

long; giant specimens of Marattia in the valleys; Centella asiatica along the stream banks; Piper latifolia, like N.Z. Macropiper excelsum but with shinier, brighter leaves; Clerodendron fragrans, a tree member of the verbena family with a cluster of pinkish flowers and soft grey leaves; Clerodendron fallax known as the "ghost flower" which has black seeds set on long red pedicels; blue Ageratum conyzoides growing like a weed.

The cultivated plants were all interesting - various coconuts (Cocos nucifera), mangoes, tomatoes, kumara. Taro (Colocasia esculenta - 18 varieties) was grown in flat damp fields with waterlilies in the intervening ditches or in smaller patches up the valley streams. Arrowroot was plentiful. Banana plantations were not very numerous as shipping is not available for exporting the fruit.

We visited Department of Agriculture citrus nurseries and the orchards which have been planted out since 1945. As little animal feed is available, horses have to be tethered to prevent their doing damage to the orange trees. Commelina nudiflora is the most succulent herb for food - it has blue flowers.

Very large flowers of introduced plants with beautiful colours and scents grow luxuriantly in the gardens in the villages - Cestrum nocturnum, gerberas, crotons, coleus, pointsettias, gingers, gardenias and frangipanni (Plumeria)."

- Nancy Bamford.

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We are indebted to Mr. Hannken, for kindly writing an account of the Society's trip to Oratia, and also for providing the excursion with competent leadership:

"The first day of Spring 1951 fell on Saturday the 15th of September which was, by a happy and unusual coincidence, the day on which the society visited the University reserve at Kelly's Rd. Oratia.

The problem of sorting out Olea lanceolata and Mida salicifolia proved most entertaining. Both occur abundantly and under the guidance of Mr. G. Atkinson ("O" for "Olea", "O" for "opposite") we learnt the main points of difference. The rather thick glossy leaf of Olea has a prominent light-coloured midrib on the upper surface, while the Mida leaf, thinner and duller, is markedly net-veined on the underside. In addition,

the bark of Mida is very rough and file-like. Despite this expert tuition most of us were still baffled in a few cases.

The Mida leaf varies greatly in shape, a fact which led Cunningham in 1838 to establish three species, M. salicifolia, M. eucalyptoides and M. myrtifolia. Hooker, 1853, united all three in Santalum cunninghamii. Cheeseman follows this specific name but puts the plant in the genus Fusanus. Later workers have returned it to Mida and under the rules of priority the specific name used is one of the original ones - salicifolia.

Two other plants for which this area is famed are Dacrydium kirkii and D. colensoi. The former is remarkably abundant in all stages, from broad-leaved juveniles to large adult trees which seem always to retain some juvenile foliage on the lower branches. D. colensoi of which we found only two or three trees, all mature, bore no juvenile leaves and had a much denser head than D. kirkii.

The area includes regenerating Podocarp forest; swamp forest with good specimens of Eugenia maire, Laurelia novae-zelandiae (Pukatea) and Carpodetus serratus (Putuputuweta); and, on the higher ground, mature Kauri forest. Although relatively small in extent the Kauri ridge demonstrates most of the plants usually associated with the King of the northern forests. Shrubby forms are Corokia buddleoides, Senecio kirkii (here on the ground, although frequently an epiphyte on the Kauri itself), Leucopogon fasciculatus (Mingimingi), Suttonia salicina (Toro), while on the ground grow Astelia trinerva (Kauri grass), the miniature tree-fern, Blechnum fraseri, Schizaea dichotoma (Kauri fern), Schoenus tendo and Lycopodium densum.

Also found on this ridge, growing at an unusually low altitude, are small specimens of Ixerba brexioides, one of our most beautiful flowering trees.

A senior member of the society, Mr. Stacey, recalled that this area was part of a property belonging to his grandfather and Mr. Stacey himself knew the district over seventy years ago when much of the now young forest was pastureland."

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We were fortunate during October in having with us Mr. J. Carnahan, a member who now holds a lectureship at Massey College. On Wednesday Oct. 3rd at eight o'clock he lectured to us on