

Eriochilus dilatatus

WHITE BUNNY ORCHID

Lindl.

Flowering period: March–June.**Description:** Tuberous perennial to 40 cm high with the ovate to elliptic, 10–65 mm long leaf with prominent ribs on the undersurface borne part-way up the stem. Flowers one to five, 7–10 mm long with the lip or labellum greenish-white with red blotching. Seeds produced in a ribbed capsule that splits to release many thousands of dust-like seeds.**Pollination:** Specialist pollination likely to be native bees or beetles. As with many orchids, pollination usually involves a process of deception, which in the case of the white bunny orchid involves the flower deceiving the insect into the belief that a food reward awaits.**Distribution:** Widespread though not common along the coast in secondary dunes or protected heathland in deep sand or limestone. One of only a few orchids that occur in coastal areas in Perth and often easily found as a result of its early flowering.**Propagation:** Difficult to propagate from seed as all native terrestrial orchids require a fungal associate to effect germination. The fungus needs to be isolated from the parent plant at the start of the growing season and seed combined with the fungus under controlled conditions. Seedlings generated in this way require a period of acclimation prior to transfer to restoration sites.**Uses in restoration:** Useful as an indication of restoration success as orchids are some of the most ecologically sensitive species in natural systems due to their complex relationships with specialised fungi and pollinators. Replant only into stable, weed-free, well-vegetated sites, preferably with a mixture of low heathy species.**Notes:** An ideal potted plant that can be reliably grown and flowered under garden conditions. As with most Western Australian bush orchids, propagated plants must be allowed to rest over summer in dry, cool soil. Commence watering in May when hot weather has finished.

M. Brundrett

Flowers



Flower



Leaf



Distribution