

# JR FACT FILE



## VICTORIAN ORCHIDS



### AT A GLANCE

#### Distribution:

Orchids grow within dry eucalypt forest, heathy woodlands near the coast, closed scrub and grassland environments in Victoria.

#### What are Orchids?

Orchids are the largest family of flowering plants in the world, with over 30,000 species identified. In Australia there are between 1,200 and 1,400 orchid species with 80% of these not found anywhere else in the world. Victoria is home to approximately 400 species of orchids.

Orchids are especially prolific in tropical regions, where they grow on the trunks and branches of trees. These orchids are common in Queensland and Northern NSW. In Victoria however, most orchids grow in the ground.

Orchids rely on fungi in the soil to assist with their germination. Fungi not only assists with germination of seed, but also provides for continuing health and development of the orchid. This fungus is called

mycorrhiza fungi. This fungus allows orchid seeds to germinate by providing it with energy that it can't obtain itself.

Victorian orchids need to survive frequent summer drought and wildfire. They have developed particular life cycles that allow them to withstand these conditions.

Some orchid species imitate female wasps so well that they trick the male wasps into attempting to mate with the flowers. Through this process, the wasp assists with the pollination of the plant.

Victorian orchids have experienced a range of threats since European settlement, including vegetation clearance, mining, wildfire, habitat damage from recreational use, illegal collection, grazing from rabbits and spread of weeds.

Parks Victoria works with other agencies such as Department of Sustainability and Environment to protect our precious orchids by; managing weeds and pests, minimising the impact of people and monitoring populations.