

## **Southern African Epiphytic Orchids, by Ball, John S.**

Conservation Press is proud to announce the publication of *Southern African Epiphytic Orchids*. This is a magnificent record of the epiphytic orchids growing on trees and rocks South of the Zambezi and Cunene Rivers. Besides being an invaluable reference book for South African wildflower lovers, it will be of great assistance to botanists all over Africa, as many of the species and genera are widely distributed. In addition it will be welcomed by orchid lovers throughout the world. Although the epiphytic orchids from the southern regions of Africa lacked the variety of colors, shapes and size of their cousins from the tropics of Asia and the Americas, they often compensate in charm by delicate structuring in virginal whites and creams and with neat arrangements of the flowering spikes.

Each species is painted life-size by Patricia Van de Ruit and with meticulous attention to detail. Where necessary, enlarged drawings of the flowers have been included for greater clarity. This example of the work by Patricia Van der Ruit places her amongst the best botanical artists of our times. 104 plates portray the charm of these inhabitants of our forests.

Maps show the known distribution in Southern Africa of all the species dealt with. Full notes are given, including descriptions, meanings of the Latin names, flowering times, and any other information of interest. A simplified diagrammatic key to the various genera has been specially compiled to assist in determining the group to which each species belongs. The larger genera also have keys to facilitate identification.

Introductory notes and an illustrated glossary cater for amateur and professional needs in following descriptions in the text.

A particularly attractive feature of the book is a series of habitats photograph's in color, showing typical sites favored by orchids. The thrill of locating orchids in the field is heightened by their choice of the most scenic parts of Southern Africa in which to grow.

This handsome volume is an important milestone in the botanical literature of Southern Africa and will rank with the Reynolds' Aloes and Roberts' Birds in appeal to nature lovers, as well as being an item to be cherished by collectors of Africa and good books.

