

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS

On Wednesday June 7th at 8 o'clock Prof. John H. Davis of the University of Florida, and for this academic year visiting Professor of Botany at Auckland University College, lectured to the members on "Botanical Differences and Similarities of New Zealand and Florida". He gave examples of subtropical plants of Florida and New Zealand to emphasize the larger number of this kind in Florida where more definitely subtropical conditions exist. New Zealand, he showed, has a much wider range of plants from many floristic realms than in Florida, due, he stressed, to the great variations due to mild lowland and cold montane climates of these islands - Other differences were pointed out.

The lecture was illustrated with Ansco color slides, which type of film lends itself to very sensitive rendition of the true colours, particularly the shades of green. Professor Davis plans to be with us until December and he says he "hopes to see most of New Zealand which has some of the most unusual types of vegetation and flora in the world." His chief purpose will be plant ecology and he plans research to study the kauri and other forest types.

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On Saturday, July 15th, an excursion was held to Rangitoto Island. Owing to the inclement weather the attendance was small. The party disembarked from the launch at Rangitoto wharf and proceeded up the summit track to the fireplace and then followed the track around the cone to the Islington Bay Rd. joining the boat in the afternoon at Islington Bay.

The party noted the lack of undergrowth in the tall tea tree around the cone and as the track approached the road fresh deer foot prints were seen. Early flower heads of Senecio kirkii were seen among the bush on the summit track while even in the most unpromising bare larval crannies masses of Pterostylis trullifolia were in bloom. Acianthus sinclairii was also in flower but not in the profusion of the Pterostylis. Near

Islington Bay Cyrtostylis oblonga and Corysanthes triloba were also in flower, but a high-light of the day was when one member found a very large clump of Psilotum triquetrum with many fronds at least 18" high.

(Hatch's names.

Cyrtostylis oblonga = Acianthus reniformis var. oblonga.
Acianthus sinclairii = Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii.
Corysanthes triloba = Corybas trilobus)

Miss Dingley who lead the excursion has kindly forwarded the above record. We should note the remark about deer. It is to be remembered that in some cases the damage done by animals is so complete that it ceases to be noticeable. For instance, in the vicinity of the drinking place at the base of the cone, the undergrowth has entirely disappeared so that people often remark, "How like an English woodland". Yet, a few weeks ago, during a talk to the Devonport Gardening Circle on Rangitoto, when the editor showed photographs of this "English woodland" scene, a member of the audience stated that she remembered it being necessary to cut a way through the dense undergrowth in that area in order to reach the summit. In this connection, we are glad to note that our President, Mr. L.H. Millener, has forwarded to the Wild Life Department, a detailed letter, supported by photographic evidence, dealing with damage to the native plant covering of Rangitoto.

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It is always good to hear from old friends - particularly when they remember the News Letter. Mrs. Allen (nec Molesworth) has always maintained her interest in our doings, and now she has sent us a most valuable account of what is surely one of the most remarkable private gardens in Great Britain. We are greatly indebted to her for her kindness in "taking us with her" to this fascinating spot.

"Dear Miss Crookes,

Recently I have been staying with Major A. Dorrien Smith, whose famous sub-tropical gardens in the Isles of Scilly are I think well-known to New Zealanders because of the great wealth of New Zealand plants they possess. I thought perhaps members might be interested to hear about some of the plants I saw there. Professor Wall (T.N.Z.I. Vol.60 1930) listed the plants of Tresco Abbey gardens, but since then the severe winter of 1946-47 killed and set back a great many treasures.