corner of the garden.

Comments: Native plants in our garden or in pots were obtained either, as seed, cuttings, rooted stems, e.g. Pratia, or occasionally as entire plants - usually seedlings where they were found in abundance. Seeds were sown in a mixture of river sand and leafy compost or soil from their habitat, in clay pots covered with glass and plunged in sawdust. Cuttings were hormoned if woody, inserted in sand, in clay pots and placed in plastic bags held almost closed by a rubber band. Rooted pieces were first put in a fairly sandy leafy mixture in 2"-3" pots in plastic bags for about a week, then plunged. They were moved on either into a stronger mix and larger pot, or else placed in the garden.

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BOOK REVIEW - L.H. Kyle

"A BUNCH OF WILD ORCHIDS" by SHEILA NATUSCH.

This is a small book about New Zealand orchids; it is of little use as an identification manual, partly because the common names which the author uses are not those most widely used. Obviously, though, it is not intended for such use, being a welcome addition to our much needed body of well produced, prettily illustrated and popular native botanical literature, of which we have too little. Sheila Natusch's style of writing is appealing, and any well intentioned beginner can make sense of it and learn from it, for there are no long descriptions, but accounts of her own personal experiences with our native orchids.

The amateur week-end botanist will find the illustrations to be the chief practical value of this book, though the sketching is a trifle too heavy to be quite accurate. However, the colouring of the paintings is most correct, and gives a very good impression of most of our more common species.

Published by Pegasus Press, at 50c. retail.

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# BOTANICAL PHOTOGRAPHY

by B.F. O'Connor.

This article is designed to help in eliminating some basic faults which occur from time to time in botanical slides and prints.

The purpose of botanical photographs is to record or gain knowledge, to communicate this effectively, and probably to encourage the seeking of more knowledge at various levels. Poor photographs limit this purpose and frustrate both the photographer and his 'audience'. Independently of whether equipment is simple or complex, careful application of a few basic rules and the use of a little relatively inexpensive supplementary equipment can go a long way towards achieving desirable results. Six common faults are listed here and some simple measures to deal with them are described.

EXPOSURE: Apart from knowledge and memory, the lightest exposure device is the list supplied with most films. In the absence of a meter, this can be slipped into the back of a camera case and referred to when necessary. It will be adequate for many common conditions of lighting and will sometimes avoid mistakes made through slavish use of a meter. Nevertheless, a meter is desirable for conditions which are not usual: in dense bush or heavily-shaded stream beds or when emphasizing some particular feature of plant or habitat.

Under-exposure of landscapes frequently occurs because a meter is pointed to include a large area of sky and the reading is inflated in consequence. Point the meter downwards to avoid this. On the other hand, if snow or white petal detail is required against a blue sky, take a reading of the sky and use that to avoid washed-out whites, especially when using colour film.

For plant detail in difficult conditions, a standard grey card measuring 10 x 8 inches is useful. This is placed in front of the plant and the meter reading is taken from it. In very low-light situations the white reverse side is measured and the exposure given is increased by

five. Both sides of the card can be used as a background for small plant detail and the white side may be used as a reflector.

LIGHTING: Direct frontal light is preferable when photographing twiggy or divaricating shrubs with a mass of detail, to avoid the confusion of a multitude of shadows, but for simpler subjects it is much too flat, especially with black and white film. For these, use side lighting and soften the shadows with a reflector. One can be made by glueing aluminium foil on to firm card about 12 by 16 inches in size. If this is folded about its short axis, it can be stored in a plastic bag with a grey card and slipped into a pack for field work.

BLURRED PICTURES through movement. In exposed areas, plants moving in the wind can cause more trouble than the photographer. Most frequently, the remedy is patience, but sometimes an offending stem can be stilled with a length of cord wrapped around it and attached to stones or a firmer part of the plant. Camera shake can best be avoided within easy reach of transport by the use of a solid tripod. For tramping or climbing, brass bolts with a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch Whitworth thread can be attached to ice axes, alpenstocks, pack frames or, even trowels, for low level work. A light iniversal head attached to these will hold a camera firm. If nothing else is available for support, such as a tree or rock, press your elbows into your body, or use a fast shutter speed, 1/250th, or better.

FOCUS: Always check your focus carefully. Use a tape measure if your camera has no rangefinder. With deep objects at close quarters, stop down and check your depth of focus with your lens or handbook chart.

CLUTTERED PICTURES: Spend some time checking your plant and its surroundings in viewfinder to eliminate unnecessary or distracting detail. Half an hour to make a good photo is often fast work.

DATES: A plant grows in time as well as space. Date stamp all slides and prints to avoid the loss of important information. A pretty picture may then become a useful scientific record. A date may not only record

when a plant is in flower during the year, but may also record the year in which an association or bush outline exists in a particular locality. By such dating, the photographic results become more valuable as time passes and memory fades.

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