

he also made a large collection of herbarium specimens.

Bill "retired" in 1992. He is now working on a Flora of the Cook Islands and has completed the account of bamboos for the forthcoming grass volume of Flora of New Zealand. Since his "retirement" Bill has taken part in several expeditions to the Pacific, the Himalayas, remote parts of Fiordland, the Chathams, etc., etc. Whenever he is in Christchurch Bill works almost daily at the Landcare Research herbarium at Lincoln sorting and identifying his numerous plant collections. His colleagues greatly value his presence there and make many calls on his expert knowledge of plant families and species from many parts of the world. He generously gives up his time to provide answers for difficult enquiries and to identify baffling plant specimens.

We are pleased that his name has been given to an elegant tree.

***Mida salicifolia*, our native sandalwood**

Rhys Gardner

Mida salicifolia A.Cunn.

willow-leaved maire

SANTALACEAE

Small tree, entirely glabrous; wood "with an agreeable odour"(Kirk); new stems green, slightly ridged below the leaf base and sometimes distinctly flattened in this plane, minutely papillate (x 20), junction between stem and leaf base a very distinct invagination; leaves on leading shoots in 2/5 spiral phyllotaxy or subopposite or opposite, on side shoots usually opposite and tending to be distichous (through internode twisting), blades linear to broadly elliptic, the margins undulate, entire but sinuous, in live plants both surfaces with midrib, lateral veins, and veinlet reticulation raised, the latter elongated in the direction of the margins; buds dark red, solitary, of loosely arranged scales, the outer pair of scales with recurved tips.

The glossy, undulate leaves, which are irregularly arranged and apparently only loosely joined onto the stem, the emphatic leaf venation, and the tatty-looking axillary buds, all combine to give live pieces of this plant a characteristic, and to me somewhat artificial, appearance. Dried material can more challenging to recognise, especially because the species is so variable in leaf shape. Slips in naming AK collections relate mostly to *Nestegis lanceolata* and *N. montana*, while *Syzygium maire* and the narrow-leaved *Alseuosmia* of Waipoua Forest have been plumped for once or twice. A set of specimens (*Mida* and one *Nestegis*) is shown opposite.

With a hand-lens one recognizes the *Nestegis* species by the spotted leaf surfaces (particularly the lower one), caused by minute mushroom-shaped gland-hairs; one can also note the dense short hairs on the newest stems, and the pointed maroon-colored buds, of which there may be two in an axil, the larger above the smaller. The leaves of *Nestegis* species are always opposite, and there is no internode-twisting to bring the leaves of a shoot into one plane to form a flat spray, that is, they are never distichous.

Like members of the family at large, *Mida salicifolia* is generally found in rather dry forest, and is hemiparasitic, its roots attaching to those of other plants. Its distribution is an unusual one — the species is fairly common down to about the kauri line at 38° (kauri is one of its hosts), but then is almost entirely absent until the Wellington region is reached (where perhaps there is another favoured host?). In AK there are two records from the intervening country: Whakamoenga Cave (Lake Taupo), and Lake Okataina.

Unfortunately, possums like this plant, so in future years it may be necessary to go to Waiheke or Great Barrier to have a good look at it. An easy place to see it in the Waitakeres is in the Sharp's Bush kauri stand, below Mountain Road.

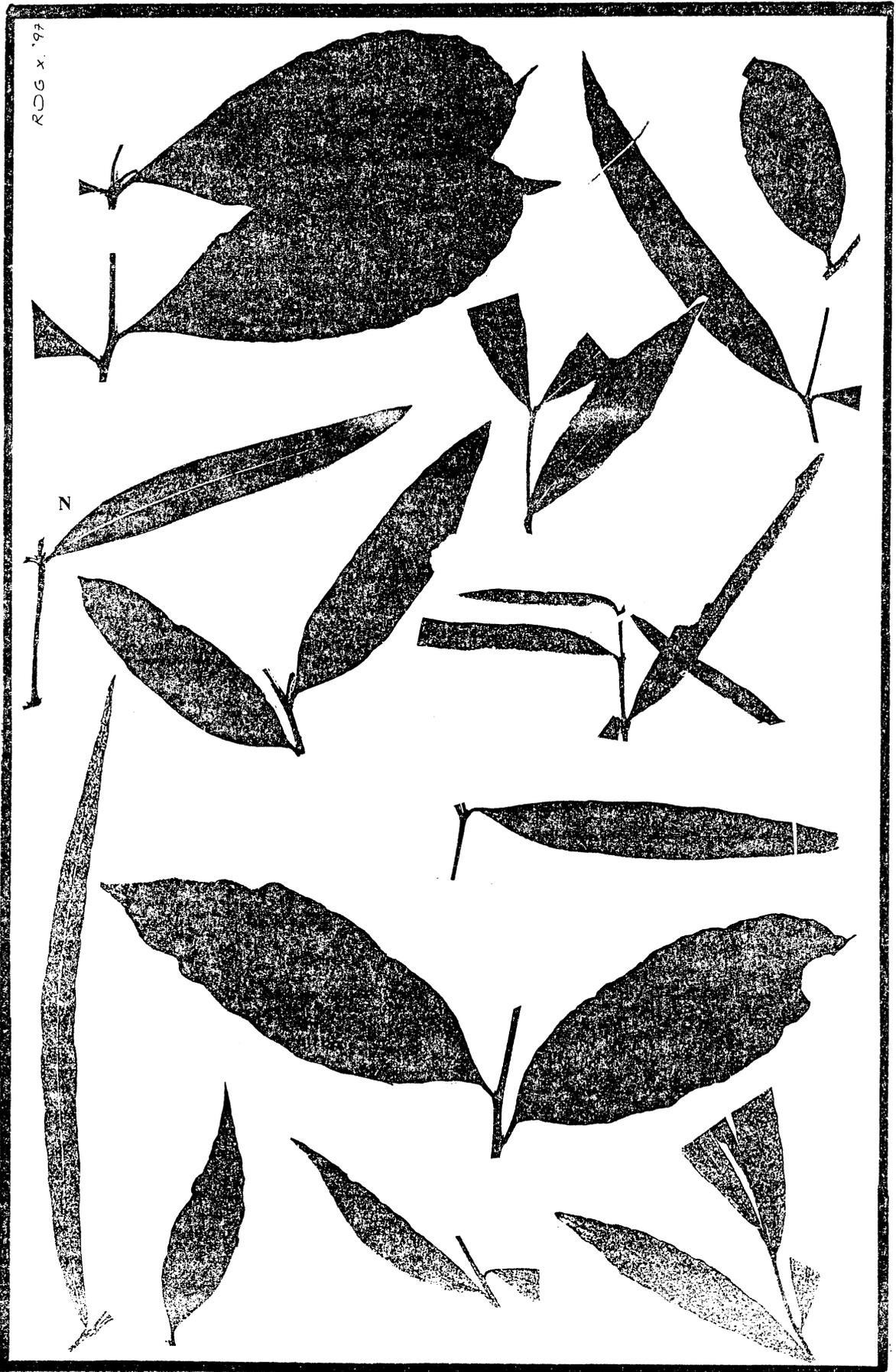


Figure 1. Leaves & stems of *Mida* and one *Nestegis* (N).