

N E W S L E T T E R

A U C K L A N D B O T A N I C A L S O C I E T Y

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The Committee of the Auckland Botanical Society has decided to publish a small News Letter, containing where possible summaries of lectures and excursions, and giving the news of the day in the local Botanical World.

It is hoped that members who have anything of interest to report, such as unusual growth forms, or the finding of plants in hitherto unrecorded localities, or indeed anything of botanical importance, will communicate with the editor. Country members particularly are urged to take part, thus keeping themselves in touch with the Society, and the Society in touch with them.

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On Saturday afternoon (August 7th) the Auckland Botanical Society held an excursion to the property of Mr. W. Goodfellow, Almorah Road. The leader was Miss M. Crookes. Here, scarcely two miles from the heart of the city, the members wandered in a patch of bush about 3 acres in extent which has remained virtually untouched since it formed part of the original plant covering of the Mt. Eden lava fields. It is very similar in character to the gullies of the Penrose and Mt. Wellington lava fields. The ground is carpeted with masses of the beautiful *Asplenium Lamprophyllum*, accompanied here and there by clumps of other common spleenworts.

Of the trees, fine specimens of kohe kohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), titoki (*Alectryon Excelsum*), pigeonwood (*Hedycarya Arborea*), and mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) are common, while a conspicuous feature of the wood is the truly magnificent specimens of mangao (*Litsaea calicaris*), a true N.Z. laurel. There is no place in the vicinity of Auckland where this tree can be seen to such advantage. Although the bush has been little touched, there have been one or two attractive introductions; noteworthy are fine

specimens of king fern (*Marattia fraxinea*), and that most rare and beautiful native maidenhair (*Adiantum formosum*), now found in the wild state only in the vicinity of Palmerston North.

In addition to natives, the property contains many interesting foreigners. The most exciting of these is *Puya alpestris*. This very remarkable plant is a member of the pine-apple family (*Bromeliaceae*) and is a very recent horticultural find. Its large flowers are an unusual colour of vivid green, set off by brilliant orange stamens. This is the first specimen of this plant to be grown in the Southern hemisphere, and its flowering season will be awaited by nature lovers with great interest.

At the conclusion of a most interesting afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Goodfellow catered for body as well as mind by providing a very pleasant afternoon tea on the sunporch.

The excursion concluded with a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Goodfellow.

Professor Lancaster has very kindly forwarded to us a comprehensive summary of his lecture, "Local Plant Communities" delivered to a meeting of the Botanical Society held on Wednesday August 18th at 8 p.m.

This summary should prove particularly helpful to the many members who for various reasons were unable to hear this instructive address.

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#### PLANT COMMUNITIES NEAR AUCKLAND

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Within easy reach of Auckland many different types of plant communities are to be found. Some of these are mature or climax communities while others represent stages in a succession leading to a relatively stable climax. Thus many of the shrub-lands will, if left to Nature, be gradually replaced by forest. In the small space available it will be possible to deal with only a few of the more important types and those communities selected must necessarily receive very superficial treatment.

1. Sand-Dune Vegetation: Only plants able to endure strong salt-laden winds, powerful insolation and a very porous unstable sandy substratum are able to exist on dunes.