

Monument Hill Reserve, Kilmore



Photo credit © Alison Curnow

Blue Fingers Orchid

Cyanicula caerulea

Other names: *Caladenia caerulea* (formerly), Blue Caladenia, Blue Fairy,

Description: A slender plant up to 180mm tall with leaves 70mm long and 5mm wide. Generally, has a single flower with petals and sepals up to 20mm long, with blueish hairs on the back. The inner petal is blue and occasionally white. Three-lobed labellum, sometimes bright yellow, 7-10mm column.

Flowering. July to October in Victoria, before dying back in hot weather.

Habitat. Open woodlands and scrub, often along ridgelines. Favours shallow, stony soils and semi-shade.

Distribution: A common orchid occurring across eastern mainland Australia and southwest Western Australia. Central Victoria boasts the highest density of this species in the state.

Uses. The tuber is harvested as aboriginal bushfood.

Conservation. Some peripheral populations of *C. caerulea* are locally significant. This orchid hybridises with several other species, including *Glossodia major*.



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Wax-lip Orchid

Glossodia major

Other names: Purple Cockatoo.

Description: Very slender plant reaching up to 350mm in height. Hairy leaf up to 100mm long and 5mm wide. Each plant has 1-2 flowers with petals and sepals up to 25mm long, with pale hairy backs. The inner petal is purple-mauve and occasionally white. Two-lobed white and purple labellum, with a bright yellow head, and 10mm column. *G. major* has a vanilla-like fragrance.

Flowering. September-November.

Habitat. Occurs commonly in dry open forests, woodlands and coastal heaths. Prefers well-drained soils in full sun to semi-shade. Tends to proliferate after fires.

Distribution: All of Australia, except Northern Territory. *G. major* is locally common, tending to form large colony patches.

Uses. Its small tubers are harvested as Aboriginal bushfood.

Conservation. This orchid hybridises with several other species, including *Cyanicula caerulea* and *Pheladenia deformis*. Its reliance upon a single species of root fungus makes colonies somewhat vulnerable to environmental change (Warcup, 1971).

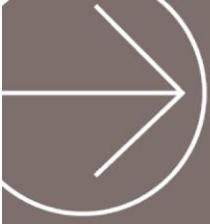


Photo credit © Alison Curnow

Blue Fairy Orchid
Pheladenia deformis

Other Names: *Caladenia deformis* (formerly), Bluebeard Caladenia
Description. 150mm high slender plant with a single faintly sweet-smelling violet-blue flower, with a compact purple bristly-looking 15mm long labellum, a 7-10mm long column and scattered fine hairs across its petals. Its leaves reach 80mm long and 4mm wide.
Flowering. May-September, triggered by fire in the previous season.
Habitat. Widespread and locally common in south and central Victoria, but uncommon across much of its broader range. Forms tuberous clumps in sand, gravel and sandy loam. Favours swamps, wet areas and outcrops in dry box forest and coastal heathland.
Distribution: All states except Queensland and Northern Territories.
Conservation. This orchid hybridises with *Glossodia major*, creating a hybrid called *xGlossadenia tutelata*.



Photo credit Daniel Young

Pink Fingers Orchid
Caladenia carnea

Other names: Pink Fairies.
Description: Slender plant reaching 250mm high, with a single narrow 150mm long, 4mm wide slightly hairy leaf and 1-3 flowers with a sweet or musky scent. The petals and sepals are up to 150mm long, and whiteish-pink or greenish-white in colour, with sparse hairs on the outer surfaces, and a compact 3-lobed 10mm long pinkish-white labellum with red lateral stripes and a yellow tip, and a 6-8mm column with lateral red stripes. Greenish or reddish slightly hairy stem and round tuber. Very variable across its range.
Flowering: August-December, but very variable indeed with regards to flowering time. *C. carnea* dies back to a tuber in hot weather.
Habitat: Grows in a broad variety of habitats including sclerophyll forest, coastal heath and woodland. *C. carnea* is disturbance tolerant, and readily recolonises cleared areas. It forms sparse colonies. Requires at least partial sunlight, typically occurring in sandy or depauperate soils in both moist and well-drained positions.
Distribution: Occurs throughout eastern and south-eastern

Australia and Tasmania, and is widespread in Victoria.

Uses: Harvested by Aboriginals as edible tuber.

Conservation: Hybridises with other members of *Caladenia*. Its high variability makes it possible that *C. carnea* is in fact a species complex with high local biodiversity of according conservation value.

