

Lythrum salicaria is described as a cosmopolitan species but it does not mention that it is listed as vulnerable in Tasmania. But wait, there are more examples: *Centaurium spicatum* is listed as a native of southern Europe and Asia, but it is not mentioned that it is also considered native in Tasmania and rare as well. A couple of threatened species of *Persicaria* are also treated as weeds, and I am sure if I looked hard enough I would find more in this category. Treating these species as weeds in Tasmania and doing to them what is generally done to weeds would be breaking the law! Their inclusion in the book without proper notes on their conservation status could be portrayed as irresponsible.

There is one last negative aspect. I get the feeling that the Tasmanian *Census of Vascular Plants* was not consulted during the production of this book. One big clue to this is that 24 out of the 36 species which are known in Australia as only occurring in Tasmania are omitted.

Calling this book an identification guide and aiming it at the general public may be over ambitious. Perhaps it could have been titled ‘an annotated illustrated inventory to the weeds of south-eastern Australia’ then I would have no problems. Despite this, I find the book very useful, and there is probably not a day that goes by when I don't pick it up. I also know of others in the weed fraternity that use it almost as often. It has assisted me to make many identifications but I will always refer to a flora before making a final identification.

I would recommend the book anyone interested in weeds but I would always suggest that having identified your plant, you should seek further information if you intend to kill it.

A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia including the Island Territories by D.L. Jones, Reed New Holland, 2006, full colour, hard cover, 496 pages.

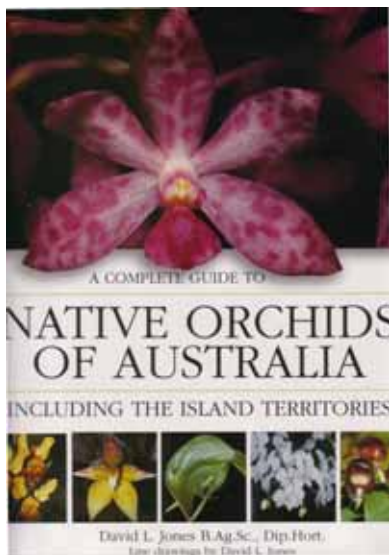
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This beautiful book is an appropriate culmination of the career of Australia's most prolific orchidologist. Over 45 years of involvement in Australian native orchids, Jones has become Australia's foremost expert on this beautiful and complex group. *A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia including the Island Territories* (NOA) arose from a rewrite of Jones's earlier publication, *Native Orchids of Australia* (1988), and was published just prior to his retirement earlier this year.

Jones aims to present a book that can be used by “casual visitors to the bush as well as orchid enthusiasts, conservation workers, environmental consultants and professional botanists” to identify species, and in general, raise the profile and conservation

significance of Australian native orchids. Layed-out in three parts, Part I gives an excellent introduction to orchids. It details the diagnostic floral structure of orchids, then looks at life history attributes including pollination, hybridisation, seed germination, mycorrhizal fungi and cultivation. Parts II and III describe in detail over 1300 species of terrestrial (part II) and epiphytic (Part III) native Australian orchids. Chapters amalgamate groups of closely related genera, and species are listed alphabetically within each genus. Detailed line drawings of the important floral and vegetative characters accompany each genus, and almost every species has an accompanying colour photograph. Species descriptions are deliberately brief and scientific nomenclature is kept to a minimum. Most species also have notes on distribution, recognition, and conservation status, making NOA the most comprehensive single reference on Australia's orchid flora.

Jones has adopted some taxonomic treatments that are not currently accepted, and in some cases have been rejected by the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria (CHAH). For example, his treatment of the greenhoods (*Pterostylis*) was considered but not adopted by CHAH. The use of non-accepted taxonomy makes this taxonomically confusing group more confusing and is the main drawback of the book.



Another notable and deliberate omission from NOA is any type of key to species. With a book of this detail covering such a wide range of species, keys would be difficult to follow, let alone produce, and with descriptions, photos and notes on recognition, most users will be able to identify field specimens to at least a narrow range of species, although professional users will need to revert to the primary literature in many cases to positively identify species. Distribution maps would also be helpful in identifying potential species for the field worker.

Overall the book is wonderfully presented, beautifully illustrated and conveys the diversity and beauty of our native orchid flora more effectively than any other publication I am aware of. This book could be described as an encyclopaedia of Australian native orchids and will be an essential reference for years to come.