

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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On Saturday, July 20th, our "outing" took the form of an indoor excursion devoted to a consideration of keys.

First, keys and their importance for identification were discussed by Miss Crookes and Dr. Rattenbury, then members constructed for themselves a simple key for the native species of Nothofagus, based upon their leaf characters.

Following the construction of the Nothofagus key, members repaired to the Junior Lab., where after afternoon tea - highlighted by Mrs. Hynes' sponge cake and Mrs. Coyle's scones, - those interested, provided with simple keys and some assistance from Miss Crookes and Dr. Rattenbury, decided to what families specimens on exhibition belonged. Unfortunately the lack of suitable flowers available in July, compelled in some cases the use of inconveniently small specimens.

Even so, however, a number of members expressed their interest to the two organisers.

Identification may be a very difficult business and only the specialist can aspire to be an expert taxonomist. Nevertheless, without elaborate study it is possible for lay members to gain information that will enable them to make a great many identifications and even an incorrect identification may teach one at least something about a plant.

One of the difficulties about identification from the point of view of the non-specialist is the matter of technical terms. In order to assist members in this respect, Miss Crookes and Dr. Rattenbury are at work on a simple illustrated glossary of botanical terms, to be published as a small inexpensive pamphlet. It is hoped that this little work may be completed in time for the summer holidays. Unfortunately various obstacles have held up the work so far, but we will do our best.