

Common native orchids of the Adelaide Hills

Native orchids are a very important part of our environment and there are over 250 described species in South Australia. They are delicate and have a special role in ecosystems. Much like frogs can tell us if water is healthy, orchids can tell us if an area of native vegetation is healthy. Some are very rare and often rely on a single insect for their survival (as they need them for pollination to produce seed). Orchids come in all shapes and sizes with some looking like spiders and even donkeys. When walking, we need to be careful not to step on orchids; being small they can be hard to see but this identification chart will help you recognise and protect them.

Pollinator

- Native bee
- Native wasp
- Native fly
- Fungus Gnat (*type of tiny fly, mosquito-like*)
- Self-pollinated
- Ant
- Unknown

Leaf type

- Round or heart-shaped leaf, flat on ground
- Leafy stem or a rosette (cluster) without flowers
- Single upright grass-like leaf
- Wide flat leaf growing at an angle from the ground
- Tubular leaf like a chive or onion
- Rosette (cluster) of leaves spreading from a central point on the ground
- Two or more upright grass-like leaves
- A flower stalk with no leaf

Common Midge Orchid

Genoplesium rufum (*Corunastylis* sp. Adelaide Hills)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 10 cm. Several tiny green and reddish brown flowers pointing downwards. Green leaf is thin and tightly wrapped around stem. Pollinated by a Midge Fly.

Parson's Bands

Eriochilus cucullatus (*Eriochilus* sp. Hills Woodland)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 20 cm. Usually one flower, sometimes two to three, with two white sepals pointing downwards. Leaf is green to black, covered in rough short hairs, and appearing after the flower has finished.

Mosquito Orchid

Acianthus pusillus

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 15 cm. Several tiny dark red or maroon flowers in the shape of large mosquitoes. Pale green heart-shaped leaf, maroon underneath. Grows in colonies.

Blood Greenhood

Pterostylis sanguinea (*Urochilus sanguineus*)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 40 cm. One to several green to maroon and white striped hooded flowers. Labellum (tongue) readily flicks up. Green leaves grow either flat on ground in rosette with no flower stem; or no rosette but orange tipped leaves on flower stem.

Winter Gnat Orchid

Cyrtostylis robusta

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 25 cm. One to two reddish flowers with a distinctive rectangular-shaped labellum. Dull green leaves are round and flat like a plate, green underneath. Grows in colonies. The flower is similar to the spring-flowering *C. reniformis* which has a heavily veined blue-green leaf.

Large Shell Orchid

Pterostylis robusta (*Diplodium robustum*)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 20 cm. Large green and white-striped hooded flower with long curved antennae-like petals. Green leaves grow either flat on ground in rosette with no flower stem; or no rosette but leaves along the flower stem. Grows in colonies.

Nodding Greenhood

Pterostylis nutans

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. Green drooping (or nodding) hood-like flower with faint white stripes. Green leaves have crinkled edges with bumpy veins and grow in clusters. Grows in colonies.

Adelaide Hills Banded Greenhood

Pterostylis viriosa (*Bunochilus viriosus*)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 80 cm. One to several green hooded flowers with faint white stripes (bands) and a sensitive labellum (tongue) that readily flicks up. Leaves grow either as a rosette of green leaves on a stem raised off the ground but no flower stem; or no rosette but green leaves along the flower stem.

Veined Helmet Orchid

Corybas diemenicus (*Corysanthes diemenica*)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 2 cm. Small maroon flower looks like a small helmet or gum nut. Flowers have tiny teeth. Round leaf is green, green underneath and flat like a plate with a tiny point opposite the stem. Grows in colonies.

Mayfly Orchid

Acianthus caudatus (*Nemacianthus caudatus*)

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 25 cm. Several reddish flowers with long thin sepals in the shape of Mayfly tails. Green leaf is heart-shaped with crinkled edges, maroon underneath. Grows in colonies.

Maroon-hood

Pterostylis pedunculata

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. Hood-shaped flower is maroon, green, brown and white with thin antennae-looking sepals. Green leaves with obvious veins and often with crinkled edges, each leaf usually having a stem. Leaves grow in a cluster. Grows in colonies.

Spotted Donkey Orchid


Diuris pardina

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. One to eight yellow or cream flowers with brown irregular spots with two large distinctive petals shaped like donkey ears that are pale yellow on the front but brown and black on the back. Green leaves are long and thin.

Common names used as per *South Australia's Native Orchids* DVD (2011) by the Native Orchid Society of South Australia Inc. Botanical names used are those accepted by the SA Herbarium. Where there are two botanical names listed, the brackets indicate the names used as per the DVD. Names are subject to change and may vary in field/electronic guides as a result. For more information on taxonomic names, refer to the *Census of South Australian Vascular Plants* (www.environment.sa.gov.au/Knowledge_Bank/Information_data/Census_of_SA_plants_algae_fungi). The calendar for each species represents the times when it can normally be found in flower in the Adelaide Hills.


Dwarf Greenhood
Pterostylis nana (*Linguella* sp. *Hills nana*)



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 20 cm. Small hood-like green and white-striped flower with antennae-looking sepals. Egg-shaped leaves are green, smooth and grow in a cluster. Grows in colonies.

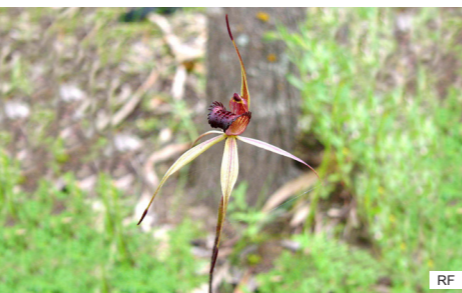
Fire Orchid
Pyrorchis nigricans



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. One to several red and white flowers that turn black when finished flowering. Leaves are abundant, large round to oval. Young leaves can have maroon spots. Grows in colonies. Flowers are only common after fires.


