

AONGATETE LOOP TRACK

Graeme Jane

A healthy group of 11, predominantly local Tauranga people gathered at the Aongatete Lodge gate carpark. After a bit of delay, while all the expected participants arrived (one from Taranaki), we headed off to the Lodge and the far end of the loop tracks. It wasn't long before the keen tailenders had to be hurried along from the interesting road edges to the track start.

The start of the track was rich in species, partly an edge effect, then we were soon into tall, rich forest dominated by tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), and pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*). Beneath was a dense understorey of tree ferns, mangemange (*Geniostoma rupestre* var. *ligustrifolium*) and abundant toropapa (*Alseuosmia macrophylla*) already in flower, but on the cool day not living up to its generic name of "scent of the glade".

Two very similar coprosmas, *C. arborea* and *C. spathulata*, were also abundant, the former as saplings, the latter as adults. Subtle differences were useful in distinguishing them, such as leaf shape - a truncate leaf base and often notched tip in *C. spathulata*- or purplish tinting beneath *C. arborea* leaves. Also, there is a tendency in *C. arborea* to be erect and single stemmed and *C. spathulata* to be sprawling. But the presence of open flowers and fruit (orange instead of black in one case) were definitive, distinguishing the adult shrubby *C. spathulata* from sapling *C. arborea*.

The ground cover included a good variety of ferns with the shiny -leaved *Asplenium lamprophyllum* readily distinguished from the more blunt- pinnuled *A. bulbiferum* by the distinctive plantlets (bulbils) on its leaves.

Further on there was a huge puriri (*Vitex lucens*) and beneath, a mass of turepo saplings with their distinctive violin (or was it viola?) shaped leaves. The name milk tree (*Streblus heterophyllus*) was demonstrated by the drops of milky sap coming from veins on a ripped leaf.

Epiphytes were not common on the trees but we were often able to see a good collection on fallen trees and branches. All three of the most common epiphytic orchids (*Earina mucronata*, *E. autumnalis* and *Winika cunninghamii*) could be seen on one heap of shattered branches. Although keenly sought, *Pittosporum cornifolium* was not seen, perhaps because of the sparsity of *Collospermum* clumps (widow makers!) above. A few seedling maire soon began the debate on "which?".

After passing the branch for the shoot loop track, we descended to a branch of the main stream. The mossy stream proved typical of sites for *Lindsaea viridis* and *Hymenophyllum atrovirens*, the former soon spied perching on the rocks in midstream and the latter close to the water on shaded sides of rocks. Other plants noted here included *Oxalis magellanica* and *Anaphalioides trinervis*. Here, in a patch of sunshine in a well used camp site we settled for a well-earned lunch.

After lunch, we continued upstream along the track. At the second crossing really lush plants of *L. viridis* and *H. atrovirens* were noted before we began the steep climb up onto the ridge. Here tawari (*Ixerba brexioides*) and tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*) suddenly became abundant and the understorey was quite limited. Further up, the tawari declined in importance and tanekaha became more prominent. In this more open forest the ground cover was dominated by kauri grass (*Astelia trinervis*), patches of the rush-like sedge, *Schoenus tendo* with its floral bract at right angles and tuft of hairs at the base, and *Lycopodium deuterodensum*.

Here at last we were able to complete the maire debate with the sight of a good clump of the variable-leaved, willow-leaved maire (*Mida salicifolia*) - surely a

misnomer - growing with seedling white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*). The dark, shiny leaves with wavy, irregular margins easily separated willow-leaved maire from the other two. Separation of the two *Nestegis* species is more difficult. The raised midrib in white *N. lanceolata* is not always clearcut, nor are the black leaf bases in black maire (*N. cunninghamii*). The yellow blade around the midrib can also help identify white maire seedlings. Still, there is always scope for debate unless adult plants can be seen nearby.

