

Corybas cryptanthus

Corybas Cryptanthus (Saprophyticus)

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ONE day in the summer of 1955-56 Piers Hunt and I were out looking for *Bulbophyllum* in the beech forest behind the Pinehaven School. On our way back Piers noticed what he took to be a seed head of *Caladenia carnea* var. *minor*. As we were not certain we took it to Mr. Druce for identification. He told us it might be *Corybas cryptanthus* and asked us to look for the flowers the following August.

On July 17 (1956) we went over to the beech forest again and I found five flowers of *C. cryptanthus*, their tips just showing above the leaf mould. This we cleared away, thus exposing the flowers completely. A few days later Mr. Druce came and took the photograph that is reproduced here. The plants were growing in a sheltered spot only a few yards from an open grass paddock. They were growing in the leaf mould of black beech, though there were several rimu and kahikatea trees nearby. The ground was flat, moist but not swampy, and received a certain amount of afternoon sun.

Later on we found more flowers and by the end of August we had seen over forty. On September 6, flowering was nearly over. In December we saw several seed-heads (some in places where we had not noticed flowers), but in early February could not find any.

When I was away camping at Ruakaka Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound, last Christmas, Michael Christeller and I found some "underground" stems of *C. cryptanthus* while we were digging for Maori relics under some manuka. One of the plants had a seed head.