

Members' Page

THE JOY OF REVEGETATION

Shirley Wells

Was someone playing a trick on me? If I closed my eyes and then opened them quickly, would it still be there? Will it be gone in the morning? How did it get there? This amazing 'thing' just arrived out of nowhere!

All around us is agricultural land that, along with our little bit of land, has been worked as such for over 150 years. Added to which it was severely burnt in a bushfire. We have been here for nearly 11 years since that bushfire busily seeding and planting natives, weeding, worrying, observing and enjoying. Earlier this year we noticed blue wrens in residence and felt a great sense of accomplishment. But now this totally unexpected exciting find!

I was pruning and weeding under a eucalypt in the garden just opposite our front door and there was this little miracle - a leaf and two flowers on a slender stalk - a cowslip orchid. Did I weed out others? Did I tread on any others? As far as I could tell I hadn't done either but the question still lingers.

Andrew Brown comments:

Following pollination, Western Australian orchids produce thousands of fine, dust-like seeds that can be disbursed over a wide area by prevailing winds. If some of this seed lands in an area that contains the right mycorrhizal fungus it is able to germinate and grow into a new plant. This way, some of our common species are able to re-invade areas that have been long-cleared. The prerequisite is that these areas contain some natural vegetation or are being actively revegetated and remain relatively undisturbed. Well done Shirley! A significant milestone!