

A NEW SPECIES OF ERIA (ORCHIDACEÆ)

by

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ERIA JOHNSONII T. E. Hunt, *species nova*.

Pseudo-bulbi ovoidei, circiter 1 cm. alti et 8.5 mm. lati, virides. *Folia* 2, lineari-lanceolata, circ. 7 cm. longa, petiolata, coriacea, apice emarginata. Inflorescentia dense multiflora, circ. 6 mm. longa. *Flos* cum ovario circ. 4 mm. longus lutei-albus, pellucidus, pilosus. *Sepala* lanceolata, obtusa, concava, circ. 2 mm. longa, extus pilosa. *Petala* lineari-lanceolata, circ. 1.5 mm. longa concava, glabra. *Labellum* circ. 1 mm. longum et 1 mm. latum, acutum, glabrum, ad apicem callis minutis instructum. *Columna* brevis lataque.

Pseudo-bulbs ovoid, about 1 cm. long and 8.5 mm. wide (in the type plant), light-green, covered with the scarios remains of the sheathing scales. Leaves two from the apex of the pseudo-bulb, linear-lanceolate, emarginate, petiolate, coriaceous, light-green. Raceme many-flowered, very short and stout, about 6 mm. long. Flowers crowded together, yellowish-white, minute; bracts scarios, about 2 mm. long, broad acute. Flower including ovary and pedicel about 4 mm. long, not widely expanding, beset with woolly hairs, all segments transparent and incurved. Dorsal sepal lanceolate, about 2 mm. long; lateral sepals as long but slightly broader. Petals linear-lanceolate about 1.5 mm. long. Labellum about 1 mm. long and 1 mm. wide, tapering quickly to a short acute tip which bears a quantity of very minute calli. Column very short and broad. Pollen masses hard, easily detached from the surrounding dry membrane.

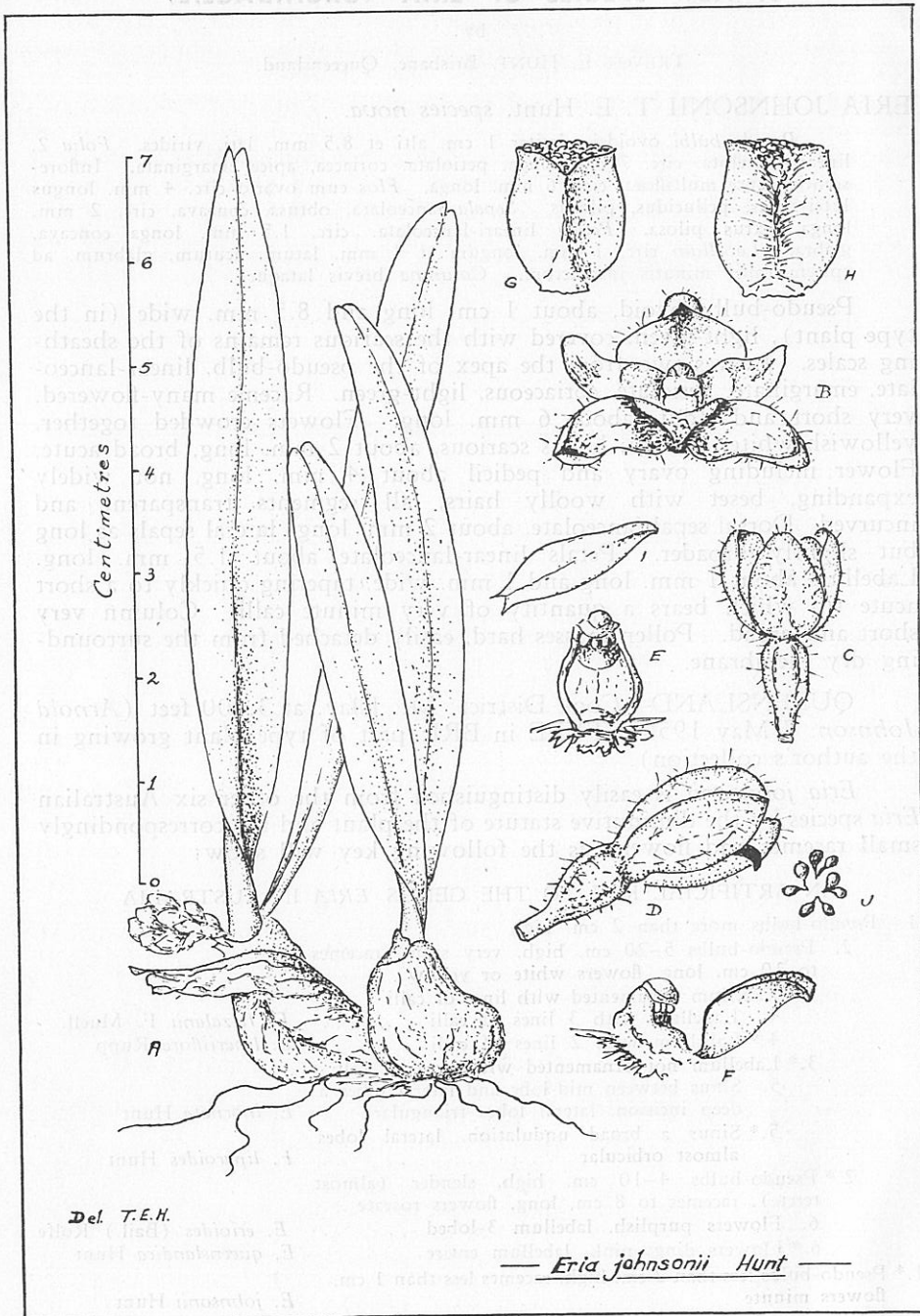
QUEENSLAND—Cook District: Mt. Islay, at 3,000 feet (*Arnold Johnson*, 7 May 1950—TYPE in BRI; part of type plant growing in the author's collection).

