

PLANT IDENTIFICATIONS – DO WE MAKE TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS IN THE FIELD?

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I recently collected two roadside plant specimens at Hauparu Bay on the southern shore of Lake Rotoiti. One was rather battered and I thought may have been subjected to a light dose of herbicide, the other was a specimen of *Galinsoga* in flower which I recorded as *G. parviflora* because I was not familiar with any other species of that genus. Back home I first looked up my much thumbed copy of the “Annotated list of vascular plants in the Rotorua Ecological District” (Ecroyd et al. 1990) and noted that two species had been recorded. Firstly, *G. parviflora* had been vouched (NZFRI 9977) and secondly, *G. quadriradiata* had a somewhat dubious annotation (Recorded for Rotorua by Given (1984). AK 118860 on which this record may have been based has been redetermined as *G. parviflora*).

Under the microscope it was apparent, from comparing the floral structure, that both these specimens were the same species of *Galinsoga*. The next question was which species? So out came another well-thumbed volume - Flora of New Zealand, Vol. IV. Webb et al. (1984). Page 218 has the key to the two known species in New Zealand and conveniently the facing page has, as Fig 23, drawings of the achenes of the two species. A quick look under the microscope and I determined that what I had collected was *G. quadriradiata*. I will now have to go to the ten sites in the Rotorua Ecological District where I may have misidentified *G. parviflora* and see which is there.

The following day I took my specimens into the National Forestry Herbarium where Elizabeth Miller said there was some *galinsoga* growing outside. A specimen was brought in and examined and low-and-behold it was *G. quadriradiata*.

Amongst other species I look at closely are *Arrhenatherum elatius* / *Schedonorus arundinaceus*, *Asplenium bulbiferum* / *A. gracillimum*, *Hypericum androsaemum* / *H. henryi* and *Verbascum creticum* / *V. virgatum*. (*V. creticum* has not been recorded in the Rotorua ED).

REFERENCES

- Ecroyd, C.E.; Clarkson, B.D.; Wilcox, M. 1900. Annotated list of vascular plants in the Rotorua Ecological District, Rotorua Botanical Society Special Issue No 1.
- Webb,C.J. ; Sykes,W.R. ;Garnock-Jones,P.J. 1988: Flora of New Zealand, Vol IV. Naturalised pteridophytes, gymnosperms, dicotyledons, Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch, New Zealand.