

## Plant of the Month — December 2018

### *Gastrodia lacista* D.L.Jones



*Gastrodia lacista* (Potato Orchid) is a tuberous, perennial herb that grows to 25–30 cm high and produces pendulous, fawn and white, bell-shaped flowers from November to January. The common name refers to the fleshy tuberoid roots while the specific epithet *lacista* is Latin for "torn" and refers to the ragged edges of the flower's labellum.

Potato Orchids occur between Bunbury and Albany where they can be found growing in moist, sheltered forest areas in deep layers of leaf litter provided by trees such as Karri and Sheoak.

Species in the genus *Gastrodia* have leaves reduced to small bracts on the stem and the plants don't have chlorophyll, which means they can't photosynthesise, instead they rely on mycorrhizal fungi to provide their nutrients. Eight species of *Gastrodia* occur in Australia with just the one in WA.

Photo: R. Davis

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