

## CONGRATULATIONS!

The Loder Cup has been awarded this year to Mr. Norman Potts of Opotiki. Mr Potts is a foundation member of this Society and we unite in offering him our heartiest congratulations. Mr. Potts has always given most able and generous help to all collectors, and in his own district has done much to encourage the study of native flora and has done yeoman's work in furthering the planting of native trees. All who are familiar with his enthusiastic and unselfish work, will rejoice in this most fitting recognition of his services to New Zealand Botany.

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## CORRESPONDENCE:

A very keen country member, Mr. Ross McKenzie of Clevedon, has forwarded some observations of interest.

He writes : "Re Nothopanax colensoi. At Horopito, on the south side of Mt. Egmont at about 3000 feet, I noticed a Nothopanax with light green fruit. Being accustomed to our northern N. arboreum with dark purplish fruit from flower to ripeness, I began to investigate. In the same month January 1944, I visited Te Whaiti and went to the top of the Huiarau Range, 3,120 feet. Here again was a great deal of Nothopanax colensoi with the green fruit. Cheeseman says N. Colensoi has "purplish black" fruit, so I was puzzled. "On investigation, Mr. McKenzie found that the Auckland Museum specimens also had green fruit.

Mr. McKenzie's observations should be noted by members, it will be interesting to know whether the green fruit is invariable. N. colensoi is an interesting little mountain tree, closely allied to the common Five Finger (Nothopanax arboreum). It flourishes in high country usually between 1500 and 4000'. Dr. Cockayne stated that on Mt. Egmont both N. colensoi and N. sinclairii grow as perching plants "frequently killing and replacing their hosts." N. colensoi is usually distinguished from the five finger by the fact that its leaflets are not stalked and are from 3 - 5 in number, instead of from 5 - 7. Having given this simple straightforward method of distinguishing the species we would

remind readers for their comfort that N. colensoi has developed the hybridization habit and hybridizes merrily with arboreum and simplex. As regards N. colensoi X arboreum, Cockayne and Allan remark "An important feature of this hybrid group is the transition in length of petiolules (leaf stalks) from the sessile (colensoi) to the well stalked (arboreum) condition".

Mr. McKenzie also has observations to make on Clematis hexa sepala. He points out that the number of sepals is not what one would expect from the name. Strictly speaking hexasepala means six sepalled. Cheeseman gives the number as 6 - 8, but apparently it varies. Mr. McKenzie remarks: "In Te Whaiti in November 1944, I saw a great deal of this (C. hexasepala) and I found it at Miranda in October. Here again I was completely puzzled. Cheeseman says the flower is white --- the flowers were a rich cream in every case." The sepal number was also not what he expected. "Had it not been for the kindly and ready help of Miss Molesworth I should also have remained in the dark in this case too."

The variety in the number of sepals and in colour may be due to the fact that C. hexasepala hybridizes with indivisa, foetida and (possibly) with colensoi. As regards the foetidax hexasepala cross, Cockayne and Allan remark, "But few examples have been observed but these show clearly the results of the combination of the small yellow flowers of foetida with the larger white ones of hexasepala".

Years ago the editor remembers noting a beautiful specimen of C. hexasepala growing in a private garden. It flowered profusely and the flowers were of a beautiful greenish cream, certainly far from being white.

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Another interested country member, Mr. G. Fanand of Kumeu, expresses his desire to understand the use of the word "birch" as applied to our native trees.

We are not surprised that our correspondent finds the name birch puzzling, when used in regard to New Zealand trees. Actually it ought never to have been applied to any plant, since we have no true birches (i.e. members of the genus Betulus) in New Zealand. The name "birch" was originally applied by the early settlers to the