



CLEMATIS COLENSOI

This is the first of a series of drawings by Miss Nancy Adams, illustrating the New Zealand species of clematis. *C. colensoi* is not uncommon about Wellington in coastal scrub, open beech forest and old stands of manuka. It is an attractive plant, because of its foliage, even when out of flower. There is much variation in the form of the adult leaflets, but so far no one seems to have made a detailed study of the species. The juvenile leaflets are entire or nearly so, a fact not mentioned in botanical books.

NOTES ON THE FINDING OF A NEW SAPROPHYTIC ORCHID

During October 1949 I spent several days near Kaitaia, in the company of Mr. Owen Gibson of New Plymouth, searching for some of the rare orchids reported many years previously by R. H. and H. B. Matthews.

Realizing that *Corybas unguiculatus* (*Corysanthes matthewsii*) would have finished flowering two months previously, we paid particular attention to all seeding *Corybas* which appeared in any way unusual. We made several interesting finds near Kaitaia but were still looking for *C. unguiculatus* when we reached Wellsford on our way back to Taranaki. There, in long-established manuka scrub, Owen paused to examine what he thought to be a group of seeding *Corybas*.

No leaves were showing so he removed the loose leaf mould expecting to find a withered leaf at the base of the stem. To our surprise he uncovered a fragile, translucent, red-flecked bract about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long. Unlike *Corybas* the plants had no tubers. Below ground the plant consisted of a succulent, branching caudicle from which the

flower stems arose at intervals of about 4 in. At the base of each such stem and beneath the surface was the enlarged bract mentioned above. The stems were about 4 in. high topped by single ripe capsules.

A hurried search revealed about twenty seed heads in groups of three or four over an area about twenty yards square. We collected several plants which we later showed to Mr. E. D. Hatch of Auckland whose work on New Zealand orchids appears in recent volumes of the Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand. We suspected that the strange plant was a native of Australia and that the original seed had been blown across the Tasman. Mr. Hatch assured us, however, that no similar orchid had as yet been reported from that country.

Two months later on a beech ridge up the Waitotara Valley I found three seed heads identical with the Wellsford plants. Had I not been searching carefully for these plants, they would have remained unnoticed among the thousands of seeding *Corybas trilobus* present. Now that the new orchid's existence is known I feel sure that it will be found in other localities.

On June 4 this year Mr. Hatch, Mr. Bartlett of Silverdale and I revisited the Wellsford locality. After much careful searching we found two plants which bore buds 1-10th inch long still covered by leaf mould and moss. The buds were enclosed within the bracts which at this stage were very tiny. Mr. Hatch suspects that the flower blooms below the surface, the seed capsule being raised after fertilization.

J. B. IRWIN.

Postscript: After the above was written Mr. Hatch again visited the Wellsford locality and this time succeeded in finding a plant in flower. The orchid, as it turns out, is a species of *Corybas*, but a most unusual and interesting member of that genus. As suspected the flower did not show itself on the surface and was only found by removing the moss layer. The orchid will be fully described in the Transactions in due course.—Ed.

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