

Six harmless exotics

R. O. Gardner

***Bambusa balcooa* Roxb. (Gramineae)**

This bamboo is to be found in the Auckland Domain, across the drive from the Band Rotunda - see Jack Mackinder's illustration opposite. It is also at Mansion House on Kawau Island. It forms dense colonies, with stems to about 9 m tall and 5-10 cm diameter; these are taller, thicker-walled, and more curved-over near their tops than those of Auckland's common large bamboo, *B. oldhamii*. It is native to the Himalayas.

Material collected on Kawau in 1970 by Alan Esler included flowering shoots, and these are still being produced, at least by the colony at the Mansion House pond. The Domain colony has also been flowering sparsely in the last few years, from the base of cut-back stems on the clump edge. These old plantings seem likely to have been an introduction by Sir George Grey, who is reported in newspaper articles at the turn of the century as being responsible for the planting of trees around the Domain ponds (J. Adam *pers. comm.*). The species is also in cultivation in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, with one of the clones there having flowered at numerous times ever since 1971 at least (S. Jacobs *pers. comm.*).

***Drypetes deplanchei* (Brongn. & Gris) Merr. (Euphorbiaceae)**

There are three individuals of this at Ellerslie Racecourse, along the south tree-lined side of the entrance drive. The species occurs on Lord Howe Island, New Caledonia, New Guinea, and also on the east coast of Australia where until recently it has been known as *D. australasica* or *D. lasiogyna*. It is a small rather crookedly-branched tree, without conspicuous flowers and perhaps more suited for shelter than ornament. The northernmost tree of the three is female, and produces orange olive-like fruit, with seedlings directly underneath.

***Eucalyptus tenuiramis* Miq. (Myrtaceae) silver peppermint**

On the western side of the Rosebank Road peninsula, Avondale, near the end of Charann Place, there is a single colony of this species among the pines and scrub. It consists of a number of medium-sized individuals and also a shattered relic, which may be the parent tree, but seedlings or saplings are not currently to be found. I have not seen this eucalypt elsewhere in Auckland; as a Tasmanian species, it probably does better in cooler regions. Its glaucous foliage and flowers give it a superficial appearance to silver dollar gum, but it has smooth firm bark.