Eria johnsonii is easily distinguished from the other six Australian *Eria* species by the diminutive stature of the plant and the correspondingly small racemes and flowers, as the following key will show:

AN ARTIFICIAL KEY TO THE GENUS *ERIA* IN AUSTRALIA

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|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Pseudo-bulbs more than 2 cm. high | |
| 2. | Pseudo-bulbs 5–20 cm. high, very stout, racemes to 30 cm. long, flowers white or yellow | |
| 3. | Labellum ornamented with lines of calli | |
| 4. | Labellum with 3 lines of calli | <i>E. fitzalanii</i> F. Muell. |
| 4.* | Labellum with 2 lines of calli | <i>E. tinariiflora</i> Rupp |
| 3.* | Labellum not ornamented with lines of calli | |
| 5. | Sinus between mid-lobe and lateral lobes a deep incision, lateral lobes triangular | <i>E. inornata</i> Hunt |
| 5.* | Sinus a broad undulation, lateral lobes almost orbicular | <i>E. liparoides</i> Hunt |
| 2.* | Pseudo-bulbs 4–10 cm. high, slender (almost terete), racemes to 8 cm. long, flowers roseate | |
| 6. | Flowers purplish, labellum 3-lobed | <i>E. erioides</i> (Bail.) Rolfe |
| 6.* | Flowers dingy-pink, labellum entire | <i>E. queenslandica</i> Hunt |
| 1.* | Pseudo-bulbs less than 2 cm. high, racemes less than 1 cm., flowers minute | <i>E. johnsonii</i> Hunt |

PLATE IV.



For explanation see page 23.

When this plant flowered in the author's glasshouse, some months after its arrival, it was forwarded immediately to the late W. H. Nicholls in order that he could prepare a plate of it for his monumental work *Orchids of Australia*. As the species was unknown and had been disturbed during the growing season, the duration of life of the flowers could not be predicted; so the plant was not held long enough for the writer to prepare detailed drawings of the flower. Although sick at the time, Mr. Nicholls, with his usual courtesy and thoughtfulness, returned a delightful coloured sketch of the plant and the floral details, and it is from his sketch that figures B-J have been prepared. His plate of this species must have been one of the last, if not the last, that he painted.

KEY TO PLATE IV.

Eria johnsonii sp. nov.

A. Plant (to scale provided); B. Flower, from front; C. Flower from above; D. Flower, from side; E. Column, from front; F. Column and labellum; G. Labellum from below; H. Labellum from above; I. Petal; J. Pollen masses.

—Drawings after the late W. H. Nicholls.

(Nos. B-J, greatly enlarged).

[NOTE—While this paper was in press, S. T. St. Cloud published in *The North Queensland Naturalist* 23³: 1-2 (May 1955) the description of *Eria irukandjiana* type material of which came from Nesbit Range, Trinity Bay. This new *Eria* was described as the "smallest yet recorded." I had recently provided Mr. St. Cloud with a manuscript copy of my diagnosis of *E. johnsonii* (prepared several years ago), but apparently he considered that the two plants were not conspecific—an opinion which I do not share. It is therefore most regrettable that the name *E. johnsonii* must at once fall into synonymy; but, at least, the present illustrations will serve to supplement the rather inadequate sketch provided by St. Cloud, and the key to our seven known Australian species may be useful].