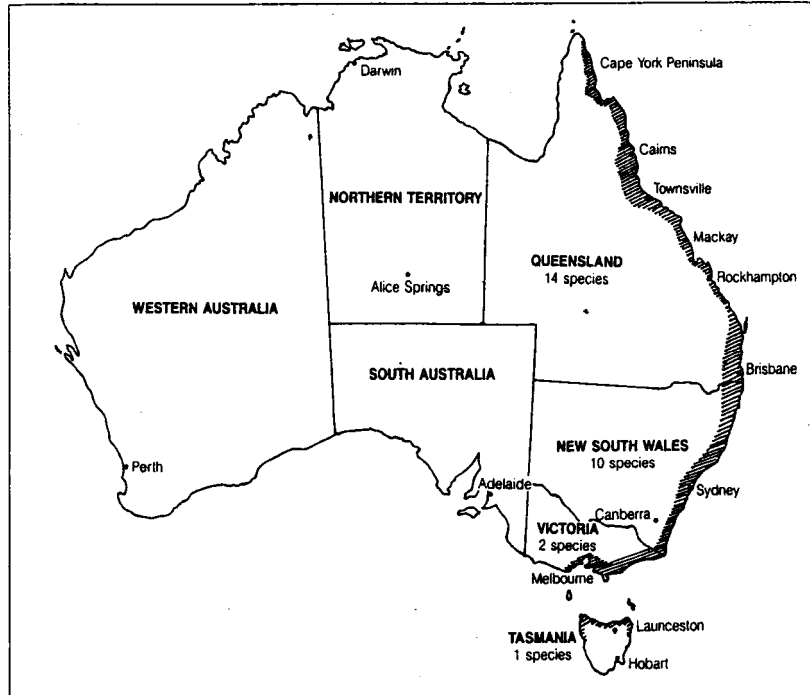


MARIBYRNONG ORCHID SOCIETY INC

GUIDELINES TO GROWING SARCOCHILUS



Distribution of the genus *Sarcocochilus* in Australia

NATURAL HABITAT

These species are distributed mainly on the Dividing Range in N.S.W. to elevations up to 1000 metres.

Some of them such as *Sarc. falcatus*, *olivaceus*, *australis* grow on trees, others like *Sarc. fitzgeraldii* commonly called the "Ravine Orchid" grow in cool, damp gullies. *Sarc. hartmannii* on the other hand grow on rock faces in quite harsh conditions.

CULTIVATION

Although good light is needed to produce good flowerings - when grown out of their natural environment they need protection from the extreme heat and dryness over our Summer period, so I would suggest *Sarcocochilus* be grown under 50% shade cloth and if possible under a hard roof (fibreglass). This then enables you to control the watering by giving them water when they need it, rather than having excess rain keeping them too cold and soggy during the depth of our Winter.

POTTING MEDIA

This can vary from a mixture of bark, charcoal and stones, to just bark by itself - the size of the bark will depend on the size of your plant - as you eventually pot up a size it is usual to also go up a size with the bark. Some *Sarcs* eg. *falcatus*, can be mounted on slabs of aged hardwood, or good quality treefern.

WATERING

Sarcocochilus like to be kept just damp at all times if possible, especially through the summer months - and perhaps watering only once every week to 10 days during the depth of winter. During the summer months, as well as watering, daily damping down the floors of the shed helps to keep them cool and also adds humidity. Slab culture will need watering more frequently, perhaps soaking in a bucket of water for a short time.

FERTILIZING

Fertilizing can be carried out at the time of repotting with a "slow release" fertilizer such as "Hoof and Horn" or "Osmocote" plus a very weak liquid fertilizer can be given occasionally when watering during the rest of the year.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Snails and slugs enjoy the conditions these orchids grow under, so should be checked frequently. If you have good air movement over your plants you should have little or no trouble with leaf spotting, but should your plants be crowded and air movement poor, leaf spotting and leaf drop may be a problem, if this happens a fungicide such as Mancozeb could be used to control the fungus problem. A small fan to create air movement over the plants would be a better solution. Caterpillars and aphids can also be a problem at times, but can easily be controlled with a Carbaryl dust - it will not hurt buds, but keep off the open flowers.

SARC. CECILIAE

This species needs slightly different treatment from all the other *Sarcocochilus* - perhaps a slightly more protected area, more light and slightly drier in the winter months. These can be potted into a terracotta saucer (well drained) with a very coarse potting media - perhaps hanging higher in the shed to get extra light and air movement.

Try to learn a little about your plants - where do they grow in nature? what temperature to they grow in? etc etc.

Today's *Sarcocochilus* hybrids are a mixture of *Sarc.* species so the above guidelines are a basis only for your growing - you will have to alter some of these conditions to suit your growing area.