***Noltea africana* (L.) Endl. (Rhamnaceae)**

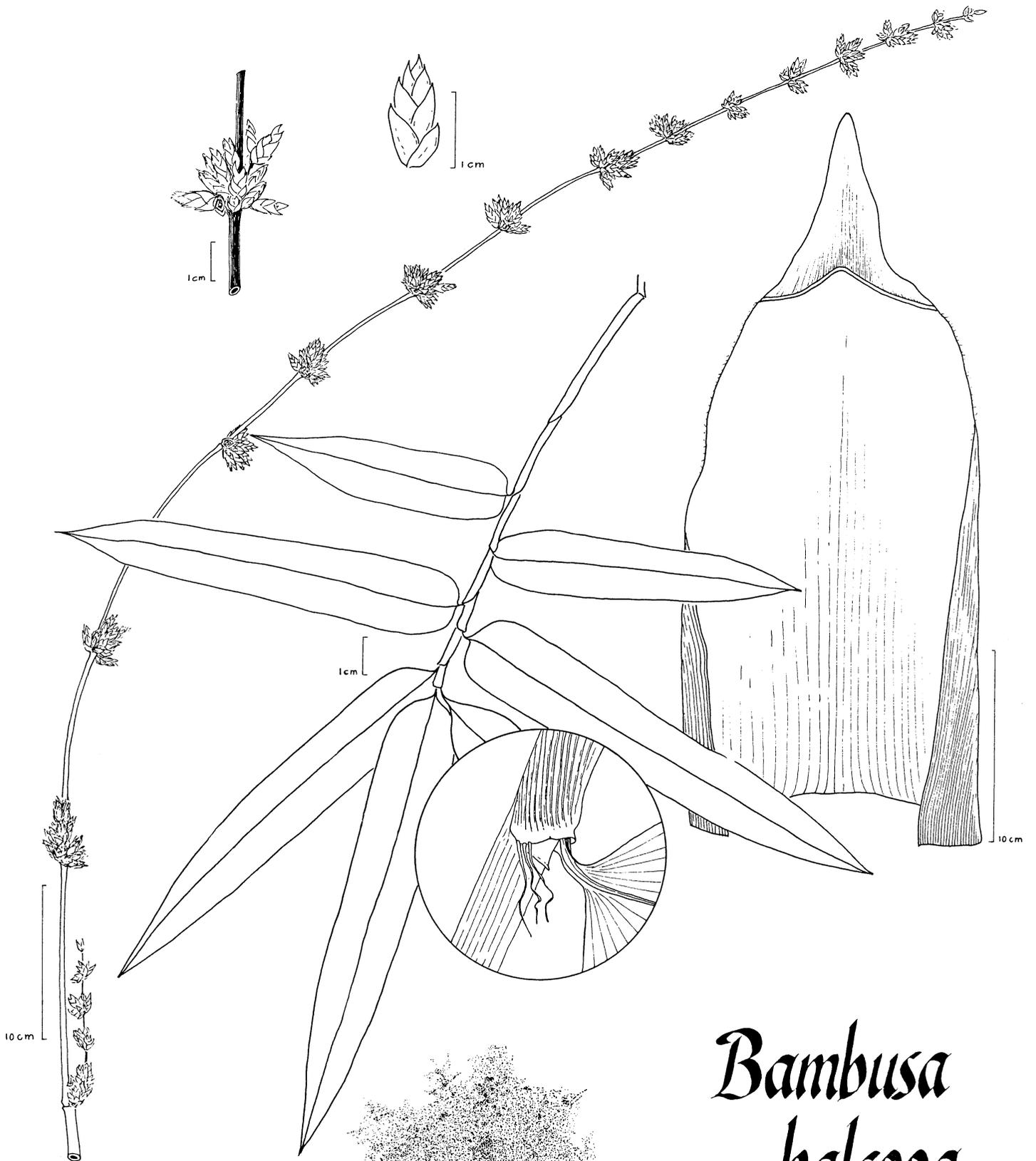
This bushy South African plant was recently located as a survivor on the overgrown slope south of Mansion House on Kawau Island. There is a single other AK collection, made in 1982 from a hedge in what was the Maori Girls Hostel on Gillies Ave. Possibly it is in some of our other old gardens.

***Hydrocotyle leucocephala* Cham. & Schltld. (Umbelliferae)**

A collection of mine (6610) from the Otahuhu property of a grower for the aquarium-plant trade seems likely to be this South American species. It was growing abundantly on the soggy floor of the warm tunnel-house but had not spread outside, nor did it seem to have fruit. It was conspicuously different from our native species by its large white petals.

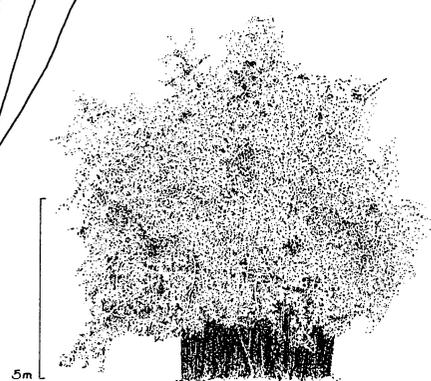
***Pararchidendron pruinosum* (Benth.) Neilson (Leguminosae-Mimosoideae)**

The old tree growing on the main drive at St Kentigern's School, Shore Road, Remuera, is perhaps the only one in the country. The species is native to the eastern coast of Australia, but our tree has long been misidentified as the American *Enterolobium contortisiliquum*, which, as its specific name suggests, also has twisted fruit pods. The tree is declining (though still making viable seed), which is probably why it has failed to persist onto the register of protected trees in our current Proposed District Plan.



Bambusa balcooa

J.M.S.



Auckland Domain