Veined Spider Orchid
Caladenia reticulata (*Arachnorchis reticulata*)



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. Usually one pale yellow flower with red stripes. Flower shaped like a spider. The labellum (tongue) in the middle of the flower is mainly red and has distinctive red teeth along its edge. The green leaf is long and narrow with very long hairs.


Pink Fingers
Caladenia carneus



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 25 cm. One to four pale pink flowers with four "petals" pointing forward like fingers and one pointing upwards. Green leaf is short and narrow with a fold along the middle.


Rabbit Ears Sun Orchid (or Lemon Sun Orchid)
Thelymitra antennifera



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 20 cm. One to several yellow flowers with six "petals". In the middle of the flower is a small column with two red lobes at the top. Flower is lemon-scented and opens on warm sunny days. Long thin leaf, reddish at the bottom.


Purple Cockatoo
Glossodia major



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. Usually one purple to white flower with five "petals". On warm days has a faint sweet perfume. The middle of the flower looks like a cockatoo's beak. Always has a spot of yellow in the middle of the 'beak'. Pale green leaf is a narrow oblong with very short hairs.


Sand Hill Onion Orchid
Microtis arenaria



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 60 cm. Several tiny greenish flowers, with a fragrant perfume. Leaf is green, narrow and tubular like those of a chive or onion. It can grow in a variety of places including coastal sand hills.


Common Pink Sun Orchid
Thelymitra rubra



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 40 cm. One to four pink flowers with six "petals" that open on warm sunny days. Flowers are perfumed. Narrow leaf is folded along the middle and reddish at the bottom. Similar to the smaller *T. luteociliium* and *T. carnea*.


Great Sun Orchid
Thelymitra grandiflora



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to one metre. Several blue or mauve sweet-scented flowers that open on warm sunny days. Leaf is leathery and pale green with a powdery appearance. Largest of the sun orchids in the Adelaide Hills.


Wallflower Donkey Orchid
Diuris orientis



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 45 cm. One to several yellow flowers with red-brown or purple markings with two large distinctive petals shaped like donkey ears. Green leaves are long and thin. Grows in colonies.


Narrow Lipped Spider Orchid
Caladenia leptochila (*Arachnorchis leptochila*)



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 45 cm. One to two red and green flowers with all of the "petals" pointing upwards to resemble the shape of a spider. The maroon labellum (tongue) in the middle of the flower is narrow, dark red and without any teeth. Green leaf is long with short and long silky hairs.

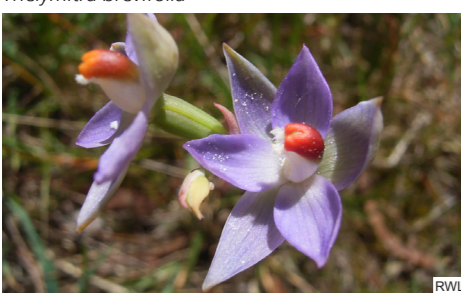
King Spider Orchid
Caladenia tentaculata (*Arachnorchis tentaculata*)



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 60 cm. One to two large green and pale yellow flowers shaped like a spider. The labellum (tongue) in the middle of the flower has distinctive green teeth along its edge. Grey-green leaf is long and hairy. A large spider orchid.


Peppertop Sun Orchid
Thelymitra brevifolia



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. Several blue, mauve, or lilac flowers with six "petals". In the middle of the flower is a small column with a dark brown or reddish top. Flowers only open on warm humid days. Leaf is short, thick and can be reddish, especially at the base.


Slender Blue-spotted Sun Orchid
Thelymitra juncifolia



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 60 cm. Several blue to purple flowers with dark blue spots inside. Outsides of buds are deep pink to dark purple with pale blue edges. Flowers only open on warm humid days. Leaf is long, narrow and folded with thin red stripes near the base.


South African Weed Orchid (INTRODUCED)
Disa bracteata



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 40 cm. Many tiny yellow and brown flowers form a thick flower head that turns dark brown once finished. Leaves grow in a cluster, are narrow and pale green, reddish underneath. It is a weed from South Africa and grows on disturbed sites.


Common Bearded Orchid
Calochilus robertsonii



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 30 cm. One to several green, often red-veined flowers with a purple beard. There are two red sham eyes immediately above the beard. Leaf is green or reddish-green and folded into a distinctive v-shape. Grows in different places from woodlands to swamp edges.


Two-bristle Greenhood
Pterostylis bisetus (*Oligochaetochilus bisetus*)



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to 20 cm. One to several brown, green and white hooded flowers with two long hanging sepals narrowing to thin tips. The labellum (tongue), with its two long hairs, readily flicks up. Leaves, edged with tiny hairs, grow in clusters which brown and wither before flowering.

Pink Hyacinth Orchid
Dipodium roseum



J F M A M J J A S O N D

Grows to one metre. Several pink to white flowers with mauve spots. The labellum (tongue) always has pink stripes (similar species *D. pardalinum* has pink spots but never stripes). Does not have leaves and grows near stringybark trees. Has asparagus-like shoots which are green or brown.



Photography: Robert Lawrence (RWL), Helen Lawrence (HL), Jason Tyndall (JT), David Mangelsdorf (DM), Phil Bridle (PB), Marg Paech (MP), Jenny Woodley (JW), Deb Furbank (DF), Renate Faast (RF), Rosalie Lawrence (RAL), Alan Stephenson (AS), Kris Kopicki (KK). Leaf symbols courtesy of R. W. Lawrence from 'Start with the Leaves'.

This identification chart is a collaborative project between Green Adelaide and the Native Orchid Society of South Australia Inc. (www.nossa.org.au)

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