

most disappointing that the reduced bus and tram services on the weekend kept our attendance to only 4,500.

To all those who helped in other ways - with the loan of equipment, with the collection of material from the railway, with material for display, with funds for prizes, with gifts of vases, with serving of refreshments and with cleaning up after the Show, I must also express my sincere thanks.

Robert Cooper.

BOTANICAL AT HOME.

On Wednesday, June 1st., instead of the usual lecture we had four short papers by members each containing original observations and records.

Miss Dingley gave an account of some of the commoner fungi to be found locally, while Dr. Hastings described the ferns she had collected in the immediate vicinity of Orewa. Though of use and value to our members, these papers do not lend themselves to reproduction in the News Letter.

Mr. Farnell gave us an account of some of his hybridization work with native plants and we hope to publish an account of this later.

Mrs. Hynes' account of Australina pusilla is given below. It will be seen that Mrs. Hynes' records increase the plants' altitudinal range by 1500 feet. An observant eye and methodical recording can add much to our understanding of a plant. As the vegetation of our country is changing rapidly we hope that members will, like Mrs. Hynes, keep a sharp look out for anything, however small, that adds to our knowledge of our plant covering.

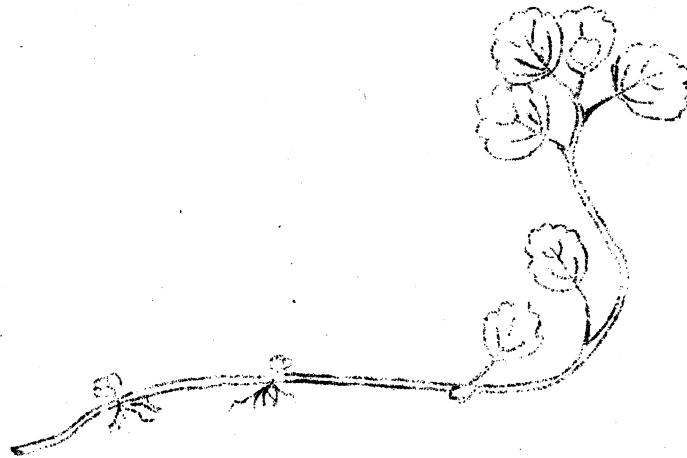
AUSTRALINA PUSILLA Gaud.

Part of my journeyings in the Urewera Country at Christmas, 1954 took me down the Whakatane River to the junction of the Kakawahine, and this stream, which has its source in the Huiarau Range, was followed up to meet the Maungapohatu Track, a few miles from Rua's Stronghold.

For those who like stream wading this can be a delightful trip at that time of year. High mountains close in the lower end of the stream to form a gorge and it was in this part that I saw for the first time a low, lax creeping plant with small dark crenate leaves. It was most abundant and usually growing in association with Hydrocotyle dissecta. It appeared to belong to the Urticaceae (nettle) family and when the first halt was called I was able to use the lens to find the small, insignificant flowers in the axils of the leaves, a feature so typical of this group.

This plant proved to be Australina pusilla. Later on I was to see it just as abundant in other deep, dark valleys on the northern side of the Huiarau Range but I did not find it around Waikaremoana. It evidently

prefers a very moist and shady situation but not too high an altitude for it stops abruptly on the Maunga pohatu Track at about 2,500 ft. Regarding its distribution Cheeseman's Manual says, 'Dark, shaded woods from Hokianga Harbour and Bay of Islands to Foveaux Strait but often local.' The Auckland Museum herbarium has specimens from two localities only: Paparata Valley and Ruatahuna. It would be interesting to hear of other localities where this plant has been found.



BETHELL'S SWAMP.

We had a beautiful sunshiny day for our trip to Bethells. As we were concerned with the swamp vegetation at the mouth of the Waitakere River, we made our picnic ground by the cart-shed and then made our way back along the river to the swamp. At the erstwhile swing bridge (which is now marked only by the posts) we found much of interest within a very small area. First reaching below the surface we soon retrieved the bladderwort (Utricularia novae-zealandiae) easily recognisable by the little transparent bladders about the size of a small pea growing down the stem. Some of them were dark showing this insectivorous plant was busy at its insect-devouring work. Floating on the surface were seen the little oblong leaves of the manihi (Potamogeton cheesemani). It was flowering and its small stiff spikes were in quantity. The little flowers are insignificant but interesting under the lens in that their stamens produce small petal-like outgrowths. Also present was the dock-leaved Potamogeton (P. polygonifolia). The much larger leaves of the oval-leaved *Ottelia (O. ovalifolia) were noted and one or two of its charming white flowers were seen just opening. Also seen but not flowering was the yellow flowered *Primrose Willow (Jussiaea diffusa) whose rather fleshy stems creep or float according to circumstances. There was also an abundance of the water milfoil (Myriophyllum elatinoides) with its thread-like leaves below the surface and its broader ones above, and minute flowers along its stem. Also in flower was the little water buttercup (Ranunculus rivularis).