

## Crimson Spider Orchid, *Caladenia concolor*



*Caladenia concolor* (left - Matt Cameron; right - G. MacDonald)

### Description

The Crimson Spider Orchid, *Caladenia concolor*, is classified as Endangered in NSW. Fewer than 50 plants are believed to exist in the wild.

#### The species has the following characteristics:

- Flowers 50-70 mm across
- Dorsal sepal erect, lateral sepals and petals spreading
- Flower stem up to 30 cm tall
- Single, rarely two, dark red to crimson flowers
- Single, sparsely hairy leaf up to 15 cm long and 10 mm wide
- Some have reported that the flowers have a strong "hot motor" odour

### Ecology

#### Crimson Spider Orchid life cycle:

- Leaf produced during autumn or winter
- Flowers in early spring, although flowering may not occur every year
- Pollination occurs via sexual deception of male thynnine wasps, with the scent and shape of the flower mimicking that of a female wasp
- If pollination is successful, a seed pod forms and the seed is shed by the end of November
- The plant spends hot summers underground, as a dormant tuber

## Habitat

The Crimson Spider Orchid is found on stony ridges and slopes in grassy or shrubby woodland. At sites where it is currently found the ground flora is relatively diverse and other orchid species are present.



***C. concolor* habitat at Nail Can Hill Crown Reserve, Albury NSW**

## Distribution

Historically, the Crimson Spider Orchid was scattered across southern NSW, and north-eastern and southern central Victoria.

The current known distribution of the species includes northern Victoria, in the Beechworth and Chiltern areas, and Nail Can Hill Crown Reserve near Albury, NSW.

## Threats

### The NSW population is threatened by:

- Its small population size
- Its restricted distribution
- Inappropriate fire regimes and management activities
- Damage from recreational users
- Competition with exotic grasses (e.g., *Briza* spp.)
- Human interference
- Track maintenance activities

## More information

To report a possible sighting of the orchid, contact:

### Office of Environment and Heritage Environment Line

t: 131 555 | f: 02 9995 5999

e: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)

For more information on the Wild Orchids Project:

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The Wild Orchids Project is a Saving our Species partnership between Murray Local Land Services, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Forestry Corporation of NSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Primary Industries - Lands, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, and private landholders.

The NSW Government's Environmental Trust is a key financial contributor to the Wild Orchids Project.

### Information sources and further reading

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