

Joseph Matthews and Puckey at Kaitaia 1836



new to me - 2 leaves, something like Chiloglottis, pale green, covered with minute tubercles, crenate, 2" long. Tubers round and large for the size of the plant. Grows on hillside'.

RHM 17.9.1900 - 'The new orchid I mentioned a few weeks ago flowered yesterday and when digging it up today, I unfortunately broke the stem, so I at once decided on putting it into a bottle of spirit instead of drying it, and posting it to you. The flower is very delicate and curious, quite new to me. Stem and petals kind of pinkish red, column pale green, labellum palest pink with narrow margins of dark shading, tubercles glossy black near the throat, shading off to reddish or lighter black towards the outer margins where the tubercles are smaller' ... Although there are plenty of plants I can find only 3 more that are likely to flower soon. I am in hopes more will flower later on but can see no signs at present. So far I have only found this orchid in one locality, close to an old pa ...'.

RHM 8.10.1900 - 'I am glad to hear that you are pleased with the Chiloglottis formicifera, which if not quite new, is at any rate new to our flora. I am sorry to say that the plants are not flowering at all freely, so far have secured only 3 specimens for drying. The locality where the plants grow, and plenty of them, is cold and exposed to SW winds; this may account for their not flowering better ... Another patch has been found by one of the boys on a hill recently burnt off. About 300 yards from the first patch'. (Cheeseman recorded this discovery in TNZI 33:312 (1901))

HBM 8.10.1912 - 'Chiloglottis formicifera is overgrown with fern and gorse - may come on again after a fire'.

HBM 7.7.1915 - 'I rediscovered the original patch of Chiloglottis formicifera which has been lost for some years. The plants are small, but a few may flower in September'.

PTEROSTYLIS MATTHEWSII Cheesem. Trans. NZ Inst. 47:46 (1915)

(Described from specimens precariously cultivated at Kaitaia by H.B. Matthews, the plants brought in from Pukemiro Pa in 1910. Equated to Pterostylis nutans R. Br. by H.M.R. Rupp Vict. Natr. 49:152 (1932))



PTEROSTYLIS
NUTANS

Kaitaia

HBM 7.

HBM 2.7.1912 - 'I have a few orchid plants in pots, that may turn out to be new, for altho' found by one of my brothers over a year ago, the flowers have not yet been seen ... they may turn out to be Pterostylis australis'.

HBM 16.9.1913 - 'the leaves, in a rosette of 6 or 7, lay practically flat on the ground'.

HBM 16.9.1913 - 'The orchids I have had in pots for several years were taken by slugs ... 2 would have flowered towards the end of August ... I hunted up the original patch and found that a fire had passed right over it ... I was very disappointed not to be able to send you a specimen'.

HBM 11.10.1914 - 'I have delayed writing in the hope of turning up

another specimen of the new Pterostylis - but so far there is only the one known patch of about 50 plants which extend along the top of a branch ridge on a southerly slope of the main ridge between Pukemiro Pa and Kingsford's farm. A very exposed situation ... I must thank you for the honour you would do me in naming the plant Pterostylis matthewsii".

HBM 8.8.1915 - 'Unfortunately I discovered that my plants growing in a pot and budding nicely, were badly affected with a minute leaf-eating insect, so I promptly put the pot into a cardboard box, introduced the stem of my pipe through a hole, put the bowl in my mouth, and blew smoke into the box as if my life depended upon it. Result - in a few days the orchids began to wither, and finally succumbed to this treatment. I am very sorry I acted so rashly as I fear specimens will be delayed for another year'.

PETALOCHILUS R.S. Rogers London Journ. Bot. 62:65 t 51 (1924) reprinted in TNZI 56:16 t 4 (1926). The validity of this genus was doubted by Hatch TRSNZ 77:398 (1949) and by L.B. Moore Flora NZ 2:110 (1970). Cheeseman had already written it off as 'a freak or a hybrid' - see below 17.11.1912)

HBM 14.10.1912 - 'I am sending you in formalin, what I hope may turn out to be a new species of Caladenia ... the new find is remarkable in not having the usual lip ... and the column being very similar to Thelymitra ... it grows within a few yards of Caladenia minor and exigua. Whereas Caladenia minor has a well developed lip and 4 petals in front, the new form is lip-less ... and has 5 petals in front'. (The labellum in other words is petaloid). 'Looked at casually Caladenia minor and the lipless form are often as alike as 2 peas'. (This is the earliest reference to Petalochilus calyciformis).

HBM 28.10.1912 - (Matthews reports the first discovery of Petalochilus saccatus). 'Like the lip-less variety (P. calyciformis) it also has 5 petals ... column similar to Thelymitra with an odd-shaped spring starting from its front base, and so bent that a pretty little pouch or cup is set on top, immediately below the top of the column'.

HBM 17.11.1912 - (Cheeseman apparently took a dim view of Petalochilus, calling it a freak or perhaps a hybrid, for Matthews' 4-page letter of this date is full of defence of his darlings). 'your last (letter) has caused my sod to fall back in the furrow all the way along, or as father would have said "has put my pipe out" ... I fail to follow your reasoning'.

HBM 16.7.1913 - 'I am still in hope that the pouch and cup Caladenias will turn out to be new species'.

HBM 11.12.1913 - 'The new Caladenias of which I sent you specimens last season, came true to character again ... you have never let me know what the Expert on Orchids had to say about them. You wrote telling me you were sending specimens to the best authority on orchids'. (Cheeseman sent Matthews' specimens to Dr. R.S. Rogers of Adelaide for comment).

HBM 12.7.1918 - (Cheeseman, in the course of conversation, apparently told Matthews that while Rogers was quite at liberty to describe Petalochilus, he was liable to have it disrated - he did! Matthews however, wrote to Rogers and told him to go ahead. It is intreresting

to note that both Chiloglottis formicifera and Pterostylis nutans were growing on hills exposed to the SW winds; the perfect landing place for seed blown from Australia).

Received 5 June 1989.

MYOPORUM LAETUM VAR. DECUMBENS

Maureen Young

Have any readers who are familiar with the Coromandel Peninsula noticed the peculiar ngaio, Myoporum laetum, which grows against the Granite Wharf, north of Te Hope stream? It has a sprawling growth habit and has very broad leaves with a thick, leathery texture, 11 x 5 cm; margins entire in lower half, finely serrate in upper. It fits the description of M. laetum var. decumbens in Flora Vol. 1.

CORRECTION

to de Lange, P.J. 1989. Koromatua Bush, Pirongia Highway. ABSJ 44(1): 12-22.

For Pteris saxatilis read Pteris pendula.