

harbour years ago. Those who had landed at Rakino were most hospitably entertained by Mr. Sandford, who lives here with his family, and raises sheep and cattle. The Club had evidently been expected, for extensive preparations had been made, and food and drink were supplied throughout the whole day. The excursionists had reason to be thankful to Mr. Sandford and family for their very courteous attention. Rakino did not seem to yield anything very remarkable from a naturalists' point of view, and ferns and plants worth taking being rare, some attention was directed

to oyster-gathering, and it must be confessed, with great success. Oysters abound on the rocks surrounding the island and are to be had in cartloads. About 4 p.m., the Tainui arrived from Otatou, and re-embarkation commenced. The last stragglers were on board about 5.10, and a start was made for home. The route taken was the alternative one round the outside of Motutapu, by Rangitoto Reef, and through the Channel. Queen-street wharf was reached shortly after 7, and the excursion had proved a most enjoyable one."

Auckland Botanical Society Trip to Dunn's Bush, Puhoi 15 September 2001

Maureen Young & Arthur Dunn

As I try and decipher my notes taken on the day I am reminded of the weather. In a word: wet. The route to our meeting point was along the valley of the Puhoi river showing starkly the effect of the floods some weeks previously and we were spared those conditions, but the ground underfoot was slippery in the extreme and the quote of the day was 'Even Helen got muddy.'

We met at the Dunn homestead and Arthur explained how the bush had once been part of his farm, but was covenanted, and eventually given to, the Queen Elizabeth 2 Trust. An active trapping programme has succeeded in reducing possum numbers greatly.

The reserve consists of two tracts ('Arthur's Bush' and 'Val's Bush') and our plan was to visit both but as we moved at botanists' pace, we were still in Arthur's Bush at lunchtime. As the rain showed no sign of stopping we did not go to Val's Bush, which meant we did not see the carmine rata which we were told was just coming into flower.

However we found *Rhabdothaminus solandri*, and *Alseuosmia* sp. in flower, as well as *Pterostylis banksii* and *P. alobula*, *Acianthus sinclairii* with a few flowers left, and the remains of some *Corybas* sp.

We saw very few Kauri trees, the principal gymnosperm being kahikatea, and some of these were mighty; the tamest had a circumference of 6 m and a diameter of 1.9 m (but it was hollow). There were also large specimens of the hybrid *Metrosideros excelsa* X *robusta*.

A welcome sight was the abundance of *Collospermum hastatum*, both perching and on the ground(= no possums). At lunchtime a sharp-eyed botanist spied a *Raukawa edgerleyi* epiphytic on a tree-fern. We noticed four different tree-ferns, as well as *Cyathea medullaris*. *C. dealbata* and *Dicksonia squarrosa*, there were colonies of *C. smithii* in the valleys. A new *Asplenium* to some of us, *A. lamphrophyllum*, proved easy to recognise by its oil of wintergreen scent. We also found *A. hookerianum*, a delicate little species. On the way up the hill, in a (normally) dry area we found a colony of *Libocedrus plumosa* looking healthy.

By this time most of our concentration powers were on keeping ourselves upright and the wet hair out of our eyes, also my ballpoint pen stopped writing on the wet page, so here the account must end. But not without a word of appreciation to Arthur and Val Dunn for making us welcome, and for preserving and making public an area with a rich variety of indigenous plants.

New Zealand Spinach in Mangere

Mike Wilcox

New Zealand spinach, also known as Warrigal greens, and, in Maori, kokihi or rengamutu (*Tetragonia tetragonoides* (Pall.) O. Kuntze: Aizoaceae) seems to be quite rare in the wild (de Lange & Cameron 1997), at least around Auckland. It is a prostrate, sprawling plant with soft stems and rather succulent foliage and can spread to around 2 metres. Leaves are oval or diamond-shaped and about 75 - 100 mm long. The small, greenish yellow flowers appear at the leaf bases throughout most of the year. It gets its unimaginative specific name from the fact that it was first described by Pallas in 1781 as *Demidovia tetragonoides*.

In 1999 I found single-plant colonies, both apparently wild, of New Zealand spinach at two sites in Mangere. One was on the old Mangere Bridge itself, where it was growing amongst buck's horn plantain (*Plantago coronopus*) on the seaward side; the other was on a small rocky islet in Ambury Regional Park. In October 2000 I took some cuttings home and set them. Now we have a thriving patch in the garden of the local provenance, with an endless supply of this nutritious vegetable, rich in Vitamin C (Phillips & Rix 1995; Pomare 2000). The leaf reputedly has a high soluble oxalate content which, if consumed in large quantities, can be toxic, and is best not eaten raw. It requires