

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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As the Society is organising a week-end trip to Ohakune during January (Friday 23rd to Monday 26th) members may be glad to learn of some new acquaintances they may make along the Ohakune track.

Ferns.

Leptopteris superba: the Prince of Wales Feather. Look for hybrids between this and L.hymenophylloides, which is also present - they are not common but there is always a chance.

Blechnum vulcanicum: Found on cuttings, rock faces, etc. Rather like a small edition of B.procerum, but the sterile frond not narrowed below and the lowest pair of pinnae deflexed.

Blechnum patersoni: A very handsome dark green fern, on cliffs, banks, hillsides, etc. Note way pinnae join rachis.

Blechnum penna-marina: A small fern. Growing on ground often in open or swampy places. Fertile frond has extremely long stipe.

Asplenium richardi: Fronds tufted, three to nine inches (without the stipe). Small forms rather resemble A.colensoi and larger erect forms of A.flaccidum.

Apteropteris malingii: Usually growing on Librocedrus bidwillii. Slate green above, reddish below. Ultimate frond segments cylindrical.

Conifers.

Libocedrus bidwillii: Bidwill's cedar, pahautea. If you confuse this with the kawaka (L.plumosa) familiar round Auckland, look at the brachlets, those of pahautea four-angled (tetragonous) and those of kawaka more or less compressed.

Conifers Continued.

Dacrydium biforme: Yellow Pine, Tarwood. Not more than 40 feet, but in alpine regions may dwindle to a few feet. Like our D.kirkii has large $\frac{3}{4}$ inch) juvenile leaves and small scale like mature ones.

Dacrydium bidwillii: Rather like the former species but much smaller, an erect or prostrate shrub, from 2' to 10' high.

Dacrydium laxifolium: The famous "Pigmy Pine", probably the smallest known "pine". Not more than 2 feet high, a small prostrate shrub. "Fruiting specimens can often be seen barely 3 inches in diameter".

Dicotyledons.

Three beeches will be encountered. Nothofagus cliffortioides, N.fusca and N.menziesii.

N.cliffortioides: Mountain Beech. This species can be distinguished at once by its small leaves with entire margins.

N.fusca: Red Beech. Leaves up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, rather thin and sharply toothed.

N.menziesii: Silver Beech. tawai. Leaves small, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, rather leathery, margins doubly crenate.

Elythranthe tetrapetala: In the beech forest members should have a chance of encountering this beautiful red-flowered mistletoe. This flourishes on Nothofagus spp. and flowers from November to January.

Pseudowintera axillaris. Horopito. Note coloured foliage.

Aristotelia fructicosa. Not at all like our wineberry (Aristotelia racemosa). A much branched shrub 3-8 feet high. Described by Cheeseman as "one of the most variable plants in New Zealand". Its identification should give rise to friendly argument.

The same applies to the five Coprosma spp. to be found.

Coprosma foetidissima. Hupiro. Identifiable by the characteristic smell of the flushed leaves. These are oblong and up to two inches long. Flowers large (corolla up to $\frac{2}{3}$ inches long) and terminal. Drupe pale orange.

C.pseudocuneata. Stipules ovate, large and united, margins with long white hairs, drupe red. Oliver remarks "This species exists in a multitude of forms, many of which may be correlated with differences in habitat." Members will be able to note differences between typical forest type and the small leaved scrub form.

C.rotundifolia. Like our local C.areolata, this species has noticeably net-veined leaves, with veins visible from both sides of the leaf. Drupe red.

C.colensoi. Leaves $\frac{1}{3}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long, rather broad and yellowish-green. The male and female flowers grow singly on curved peduncles. Drupe red.

C. parviflora. Leaves smallish, $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " long, net-veined. Oliver says the species exists in two distinct forms, characterised by the colour of the drupes, these being either white and translucent or dark purple. Hybrids may have drupes of various shades or pink. Oliver found pale pink drupes at Waimarino.

