

***Dendrobium speciosum***  
(Orchidaceae)

**Common name:** King orchid.

**Localities:** Upper Brookfield.

**Growth form:** An epiphytic orchid, with dense clusters of "stems" up to 1 m tall.

**Foliage:** 2-5 leaves are borne towards the tip of each pseudobulb ("stem"). These are large and leathery, mostly up to 25 cm long and 8 cm wide.

**Flowers and fruit:** King orchid is spectacular when in flower in spring, with long, arching sprays up to 60 cm long. Individual flowers are white to yellow, about 5-6 cm across, and are scented.

**Habitat:** Grows on trees and rocks in subtropical rainforest.

**Propagation and Management:** Readily propagated from back-bulbs, but, in common with other orchids, difficult to propagate from seed, which is minute. King orchid tolerates shade and almost full sun, and may be grown attached to a tree with non-shedding bark or on a rock. Although drought-tolerant, it benefits from summer moisture and fertilising during the growing season.

**General:** The dendrobium beetle can cause extensive damage to developing pseudobulbs and is most readily controlled by hand. When alarmed, they drop and may easily be caught and destroyed. Pseudobulbs of king orchid were cooked and eaten by Aborigines. Other epiphytic orchids occurring in the area are *D. macropus*, *D. linguiforme* (tongue orchid), *D. monophyllum* (lily of the valley orchid) and *D. teretifolium* (bridal veil orchid).

