

## REDISCOVERY OF *DENDROBIUM LOBBII* TEIJSM. & BINNEND. (ORCHIDACEAE) IN SINGAPORE

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### INTRODUCTION

*Dendrobium lobbii* Teijsm. & Binnend. is a slender, grass-like, terrestrial orchid that grows to 70 cm tall with stiff, narrow leaves in two opposite rows and whose axillary flowers are borne singly or in pairs (Seidenfaden & Wood, 1992; Keng et al., 1998). It grows in sandy ground, shallow water or in periodically flooding streambeds (Seidenfaden & Wood, 1992) or adinandra belukar (Holttum, 1954; Keng et al., 1998; pers. obs.) This species is naturally distributed in peninsular Thailand, Vietnam, Sumatra, Bangka, Borneo, the Philippines, New Guinea and Australia (Queensland) but in Peninsular Malaysia, it has been recorded only in the southern half (Seidenfaden & Wood, 1992). In Borneo, this species favours kerangas-type forest and is common on other white sand habitats.

It was classified as nationally extinct in the first edition of The Singapore Red Data Book (Turner et al., 1994) because since 1930 no further collections were made till that book's publication (Table 1). However, it was rediscovered in the forest areas surrounding MacRitchie Reservoir on 10 July 2007.

Table 1. Previous Singapore collections of *Dendrobium lobbii* Teijsm. & Binnend. deposited in the Herbarium, Singapore Botanic Gardens (SING).

S/No.	Bar Code No.	Collector	Collector's No.	Year	Locality
1.	0010695	Ridley, H.N.	s.n.	1889	Bukit Mandai
2.	0010697	Ridley, H.N.	s.n.	1889	Tampines
3.	0010696	Ridley, H.N.	2377	1891	Changi
4.	0010715	Ridley, H.N.	s.n.	1891	Changi
5.	0010698	Ridley, H.N.	23142	1930	Labrador

### DETAILS OF COLLECTION AND REDISCOVERY

On 10 July 2007, *Dendrobium lobbii* was rediscovered in the forest areas surrounding MacRitchie Reservoir at two localities, barely 200 m apart. The first and larger population with many plants was found in a swampy area separated from the main reservoir by an earth bund on mounds growing with grasses (Fig. 1), *Alstonia spatulata*, *Dillenia suffruticosa*, *Nepenthes gracilis* and *Thrixspermum amplexicaule* (Figs. 2–4). The voucher specimen, A. F. S. L. Lok 21 (SINU accession no. 2007007709) has been deposited in the Herbarium, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Department of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore (SINU).



Fig. 1. The marshy area behind an earth bund separating it from the main body of MacRitchie Reservoir.



Fig. 2. Flowering *Dendrobium lobbii* plant with a dried *Nepenthes gracilis* pitcher.





Fig. 3. Single flower, stem and leaves of a *Dendrobium lobbii* plant. Scale bar = 5 mm.





Fig. 4. *Thrixspermum amplexicaule* growing with *Dendrobium lobbii*.



Fig. 5. The second locality, where *Dendrobium lobbii* was found growing on a fallen and sinking rattan stem.

At the second locality (Fig. 5), only a single plant was found growing on a fallen, floating rattan stem. This specimen was rescued and brought back for cultivation at the nursery of the Plants Systematics Laboratory, Department of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore, because the fallen rattan stem it was growing on had begun to sink. This specimen however died in Jan.2008.

We are unaware of other localities for this species, although it is likely that there are other viable populations of these plants that are awaiting discovery. This species is superficially grass-like and is only noticeable when in flower, so it is easily overlooked.

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