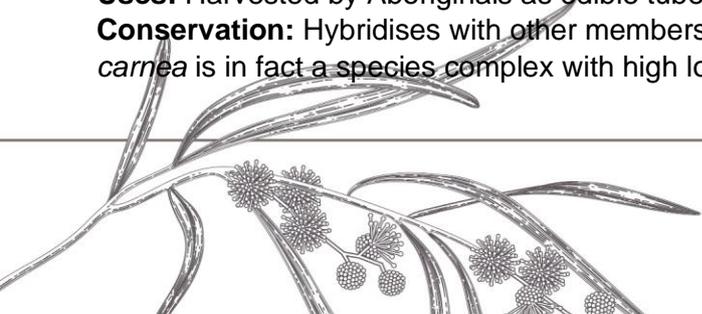




Photo credit: © Alison Curnow

Dwarf Greenhood

Pterostylis nana

Description: 150mm tall slender stemmed plant with a rosette of 20mm long oval leaves. 15mm long erect green and white flower, with erect lateral sepals.

Flowering: July-October.

Habitat: *P. nana* grows in a wide range of habitats including open forest, mallee scrub and coastal heath. It favours sheltered areas in open woodland, with well-drained soils. It is common in landscapes where it occurs, typically forming small colonies. It is pollinated by invertebrates.

Distribution. South-eastern Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Conservation. *P. nana* is a complex of species of contested taxonomic status subject to ongoing investigation. Localised populations of *P. nana* hold potential for future analysis to identify them as genetically distinct sub-groups in their own right, with accordingly higher conservation significance.



Photo credit: © Alison Curnow

Nodding Greenhood

Pterostylis nutans.

Other names: Parrot's Beak Orchid.

Description: A distinctive looking orchid growing up to 300mm, with a single 25mm long translucent green and brown hoodlike flower with a curved red beaklike apex, that "nods" in the wind; and 3-6 oval leaves of up to 40mm long, that form a rosette. Small tuber.

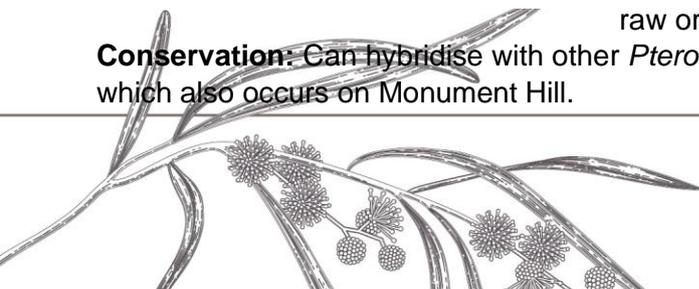
Flowering: April-October to die back into a dormant tuber over summer.

Habitat: Common and widespread in damp areas of dry sclerophyll forest, wet forest and coastal scrub, growing from sea level to high altitudes, where it forms both small and quite large colonies, typically in damp leaf litter. *P. nutans* is insect pollinated, and strongly dependant upon a single genus of soil fungus to grow (Irwin *et al*, 2007).

Distribution: Eastern and south-eastern Australia and Tasmania, with some vagrant populations in New Zealand of uncertain status.

Uses: An easily grown orchid that is commercially sold and grown by both orchid enthusiasts and as a more general garden plant. *P. nutans* has a starchy and nutritious tuber that is consumed either raw or cooked in Aboriginal bushfood (Zola & Gott, 1992).

Conservation: Can hybridise with other *Pterostylis* species, including the Blunt Greenhood (*P. curta*), which also occurs on Monument Hill.



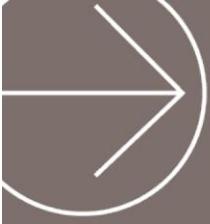


Photo credit: Graham Jury

Slender Onion Orchid

Microtis parviflora

Description. A fleshy flower spike growing up to 500mm tall, emerging from half-way up a single erect tubular leaf of up to 400mm in length. It has up to 80 densely packed tiny green 3-4mm flowers.

Flowering. October-February, stimulated by fire.

Habitat: A locally common and widespread native orchid occupying diverse habitats in sclerophyll forests, bogs and wet grasslands. It favours damp soils, but also occurs in seasonally dry winter wet conditions. It prefers semi-shade. *M. parviflora* can form large sprawling low-density clonal colonies in disturbed areas, even actively colonising lawns, gardens and agricultural areas. The flowers are pollinated by ants, especially the meat ant (*Iridomyrmex purpureus*) within the southern half of Victoria, which are attracted by a sweet fragrance released on mild humid days (Jones, 1975). *M. parviflora* has round tubers and is reliant on a single genus of soil fungus to grow (Irwin *et al*, 2007).

