

## Conservation Corner for February 2020

As we prepare for our annual Orchid Show and Sale this month, the Conservation Committee has been busy researching the meaning of elegance in the orchid world. We invite you to visit our display in the floral hall and be amazed.

My concern for conservation has always been home first, and then reaching outward as funds allowed. Recently it is difficult not to be heart-broken at the images coming from Australia and the devastating wildfires there. A quick search shows approximately 1,300 native orchid species, approximately ten percent of Australia's native flora. Not unlike the mammalian population, there are some very unusual orchids that are only native to the region. Even as recent as John Alcock's book *An Enthusiasm for Orchids – Sex and Deception in Plant Evolution* – published in 2006 by Oxford University Press, there were still new species being identified in the wild. Australia even has an orchid genus that blooms underground– *Rhizanthella*! Who knows what may be lost in the wake of the fires engulfing the continent. In a recent National Geographic post they outlined potential areas for donations. I have summarized them below.

[Australian Red Cross' Disaster Relief and Recovery](#)

[WIRES](#) - an organization committed to wildlife in Australia;

[Local Fire Brigades](#).

To support people affected by the fires -

[Salvation Army's disaster appeal](#) or the [bushfire appeal fund](#) set up by the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The fires have made Australia's declining koala population even more vulnerable; consider a donation to the [Port Macquarie Koala Hospital](#), which rescues koalas in regions across New South Wales.