

PART TWO
THE VARIETY
OF LIFE

Two species, *Pterostylis agathicola* and *Diplodium brumale*, are tied by mycorrhiza to the kauri and are never found away from it.

The main ground orchid habitats are track sides, open mossy areas in mature scrub, and short 'gum-scrub', which is the preferred home of those species which thrive in direct sunlight.

Nematoceras rivularis s.l. (Fig. 2) is a very

variable 'wet' species, growing in seeps, on stream banks and beside waterfalls. Half a dozen distinct forms have been tag-named from the Waitakeres, the most remarkable probably being the form that is sea-splashed and grows on the cliffs of the Kaitarakihi promontory.

The forest proper has few ground orchids, as most tend to shun the shade. *Pterostylis*, *Diplodium* ('green hoods') and *Acianthus* are the main ground-dwelling genera found in the forest. The epiphytes, while they grow on forest trees, usually prefer the sunlight of the upper branches, except *Ichthyostomum*, which in general grows lower down on the tree trunks, often on kauri and rewarewa.

Species of the ground-dwelling forest genera

Three little species of *Diplodium* — *D. alobulatum*, *D. brumale* and *D. trullifolium* — form a group by themselves and are related to the Australian *D. obtusum*.

The grass-leaved species of *Pterostylis* — *P. agathicola*, *P. banksii*, *P. cardiostigma* and *P. graminea* — belong to a local New Zealand group and do not occur in Australia.



Fig. 2. (above)
Nematoceras rivularis, a 'wet' species that grows on riverbanks and by waterfalls.
Digby Graham



Fig. 3. (right above)
Esrina mucronata, a grass-leaved epiphyte on a tree fern. Small yellow flowers in spring.
John Braggins

Fig. 4. (right below)
Winkia cunninghamii has the largest and most showy flowers of the epiphytic orchids.
John Braggins

