have suggestions for us to improve our workshops.

There will be a section in your feedback questionnaire, which will be sent out shortly, where you can tell us these things.

At this stage you may not be allocated to a site.

Please bear with us, as you can see we need to allocate 185 newly trained carers so it may take some time.

If you know of a particular site that you would like to work on, or you want to know when you will be allocated to a site, please don't hesitate to call us.

Our workshops have finished for this season, but if you would like to attend one next year, please call the office on 8372 0150 and you will be put onto a waiting list.

Once we have finalised our program for workshops early next year, you will be sent a slip with the dates and locations.

Kerry Greaves  
Bush For Life  
Field Support Officer



*Caladenia argocalla*, the White beauty spider orchid. Photo courtesy of Yvonne Steed.

## Plant and grass identification workshops in demand

As part of the Bush For Life program, five advanced bushcarer workshops were held in 2001.

Three general plant identification workshops were held, and two dedicated to grass species.

These one-day workshops are in high demand and are available at no cost to all active Bush For Life volunteers.

A total of 62 people attended workshops from Mt Barker to Gawler, Williamstown and Belair.

The Williamstown and Gawler workshops were held in response to a number of requests we noted on the annual Bush For Life Feedback Questionnaire from bushcarers north of Adelaide.

Workshops had traditionally been run by native vegetation consultant, Andrew Crompton, in Mt Barker and Belair.

So when northern areas bushcarers reported that they were keen to get out in the field and identify grasses and other species more local to their own sites, new venues were set and an extra presenter (Ann Prescott - Author of *It's Blue with Five Petals*) recruited.

Not surprisingly, it didn't take long for places to fill up and a waiting list to form.

### Methods of identification

These workshops introduce participants to basic plant and grass identification skills, explaining the method used to classify plants and grasses according to their species, genus and family.

Unmistakable characteristics of various species are highlighted, such as typical grass flowers, typical grass flower heads, various plant leaves, fruit and buds.

From there, identification manuals are examined.

A few basic pointers gained from the workshop would enable the most novice plant identifier to use the following books effectively:

*Plants of the Adelaide Plains and Hills*, by Gilbert Dashorst and John Jessop, *Grass Identification Manual - for everyone*, produced by the Native Grass Resources Group Inc. SA, *Native Trees and Shrubs of South-Eastern Australia*, by Leon Costermans and *It's Blue with Five Petals* by Ann Prescott.

### Herbariums help

However, as we all know, identification is not always easy.

A dried specimen in your own herbarium will simplify the process as it allows you to take your specimen to someone for identification, whether that be your

regional coordinator or another local source of knowledge.

Feedback from those participating has been very positive and incredibly enthusiastic:

“It was a great day, and I learned a huge amount. We thought it was so good that we couldn't believe that you could get all that precious knowledge for nothing! You could be charging \$5, \$10, \$20.”

Cheers,  
Jane Juttner  
Mylor

So keep your eyes on June 2002 *ReLeaf* for the next list of workshop dates.

To attend an identification workshop, you need to have completed a Bush For Life workshop (see March 2002 *ReLeaf* for dates) and also be working on your own Bush For Life site.

Workshop dates are distributed earlier to those who specifically request more information and assistance with identification on the annual Bush For Life Feedback Questionnaire sent to all active bushcarers.

Unless you have specified otherwise, your questionnaire will be arriving shortly, so if you want to have first bite at the (native) cherry, you know what to do!

Danielle O'Neill  
and Rita Reitano



Kangaroo grass (*Themeda*) on left, and speargrass (*Austrostipa* (*Stipa*)) on right. From *Grass Identification Manual - for everyone*, Native Grasses Resource Group SA.

