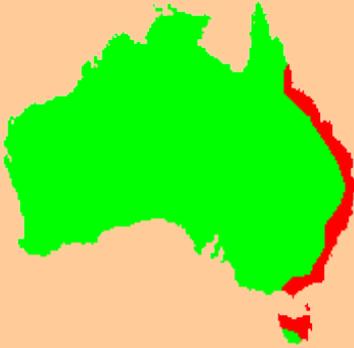


Corybas aconitiflorus



Family:	Orchidaceae
Distribution:	Widespread in open forests and woodlands of eastern Australia from north Queensland to Tasmania.
Common Name:	Spurred helmet orchid.
Derivation of Name:	<i>Corybas</i> ...From Greek <i>corybas</i> , a dancing priest of Phrygia; derivation obscure. <i>aconitiflorus</i> ... Having flowers that are similar to those in the unrelated genus <i>Aconitum</i> .
Conservation Status:	Not considered to be at risk in the wild.

General Description:

Corybas is a genus of about 100 species of terrestrial orchids of which about 20 occur in Australia.



Corybas aconitiflorus

Photo: Jill Dark

Corybas species are very distinctive orchids because of their relatively large, purplish-red "helmet-shaped" flowers. *Corybas aconitiflorus* is a terrestrial herb which has a single basal leaf up to 25 mm long by about 15 mm wide, purplish on the underside. The 15 mm diameter flowers occur singly and are seen in late autumn and winter. The plants form large colonies but become dormant

in summer when they die back to underground tubers.

C. aconitiflorus is cultivated mainly by orchid enthusiasts as it is difficult to maintain for any length of time. Generally the plants are grown in pots in a freely draining, sandy mix. They require good air circulation in a protected position of about 50% sun during the active growing period after flowering. In cultivation, the flowers may abort before fully opening if there is insufficient humidity in the growing environment. When the plants become dormant in summer, repotting of tubers can be carried out.

For further information on terrestrial orchid cultivation see [Australia's Native Orchids](#) by Les Nesbitt and [the guide](#) produced by the Australasian Native Orchid Society (ANOS).

Propagation of orchids requires specialised methods and is rarely attempted by the casual grower. The following references provide further information on growing terrestrial orchids from seed.

- **Australian Terrestrial Orchids from Seed**; D K McIntyre, G J Veitch and J W Wrigley
- **A New Medium for Raising Australian Terrestrial Orchids from Seed**; G J Veitch and D K McIntyre

Both articles appear in *Australian Plants*, journal of the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia), March 1973.