Here *Bulbophyllum pygmaeum* was quite common on tanekaha and odd plants of *Drymoanthus adversus* were noted, one almost on the ground. In places, the pout-lipped and ruffled-leafed *Pterostylis trullifolia* was abundant with the odd *Corybas oblongus* and *Acianthus sinclairii*. An unusual seedling here, a solitary *Libocedrus plumosa*, caused debate on which and why, not settled until we arrived home (it has long pointed leaves).

Finally we reached decision-time - to go on or turn back. Many were keen to continue round the loop but John Hobbs, with his GPS, placed us on the topo map and it was clear that a retreat was in order.

The return to the short loop junction picked up a few new species and allowed those who had missed out on seeing some on the way up to catch up on them. Of particular note were *Brachyglottis kirkii* and a solitary quintinia (*Quintinia serrata*). At the junction we chose to continue on the short loop. After the track rejoined the long loop there were several very large tanekaha and lots of kohekohe. *Pseudopanax edgerleyi* was quite common on tree ferns in one place. Then in a damp spot under tall mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*) there was a mass of *Corybas trilobus* with its distinctive large green dorsal sepal.

At last we emerged from dense kohekohe forest to see the cars just across the paddock.

**VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES LIST FOR
AONGATETE LOOP TRACK (3 HR)**

Graeme Jane

Psilopsids, Lycopods & Quillworts

Huperzia varia (*Lycopodium varium* agg, *L. billardieri*, *L. novae-zelandicum*)

Lycopodium deuterodensum (*Lycopodium*)

Lycopodium volubile

Tmesipteris elongata (pp *T. tannensis*)

Tmesipteris lanceolata (pp *T. tannensis*)

Tmesipteris sigmatifolia (pp *T. tannensis*)

Tmesipteris tannensis

Ferns

Anarthropteris lanceolata

Asplenium bulbiferum

Asplenium flaccidum ss

Asplenium lamprophyllum

Asplenium oblongifolium (*A. lucidum*)

Asplenium polyodon (*A. falcatum*)

Blechnum chambersii (*B. lanceolatum*)

Blechnum discolor

Blechnum filiforme

Blechnum fluviatile

Blechnum fraseri

Blechnum novae-zelandiae (pp *B. capense*; "black spot lowland"; *B. "latifolia"*)

Ctenopteris heterophylla (*Grammitis*)

Cyathea dealbata (*Alsophila tricolor*)

Cyathea medullaris (*Sphaeropteris*)

Cyathea smithii (*Alsophila*)
Deparia petersenii (*Athyrium japonicum*; *D. tenuifolium*)
Dicksonia squarrosa
Gleichenia microphylla
Grammitis ciliata
Histiopteris incisa
Hymenophyllum atrovirens agg (*H. montanum*; *Mecodium*)
Hymenophyllum demissum (*Mecodium*)
Hymenophyllum dilatatum (*Mecodium*)
Hymenophyllum flabellatum (*Mecodium*)
Hymenophyllum multifidum (*Meringium*)
Hymenophyllum rarum (*Mecodium*)
Hymenophyllum revolutum
Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum
Lastreopsis glabella (*Ctenitis*)
Lastreopsis hispida (*Rumohra*)
Leptopteris hymenophylloides (*Todea*)
Lindsaea trichomanoides
Lindsaea viridis
Lygodium articulatum
Microsorium pustulatum (*Phymatosorus pustulatus*, *Phymatodes*, *P. diversifolium*)
Microsorium scandens (*Phymatosorus*, *Phymatodes*)
Paesia scaberula
Pneumatopteris pennigera (*Thelypteris*; *Cyclosorus*)
Pteridium esculentum (*P. aquilinum* var. *esculentum*)
Pyrrosia eleagnifolia (*P. serpens*)
Rumohra adiantiformis
Sticherus cunninghamii (*Gleichenia*)
Trichomanes reniforme (*Cardiomanes*)
Trichomanes venosum

Gymnosperm trees and shrubs

Dacrycarpus dacrydioides (*Podocarpus*)

Dacrydium cupressinum

Libocedrus plumosa

Phyllocladus trichomanoides

Podocarpus hallii (*P. cunninghamii*)