Distribution: Southern and eastern Australia, Tasmania and NZ

Uses: Tuber harvested as Aboriginal bushfood.



Photo credit © Alison Curnow

Dotted Sun Orchid

Thelymitra ixiodes

Other Names: Spotted Sun Orchid

Description: Slender plant growing 600 mm tall with a grey-green or reddish stem. Slender lance-like fleshy leaves up to 300mm long. 1-15 25mm-wide fragrant flowers with mauve or bright blue petals covered in dark spots. Cup-shaped, yellow-tipped column up to 6mm long. Fleshy egg-shaped tubers. *T. ixiodes* is highly variable and subject to ongoing debate over its biodiversity and classification, though two distinct separate subspecies are generally recognised.

Flowering. Core season is October-November though also flowers a few months either side of this window, before dying back to a tuber in hotter weather. It has stringent moisture and light level requirements and will readily abort flowering for a season without optimal conditions. The flowers open on warm days.

Habitat. *T. ixiodes* is one of the most common species in the *Thelymitra* genus. It grows in a wide range of habitats including grasslands, open woodlands, swamps and sandy heaths, often forming large, localised patches. It can grow in heavily depauperate soils and often occurs on rural roadsides and is insect-pollinated.

Distribution: Widespread across southern and eastern Australia and Tasmania. Also native to New Caledonia and New Zealand.

Uses: Cultivated by orchid enthusiasts and occasionally sold commercially. Its fleshy tubers are harvested as aboriginal bushfood.

Conservation. This orchid hybridises with several other species of *Thelymitra*. While common in Victoria, it is endangered in South Australia



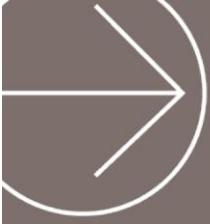


Photo credit © Alison Curnow

Leopard Orchid

Diuris pardina

Other Names: *Diuris maculata* (formerly), Burny Burny

Description: 400mm high plant with 2-3 leaves growing up to 300mm long and 4mm wide, and 1-8 yellow nectarless flowers with brown markings. 5-9mm three-lobed labellum that is shorter than the dorsal sepal. The tuber is oblong-conical in shape. Different forms of *D. maculata* occur across its range.

Flowering. August-October

Habitat: Amongst the commonest orchids in southeast Australia, and locally common around the Macedon Ranges, *D. pardina* grows amongst grass in sclerophyll forest, heath and scrub, either singly or in small groups, across varied soil types. The colour and shape of this flower have evolved to mimic various "egg and bacon" pea flowers belonging to *Pultenaea* and *Daviesia*, in order to attract pollination by legume-specialised nectar-feeding bees (Indsto *et al*, 2006). Its high variability is believed to correspond to it mimicking different ecological arrays of host plant in different areas. It readily spreads clonally through tubers.

Distribution. Southeast Australia and Tasmania.

Conservation. Readily hybridises with other *Diuris* species, including *D. orientis*. *D. pardina* is a complex of species, of

contested taxonomic status subject to ongoing investigation. Localised populations of *D. pardina* hold potential for future analysis to identify them as genetically distinct sub-groups of this species, with according conservation significance.



Photo credit: Daniel Young

Wallflower Donkey Orchid.

Diuris orientis

Description: A reasonably stout plant reaching 400mm tall., with 1-3 lancelike leaves reaching 300mm. It has 3-5 yellow flowers, with flushes of purple and reddish brown, and has a forward projecting blended dark reddish, yellow and purple three-lobed labellum, reaching 14mm. *D. orientis* is variable across its range.

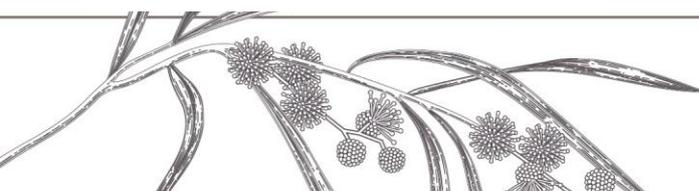
Flowering: Typically September-November, most prolifically after fire.

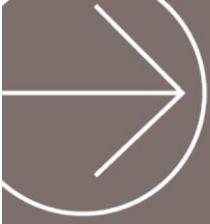
Habitat: Locally common in woodlands and heaths where it grows amongst grass in well-drained soils in semi-shade. Monument Hill is near the northern edge of its core range in Victoria.

Distribution: South-east Australia and Tasmania.

Uses: A commercially grown orchid, used in landscaped woodlands.

Conservation: Hybridises with other *Diuris* species, including *D. pardina*.





Graham Jury

Tailored Restoration Ecology and Conservation Land Services, 2021.

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