

Mr. Brockie, who is in charge of the alpine section of the Christchurch Botanical Gardens, will be remembered by all those who have been there, for his enthusiasm and for his love of these plants be works amongst.

This is an excellent booklet for overseas friends, and can now be purchased from the Progressive Book Shop and from Brookings (Customs St.) Price 3/6.

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NATIVE PLANT DYEING

by Mrs. A.H. Hutchinson

Members may be pleased to know that this booklet can now be purchased from the Auckland Institute and Museum. Price 2/--.

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NOTES BY THE WAY

A fine specimen of the so called Chatham Island Lily (myosotidium hortensia) was recently observed in the garden of Dr. H. Ranston of Mt. Albert. It measured two feet across, and the individual leaves including stalk, were 14 inches long. For some time it had refused to flower, though grown in sand as directed. "Last year," said the Doctor, "I went to the sea shore and got some good salt sand that the sea had been over. I dug that in round it and it flowered beautifully."

As many people have difficulty in growing Myosotidium, this suggestion is worth noting.

On the Chatham Islands, the only place in the world where it grows naturally, Myosotidium is essentially a shore plant. At one time it grew on sandy shores, and Dr. Cockayne tells us, "formed a belt just above high water mark." It flourished along with our old friends the sand convolvulus (Calystegia soldanella) and the shore buttercup (Ranunculus acaulis). On stony shores, where it is beyond the reach of marauding animals it "forms broad colonies which are a remarkable and beautiful spectacle." It is not surprising, then, that a little salt sand makes it feel at home!

Some time back some of us attended an exciting lecture by the visiting Chinese scientist, Dr. Li, on his work on flower bud formation, in which he discussed the importance of various factors in their influence on the formation of flowers by a plant.

Among other things chemical substances may affect the physiological balance of a plant in such a way as to increase or prevent flower formation. Sometimes a minute quantity of a particular substance makes all the difference. "The little more and how much it is!"

The Chatham Island Lily, which is actually a member of the forget-me-not family, is pleasant enough as regards foliage, but its true glory lies in its flower heads, which are roundish and up to 6 inches in diameter. They consist of many bright blue flowers shading to white at the outside, making, thus, a striking ornament to any garden.

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The latest number of the Transactions (Vol.74) contains an article by one of our foundation members, Miss Lucy Moore, M.Sc., giving the results of her researches into the two agar forming seaweeds, Pterocladia lucida and P.capillacea.

Miss Moore has hunted these species down about the coasts of New Zealand with relentless enthusiasm, until she has accumulated specimens from wherever they may be found. In addition she has obtained specimens from abroad. Of the two, P.capillacea is the smaller. It is extremely varied but "though its forms are legion," it is impossible to sort them into separate types. On the other hand in P.lucida there seems to be a "robust" form and a more finely branched one, which Miss Moore has called the "littoralis" form. Of these the robust type is the one preferred by the agar manufacturers. Forms are found intermediate between the two. P.lucida is exceedingly sensitive to its surroundings and varies accordingly. It usually grows on the open coast, but large beds have been noted about five miles in from the Heads on the southern shores of Hokianga Harbour. In one year 11,000 lb. of dry Pterocladia were sold from this district!

Both species of Pterocladia are common about Auckland - they can indeed both be found on the Takapuna reef. Members who

are "seaweed conscious" would do well to consult Miss Moore's very interesting photographs of the different forms following P.336. These should be of assistance in regard to identifications while at the same time showing that sea plants may be just as puzzling in their forms as land plants.

