

Our third botanical worry is Paratrophis microphylla, the milk tree or cow tree as it is sometimes called. This little tree has a very simple spotting point, one not surprising in a member of the Moraceae, or fig family. That fascinating group is characterised by the presence of milky juice - indeed some of its members provide us with rubber. Our tree possesses this milky juice hence its popular name. If you make an incision in the stem, the milky fluid will gradually ooze out. But give it time. The old farmer who first introduced me to turepo did not get an immediate response to his cut and remarked disgustedly "Must have gone dry".

As mentioned before there are quite a number more of divaricating shrubs, but these three descriptions should at least smooth the path for our next few excursions.

PLANTS UNUSUAL AND BEAUTIFUL

Mrs. Wood has kindly brought to our notice records that should be of interest to all members, who will, one hopes, keep on the alert for further ones.

The Yellow Rata.

While in Rotorua at Anzac week end we were driving along the shores of Lake Rotoiti and were admiring the orange-red creeping rata which occurred frequently along the edge of the cliff. Suddenly I saw some which was quite different for the flowers were a brilliant canary yellow. Thanks to an agile husband, specimens were obtained and photographed. On consulting Cheeseman's Manual I found that this plant is an "accidental sport" of Metrosideros florida. Sm. the name of which is now altered to M. scandens. (Forst) Druce. W. Colenso called it M. aurata but it is not now recognised as a separate species. The yellow-flowered form is fairly rare, but has occasionally been reported from Auckland to Collingwood. Seeds gathered from the L. Rotoiti plant will be propagated but there is no guarantee that they will produce plants with yellow flowers, however some experiments are to be made by grafting young shoots on to plants of the usual red-flowered variety, and an attempt will be made to grow it from cuttings.

K. Wood.

(I have just heard of a yellow rata reported from the King Country. I hope to have details available for the next News Letter.

Ed.)

Recently Mr. Sherwood of Wellington found in the vicinity of Gore some small plants with blue flowers. These he pressed and posted to Mrs. W. Mays who consulted me for identification. These proved to be specimens of Claytonia australasica, a plant that is more common in

Alpine areas but descends to sea level in Otago and Stewart Island. It is one of our two members of the Portulacaceae. Traces of the blue colouring still showed in the pressed specimens and they must have looked very beautiful when fresh. I have found this plant several times and the flowers have always been white, and I understand that pink flowers occur also. Has any other member seen the blue-flowered variety?

K. Wood.

(Cheeseman comments that this is a very variable little plant, the leaves, for instance, varying from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. It is not seen in the North Island north of Mt. Egmont and Ruapehu, but it is hoped that members faring afield to places where it may be found will acquaint themselves with our only native Claytonia so that they will not miss the form Mrs. Wood describes. Ed.)

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Some of our members will remember a former secretary of the Society, Miss Pauline Buddle, daughter of Mrs. Basil Buddle, who was for a number of years our treasurer. Miss Buddle eventually went to Greece, where she was engaged in bacteriological work for U.N.R.A. Some years ago she married a Greek doctor, Dr. Haritonidis, and is now living in Athens. On her last visit to Auckland, when I had the pleasure of meeting her, she told of her delight in the Grecian wild flowers, and how she wished that her very busy life gave her a little more time for studying the native flora. Now Mrs. Haritonidis has been joined by an Englishwoman, interested in things botanical who has also settled in Greece. It is with great interest that we learn that they are starting a small Botanical Society in Athens. We offer them our very best wishes, and we shall be glad indeed to hear news of their activities and look forward to receiving a copy of their first News Letter - if they publish one.

We are interested to hear that Betty Allen (née Molesworth) is back again in Malaya after extensive wanderings in Africa and elsewhere. In addition to her two papers on Malayan ferns, Mrs. Allen has also published a small popular book on common Malayan plants which has been very well received. We think Mrs. Allen is much to be congratulated that amidst her many travels, often living in surroundings fraught with danger, she can still maintain the flame of her enthusiasm, and continue to publish work of such value to nature lovers.