

Kirstenbosch, to name only three of the most famous, that he had visited and photographed with loving care. It was in fact, one of the dearest wishes of his heart to see a Botanic Garden established in Auckland. Indeed just before his death he was planning a Bulletin for our Society which would have helped to create an enlightened public opinion against the time when it will be desirable to press for an "Auckland Botanic Garden."

Our Society can pay no better tribute to his memory than to continue to work for the ideals that he pursued with so much devotion. "If and When" our Botanic garden becomes a reality it is to be hoped that some section or portion of it will bear his name, thus keeping alive the memory of a true nature lover, and one whom all members of this society would delight to honour.

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Miss Olga Adams has most kindly forwarded to us a very interesting account of the methods by which the Maoris make use of seaweed for food. As Miss Adams has herself been an eye-witness of the whole process, she is able to vouch for the accuracy of the details.

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KARENGO - PROPHYRA spp.

This plant is an edible seaweed of the purple laver type which should be better known to the pakeha. Maori people gather it in great quantities as it can be kept for months; it is much relished as a "kinaki" by the Maori Battalion overseas.

During August and September an annual growth of this seaweed makes its appearance on most North Island open shores. Bare rocks most of which lie high and dry at low tide are covered with a dense growth of karengo. It starts like tiny plants of thickly sown brownish cress and quickly grows to the length of one or two feet. The rocks are matted with its reddish purple flat leafy growth.

Each plant is divided into long thin flat fingerlike processes an inch or more wide, and the edge is slightly frilled. It is plucked when about a foot long and is clean and free from sand - otherwise it must be washed carefully. It grows again after rain but too much rain also rots it. Finally it disappears till the next season.

After gathering, the karengo is taken home and dried in the sun for one or two days on clean sheets or canvas. Each leafy portion is teased out flat and pulled apart by hand and laid down separately in small pieces which do not touch - otherwise all would stick together and not dry evenly. This is a painstaking operation but many hands make light work and it is worth the trouble. It is taken at night and pulled and dried the next day if necessary. All surplus water is now out of the seaweed which is soft and pliable and not hard and brittle. The next process is to put it in large baking dishes and finish off the drying in a medium oven for about ten minutes. This prevents mould forming. The karengo is at all times in soft separate pieces and not a hard lumpy mass.

Finally around the fire at night, it is further pulled and broken into little pieces two or three inches long and put away in clean flour bags in a dry cupboard.

Preparation for eating entails but little labour. Merely place a handful in a basin with a lump of butter or dripping - cover it with boiling water. The karengo swells and absorbs the water and makes an enjoyable addition to any meal. The taste is somewhat salty and the flavour reminiscent of oysters.

There is a story told of a chief from the East Coast who visited inland tribes and had dreams of feasting on the fat eels for which the locality was famous. His disappointment at seeing the familiar karengo put before him, can be imagined. In the hosts' opinion however, it was the very best that they could give their guest - hence the offering. Doubtless he got his eels later.

Olga L.G. Adams.