

NORTHERN WOODHILL

E.K. Cameron

On 21 November 1987 twelve hardy Auckland Bot Soc'ers braved the easterly "showers" and visited three known botanical highlights of northern Woodhill Forest. Refer to Cameron & Bellingham (1986), and Cameron (1987) for notes on the area and a map.

PUKITU

The first stop was to the small kanuka-crowned knoll of Pukitu where the Hebe diosmifolia was admired. We were too early for it to be in flower; only old capsules were present. The hairy-leaved Lagenifera stipitata possessed many small white daisy flowers.

The nearest H. diosmifolia population to Pukitu is now known to be only 13.5 km away at Pretty Bush, just north of Kaipara North Head (L.J. Forester pers. comm.). Pretty Bush is a small, narrow area of native vegetation surrounded by sand dunes.

COAL SEAM HILL ECOLOGICAL AREA

After driving around the much larger, kanuka-crowned stabilised sand knoll of Coal Seam Hill, a relatively easy access was found up into the bush. Ground orchids were frequent amongst the bryophyte mats, though none were flowering. The peduncles of the fruiting, tiny-leaved Corybas aconitiflorus measured up to 13.5 cm in height. Despite searching, the Gastrodia sesamoides could not be found. The air was heavily scented from mahoe which was in full flower. The tallest Pseudopanax ferox seen was 3.5 m tall and still with juvenile foliage. The single large puriri was so festooned with Pyrrhosia fern that the shedding bark from the puriri branches hung down, still attached by the fern's long creeping rhizomes. As in Pukitu the Lagenifera was flowering and looked very much a native in this indigenous association. The fallow deer and rabbit enclosure plot, established here in 1983-84 unfortunately has not yet been remeasured. It appeared to contain a lusher understorey than the adjacent forest.

Fellow Bot Soc'er and local farmer, Bruce Roy told us how he used to ride horses around north Woodhill before the pines were established and apart from the kanuka areas present today, it was all open sand country.

Additions to the species list of Cameron and Bellingham (1986):

Ferns

Adiantum cunninghamii (W. Patterson pers. comm.)
Schizaea fistulosa

Dicotyledons

Dichondra repens

Geniostoma rupestre

Hebe stricta (confirmed)

Pittosporum tenuifolium

Pomaderris phyllicifolia var.
ericifolia

Sonchus oleraceus

Monocotyledons

Acianthus fornicatus var.
sinclairii
A. reniformis

Aira caryophyllea
Morelotia affinis
Uncinia uncinata

LOWER WAIONUI INLET

"Area 3" of Cameron & Bellingham (1986). The new bright green fronds of Cyclosorus interruptus stood out amongst the Baumea juncea and manuka. The adjacent population of Mazus pumilio along the 4-wheel drive track had decreased since January 1986 and only a single plant was in flower. To our delight two very dense populations of Mazus were found some 20 m in from the track, amongst the Baumea sward on the margin of manuka. They had developed more densely along the animal tracks where the sedge was parted. Each Mazus population appears to have developed from a single plant, spreading by rhizomes up to 5 m in distance. Many white, dorso-ventrally flattened flowers with yellow spotted throats were visible, held well above the ground-hugging leaves.

Tall plants of Thelymitra pauciflora with blue-purple flowers were also present here. One of the keener Bot Soc'ers venturing further into the vegetation was rewarded by sighting two plants of Gastrodia sesamoides flowering on open, higher ground. Their white flowers, with yellow-orange anthers and topped labellums, were just evident above the Baumea and Muehlenbeckia complexa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all members on the trip for their observations and to Forestry Corp for allowing access and providing a gate key.

REFERENCES

- Cameron, E.K. & P.J. Bellingham. 1986. Woodhill State Forest - notes on several natural areas. Auck. Bot. Soc. Newsletter 41(2): 46-52.
Cameron, E.K. 1987. Pukitu - Woodhill. Auck. Bot. Soc. Newsletter 42(2): 54-56.

Received 25 November 1987, amended 12 April 1988.

NATIVE PLANTS OF THE TRACK TO MT KAITARAKIHI, COROMANDEL

J. Smith-Dodsworth

On the morning of the 20th Feb 1988, a party of about 17 members gathered on the saddle of the Kopu-Hikuai road between Thames and Whangamata and set off on the track to Mt Kaitarakihi. The weather being fine and calm, it was decided to abandon a side track to the Devcich kauri and head towards the summit, which was eventually reached