

Looking back, it was a rare experience sampling 140 million years of New Zealand plant species, from the fossil flora of the Huriwai Formation to a contemporary broadleaf forest remnant in one day.

Loog-yeo in Sandringham

R.O. Gardner

A browse in the sweets section of a local Thai foods shop the year before last yielded pandanus custard, durian lollies, and some packets of "Preserved Loog Yee -- Ingrs: Loog-yeo, Sugar, Salt. Product of Thailand". The custard was green and very very sweet; the durian lollies resembled barbecued Instant Pudding and were memorable only as an insult to the King of Fruits; and the loog-yeo, wrapped balls of a dark red sour-sweetish pulp with seeds, also contained a fair amount of what must have been chilli powder.

The resemblance of the loog-yeo to tamarind paste was obvious but the quadrate-ovate compressed seeds were nothing like the brown boxy seeds of that member of the mimosa subfamily of legumes. But they were rather like those of *Cassia* and *Senna* species, and to my surprise they germinated very readily to produce what were very definitely legume seedlings. These however succumbed to an Auckland autumn, leaving me to face the temptation of simply consulting a Thai dictionary.

The matter rested until by chance I looked at the second volume (Caesalpinioideae) of a series on legume fruits and seeds (Gunn 1984). My seeds clearly belonged to the pantropical genus *Dialium* in the tribe Cassieae, having for example the characteristic pale brown colour, concave faces with longitudinal fracture lines, tiny pearl-like funicular remnant concealing the very small hilum, and thick gelatinous endosperm encasing pale green cordate cotyledons. *Dialium* fruits have a 2-layered mesocarp; the inner layer is pulpy and can be "chewed to relieve thirst or macerated in cold water and used as a beverage". The relevant volume of "Flora of Thailand" (Larsen et al. 1984) notes 10 species of this genus in Asia, 3 of which are native to Thailand. Each of these three species have "yeo" as part or all of its common name ("loog" means a ball-like article), and each is noted as having edible fruit. Possibly though, one of the other species is in cultivation in Thailand and may be the source of our material.

A search is projected this summer for seedlings on the sludge heaps of Mangere.

References

- Gunn, C.R. 1984 "Fruits and Seeds of Genera in the Subfamily Caesalpinioideae (Fabaceae)" *U.S. Dept of Agriculture Technical Bulletin No. 1755*.
- Larsen, K., Larsen, S.S and Vidal, J.E. 1984 "Flora of Thailand" Vol. 4 Part 1. Leguminosae-Caesalpinioideae. Forest Herbarium, Royal Forest Department. Bangkok.

Field trip - Odilins Timber Track / Cowan Stream Saturday 18 September 1993

Maureen Young

As the name of the track suggests, this area of the Waitakeres has been logged and burned in the past, but nevertheless, under the kanuka canopy there were sufficient plants to keep the 24 members botanising happily for the duration of the walk. Early on in the trip our leader, Malcolm