

Specimens of this tree can be found along the northern cliff edges on Kawau Island - typical of its natural habitat in New Caledonia. The few examples found around Auckland are often mistaken for Norfolk pines, but differ visually in having a more compact spire-like canopy and often forming a distinct curvature of the main trunk. The species can attain heights exceeding 60 m with only a 3-4 m spread. The largest in New Zealand, which has reached 29 m, is located in Western Park (Auckland)

Flame tree *Erythrina caffra* - Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

In front of the main house stands the remains of what was a spectacular flame tree. Since storms decimated the main branch framework, new growth has begun and a canopy is beginning to re-establish. The species originates from South Africa and has stunning red flowers which form in late winter to early spring when the tree is void of foliage. The Kawau tree was a similar size to the specimen, also planted by Sir George Grey, found in Old Government House (Auckland).

Hoop pine *Araucaria cunninghamii* - Araucariaceae (Section Eutacta)

Located beside the Bunya pine, this fine example stands almost 30 m tall and is one of the largest of its kind in New Zealand. The tree is given its name by the bark formation around the trunk which develops into distinct 'hoops'. The species originates from Australia and can obtain heights of up to 70 m.

Moreton Bay fig *Ficus macrophylla* - Moraceae

The specimen positioned on the beach frontage at Mansion House is one of the original plantings. Although over one hundred years old the fig does not boast the typical massive dimensions, which is due to its destruction by fire after the turn of the century. The Moreton Bay Fig has now re-developed into a fine tree and is a focal point of the gardens. Originating from Australia, the species thrives in the more moist conditions of New Zealand where it forms colossal examples, the largest of which is located at Monte Cecilia.

***Streblus smithii* (*Paratrophis smithii*)**

Vic May

This is an update on the story in ABS Journal of July 1988. The locale was Huia. It is now Point Chevalier, Auckland. In our garden at Point Chevalier we have three close-planted seven-year old *Streblus smithii* trees (family Moraceae). In the wild there is only one known locality worldwide where these trees are found, and that is on the remote Three Kings Islands 53 km NW out from Cape Reinga in the Far North where they were first discovered in 1887 by the botanist T.F. Cheeseman 1846-1923.

We moved to our present address at the end of 1991 and proceeded to establish a garden on the usual unfriendly bare earth of a recently vacated building site. The *Streblus* came with us as seedlings, progeny of two female trees planted one hundred years ago on the Cheeseman property at Remuera, and hand pollinated (probably 1989) using pollen from catkins off the Geoff Baylis male at Campbells Bay. It is interesting to note that at Remuera the different growth forms represented by just those two trees, one sprawling and low-lying*, the other with a single, almost bare trunk, 2-2.5 m high, surrounded by a circle of top branches weeping to the ground. These are similar characteristics noted by Cheeseman when comparing *Streblus smithii* growing on South West Island with those growing on Great Island (1889). (Eagle's Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand vol.2 revised text & Plate 99)

It is a comparatively rare event to see these trees in cultivation on mainland New Zealand, and an even rarer event to see the females bearing drupes either green or ripe red. There are several possible reasons for this. The drupes develop and ripen in winter and are taken very readily by birds and rodents, so that most times the fruit is stripped at the green stage - the birds taking the flesh and the rodents taking the seeds. Like many New Zealand native species, the sexes are displayed on separate trees. In the absence of male and female trees growing together in the same immediate vicinity one has to resort to hand pollination using the pollen from catkins of a male

immediate vicinity one has to resort to hand pollination using the pollen from catkins of a male *Streblus smithii* applied to the female fruiting spike by dusting or by direct application with a small artist's paint brush.

Towards the end of last year (1996) the three trees at Point Chevalier all bore spikes (female) for the first time. They were hand pollinated using male catkins from the tree by the barrack wall in the grounds of Auckland University. Six months later the fruit developed and, being protected by bird-netting turned from green to brilliant red during June/July 1997. By mid-August the fruiting trusses (whole and intact each bearing (say) 50-100 drupes) commenced to fall to the ground, released naturally from a clean cone-like abscission point close to the trunk or branch.

There is nothing very remarkable about red fruit in winter, but nevertheless *S. smithii* retains its fascination - confined in the wild on a small remote group of ocean islands, and with the impact of its brilliant winter display of ripe drupes seen by very few people indeed, either in the wild or in cultivation.

*The generic name, from the Greek *streblos*, twisted, presumably alludes to the distorted branches of some of the twenty-two species, as mentioned under "*Streblus*" in the New York Botanical Garden Illustrated Encyclopedia of Horticulture, vol.10 STE-ZY 1982.

Mt Donald McLean to Whatipu field trip, and *Epilobium pedunculare*

E.K. Cameron

On 16 August 1997 28 Bot Soccers met at the Mt Donald McLean carpark. Several vehicles had already been parked at Whatipu where we would eventually emerge from the bush. Sandra Jones was supposed to be our leader but she had broken her ankle the previous weekend doing a reconnoitre of the track. She ended up being lifted out by helicopter at 11.00 pm but still produced a species list for us. I stood in as leader with the help of Jack Rattenbury who knew where the hard beech outlier was.

We departed from the carpark at 10.15 am and after 10 minutes along the Puriri Ridge Track we turned off to the west to 'bush bash' our way down to the beech trees. Jack Rattenbury, with help from his 'Retreads' tramping group, had marked a route during the week. This was just as well as the unofficial track was overgrown (Bot Soc previously visited this beech stand on 21 October 1989 - see Hatch 1990). At first we were on a flat ridge dominated by manuka 3-5 m tall with some taller kanuka, abundant *Gahnia xanthocarpa*, gorse (too bad for Jamie's bare feet), kiokio and *Schoenus tendo*. The wide ridge slowly narrowed and we eventually scrambled down a narrow spur to the Whatipu Stream. Mairehau, toatoa, akeake and *Corokia buddleioides* greeted us just before the beech. There were four healthy hard beech trees, up to 20 m tall, on a small spur jutting out into the stream. The picturesque stand in such a remote locality was admired by all.

Associated with the beech trees were tawa, kauri, Hall's totara, *Rhabdothamnus*, nikau, miro, *Dracophyllum latifolium*, mangeao, *Grammitis ciliata* and *Sticherus cunninghamii*. See Cameron (1997) for an article on hard beech distribution in the Waitakeres.

The stream adjacent to the beech was in a rocky gorge with moss and fern-covered banks. The native streamside daisy, *Anaphalis keriensis*, was present and sadly the ubiquitous exotic mist flower as well. Native herbs included *Nertera depressa* and several *Epilobium* species (*E. rotundifolium*, *E. nerteroides* and *E. pedunculare*). *Epilobium pedunculare* was included in Mead's (1969) Waitakere flora, but Gardner (1982) excluded it from his account because there were no Waitakere specimens in AK or AKU herbaria. This record (AK 233830) confirms its presence in the Ranges. The streamside *Epilobium* species along with other native herbs, ferns and bryophytes are threatened by the increase of weed species in northern New Zealand, especially mist flower.