Podocarpus totara

Prumnopitys ferruginea (*Podocarpus ferrugineus*, *Stachypitys*)

Dicotyledonous trees and shrubs

Alectryon excelsus

Alseuosmia macrophylla

Aristotelia serrata

Beilschmiedia tawa

Brachyglottis kirkii (*Senecio kirkii*; *Urostemon*)

Coprosma arborea

Coprosma grandifolia (*C. australis*)

Coprosma lucida

Coprosma robusta

Coprosma spathulata ssp. *spathulata*

Corynocarpus laevigatus

Dracophyllum latifolium agg (*D. mathewsii*)

Dysoxylum spectabile

Elaeocarpus dentatus

Gaultheria antipoda

Geniostoma rupestre var. *ligustrifolium*

Griselinia lucida

Hebe stricta ss

Hedycarya arborea

Ixerba brexioides
Knightia excelsa
Kunzea ericoides (*Leptospermum*)
Laurelia novae-zelandiae
Leucopogon fasciculatus (*Styphelia*; *Cyathodes fasciculata*)
Lophomyrtus bullata (*L. aotearoana*)
Macropiper excelsum ssp. *excorticata*
Melicytus ramiflorus
Mida salicifolia
Myrsine australis
Nestegis cunninghamii (*Gymnelaea*)
Nestegis lanceolata (*Gymnelaea*)
Olearia rani
Pseudopanax arboreus (*Neopanax arboreum*)
Pseudopanax crassifolius
Pseudowintera axillaris
Quintinia serrata agg (*Q. acutifolia*; *Q. elliptica*)
Raukana edgerleyi (*Pseudopanax*)
Schefflera digitata
Solanum aviculare agg (*S. cheesemanii*)
Streblus heterophyllus (*Paratrophis microphylla*)
Toronia toru (*Persoonia*)
Vitex lucens
Weinmannia racemosa

Dicotyledonous lianes and related trailing plants

Clematis paniculata
Metrosideros diffusa
Metrosideros fulgens
Metrosideros perforata

Parsonsia heterophylla

Rubus australis

Rubus cissoides

Daisy-like herbs

Anaphalioides trinervis (*Gnaphalium*)

**Conyza albida* (*C. floribunda*; *C. canadensis* auct.; *Erigeron*)

Lagenifera pumila (*Lagenophora*)

Dicotyledonous herbs other than Composites

Centella uniflora

Drosera peltata ssp. *auriculata* (*D. auriculata*)

**Fragaria ananassa* X

Hydrocotyle dissecta

Nertera depressa agg (*N. cunninghamii*; *Coprosma*)

Nertera dichondrifolia (*Coprosma*; corrected orthography)

Oxalis magellanica (*O. lactea*)

**Phytolacca octandra*

Monocotyledonous trees and shrubs

Cordyline banksii

Cordyline pumilio

Rhopalostylis sapida

Monocotyledonous lianes

Freycinetia banksii (*F. baueriana* var.)

Ripogonum scandens

Orchids

Bulbophyllum pygmaeum (*Ichthyostomum*)

Corybas acuminatus (*Nematoceras*)

Corybas oblongus
Corybas trilobus (*Nematoceras*)
Drymoanthus adversus (*Sarchochilus*)
Earina autumnalis
Earina mucronata
Microtis unifolia
Pterostylis banksii
Pterostylis trullifolia
Thelymitra longifolia
Winika cunninghamii (*Dendrobium*)

Grasses

Microlaena avenacea (*Ebrharta diplax*)
Oplismenus hirtellus ssp. *imbecillis*

Sedges

Gahnia lacera
Gahnia pauciflora
Gahnia setifolia
Morelotia affinis
Schoenus maschalinus
Schoenus tendo
Uncinia banksii
Uncinia ferruginea
Uncinia silvestris agg (*U. affinis*).
Uncinia uncinata

Remaining Monocotyledonous herbs

Astelia solandri
Astelia trinervia
Collospermum hastatum

Collospermum microspermum

Dianella nigra

Libertia micrantha

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