

situation on scoria (e.g. Rangitoto) and perhaps there for the same reasons (excellent drainage? aeration of roots?).

Other matters of interest and/or concern were the site of the old native plant plantation and the tragic devastation wrought by possums on the pohutukawas.

All our thanks to the leader and the organisers.

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PICCONIA EXCELSA (OLEACEAE)

R.O. Gardner

The current Auckland City Council Proposed District Scheme lists two Picconia excelsa trees in Remuera, at St Kentigern School and at 115 Victoria Avenue, that are to be protected for their botanical (rarity) value. This species, the Canary Islands olive, is not mentioned in most horticultural works.

It forms a tree of medium size, heavy in foliage, with the rough bark and crooked branching typical of its family. Sterile specimens have a deceptive likeness to those of Nestegis spp., even having a waxy bloom on the petioles -- (like N. cunninghamii, but not N. apetala) (Johnson 1957). The older AK material was first determined by Dr Peter Green of Kew.

There are several other individuals in Auckland, like the above of good size but almost certainly less than a hundred years old. There are trees at 2 Woodside Ave Mt Eden, at 277 Mt Eden Rd, and on a farmhouse drive in Ihumatao Rd; there is a AK specimen from the Wilson Home in Takapuna and until recently there was a tree in the crater of Mt St John.

Perhaps the importation of Picconia might be the result of a nurseryman's recognizing that Canary Islands species should flourish in what is literally the opposite side of the world.

Naturalization of Picconia in Auckland has not occurred, fruit being formed very rarely. Our trees are all lone individuals, so it may be that cross-pollination is usually essential.

REFERENCE

Johnson, L.A.S. 1957. A review of the family Oleaceae. Contr. N.S.W. Nat. Herb. 2(6): 395-418.

Figure: Vegetative shoot x0.4; fertile shoot x0.6, flower x6, ovary x9, stigma x18.

