**Dendrobium canaliculatum** growing in the Riverina region of NSW

- *the Grooved Leaf Dendrobium or Brown Tea-Tree Orchid*

Now known as *Cepobaculum canaliculatum* (5). Found in northern Australia and southern New Guinea from sea level to 700m often growing on melaleuca trees (paperbark tree) (2, 5). It is an epiphyte and lithophyte mostly found in humid swampy lowland areas and along stream banks (4, 5). In Australia their natural range is from Cape York in North Queensland south to the Tropic of Capricorn near Rockhampton. It is also found in the Northern Territory and Western Australia (4). Typically they come from areas with hot wet and humid summers and a pronounced dry winter period (4) with the temperature rarely falling below 10°C.

Canes have 4-6 fleshy grooved leaves. They bloom from mid winter until spring with 10 to 40cm long racemes with fragrant long lasting flowers (2, 5). Buds appear in late April. Flower colour varies from white, light yellow to dark chocolate, red, purple and orange (1, 2, 3). They vary in size with short forms with round bulbs around Cooktown to tall canes up to 150mm in length in other areas (1, 4). The species has been used extensively in hybridising (3).

Most plants in cultivation are the southern form var. *tuttonianum* with white flowers and yellow tips (3) and are mostly wild clones.

**Temperature requirements.**

These are tropical lowland plants and require warm temperatures with a minimum night temperature of about 12°C (1). In Sydney they require a glasshouse and it would be essential in the Riverina where winter temperatures are much lower.

**Light**

They require high light and so should be grown high in the glasshouse. Shadecloth would be required in summer but should be removed in autumn to provide high light conditions (1).

**Humidity and air movement**

Keep humidity high year round with under bench misters as this reduces leaf drop although humidity can be lower in winter (4). They like good air movement.
Water

They require frequent watering in the warmer months but infrequent watering during the cooler months until mid spring when watering can resume (1). A slight shriveling of the canes in winter is acceptable (4) and they will rehydrate in summer. Keep water off the flowers until they set as water can cause flowers to fail to open and drop prematurely (4).

Avoid watering in the heat of the day and new growth being wet as this can cause bacterial rot of the new growths (4).

Plants can lose all their leaves in dry years in their natural habitat (5).

Potting medium

Plants do best when grown on a mount as this provides the good drainage they require. They do not like to stay wet at any time (1). If potted they require a free draining potting medium (4) of medium size bark.

Fertilizers

Fertilize during the warmer months but not as frequently in winter (1). A weak fertilizer weekly is recommended (4) with a high phosphorus and potassium fertilizer from April until flowers drop (4).

Your comments and suggestions on cultural guide are welcome.
Email your comments to dearconsultingservices@gmail.com

Acknowledgements and further reading:

This fact sheet has drawn on information by local growers and the references listed below.

3. Understanding, growing and breeding the Tee Tree Orchid *Dendrobium canaliculatum*. [http://www.teatreeorchid.com](http://www.teatreeorchid.com)

These notes are intended as a guide only and are composed from available information and local experience.
The Wagga Wagga Orchid Society and its members are not responsible for any loss or damage.