Hybridism is rife among species of Coprosma. I would strongly advise students interested in this and other matters of Coprosma importance to study Oliver's excellent monograph, The Genus Coprosma (Bishop Museum Bulletins No. 132). If a copy could be brought to the excursion, so much the better.

Pimelia buxifolia. This "box-leaved" daphne has branches densely clothed with coarse greyish hairs. Flowers in dense heads, white or pink. May be in flower.

Hebe buxifolia another "box-leaved" shrub with white flowers, 1 to 3 feet high. Cheeseman gives as "spotting points", "the stout erect rigid habit, dark green closely imbricated keeled leaves..... and the usually numerous short spikes massed into a compact terminal inflorescence". Should be in flower.

Cyathodes empetrifolia. Unlike our local mingi mingi this is a small spreading often prostrate shrub. Should be in flower.

Parsonia capsularis is like a smaller and more slender edition of our local Parsonia heterophylla. It has three varieties, but the two colourful ones are from Bank's Peninsula and the Great Barrier and the vicinity of Whangarei. Should be in flower.

Olearia arborescens. A much branched shrub with large rounded much-branched corymbs, which should be visible in January. Leaves are from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. For the rest Cheeseman tells us it is the most variable species in the genus (which includes 42 species). He thinks the "thin white and peculiarly satiny tomentum on the under surface of the leaves" is a good spotting point. Should be in flower.

Celmisia incana. This beautiful celmisia has heads up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches across, and its broad leaves are clothed above and below with snow white tomentum. Should be in flower.

Monocotyledons.

Libertia pulchella. This dainty little Libertia, very rare about Auckland should be in flower.

Astelia cockaynei. Cockayne's Astelia. Masses of silky hairs on the leaves give the foliage a greyish appearance. Its panicles of greenish flowers should be in bloom. The berry is reddish-orange.

Luzuriaga marginata. Puwatawata. Small plant creeping at base, up to twelve inches long, white flower $\frac{3}{4}$ " across. In flower.

Gastrodia minor. A rather dingy little orchid that you will have to look for carefully. Should be in flower.

Our thanks to Mr. Farnell, who led the excursion to Woodcocks for a most interesting account of a very pleasant trip.

Recently some 38 optimistic members set out on a botanising and sight-seeing trip in the lower North and they were not disappointed. First stop was to see "Simpson's" Kauri tree near Warkworth. Of course, it is rather puny compared with the Waipoua forest giants, but nevertheless well worth seeing. The tape gave it a girth of 31 feet some 6 feet above ground level and its magnificent head approx. 120 feet in diameter N. to S. Mr. A.D. Mead, who we were very pleased to see in the party and who of course really knows his Kauri trees, remarked on the unusual or almost unique amount of taper in the lower 6 or 8 feet of the barrel. Mr. Farnell our leader, gave us an interesting account of the Rev. Robt. McKinney who first saved this tree and of the nearby once famous Morrison's orchard and nursery at Red Bluff; but probably what was most interesting, he showed us the minute female flowers of the Miro, that seemingly none of the party had ever seen before. Strangely, as members were gathering and examining these specimens, a native pigeon flew by, as if to protest at the loss of a future meal.

With some wet and muddy boots we journeyed on to Woodcocks, where a descendent of the original settler of that name met us to escort the party through his bush. This is a really amazing patch of regeneration and rather difficult to understand, entirely different from what we find in our Waitakeres - age 50-100 years? No sign whatever of an older generation, Rimu outstandingly dominant tree, Kauri only three seen, Kauri grass abundant, Kawaka most plentiful and remarkably dominant as seedlings on forest floor of moss, overhead canopy rather heavy owing to density of tree population, floor rather sparsely covered and very notable scarcity of undergrowth. Our leader explained these peculiar characteristics as the result of damage done by cattle some years ago, from which the area is now recovering.

Another very noteworthy find here, such as we had not seen before was Thesipteris tannensis growing in almost unbelievable profusion on several Cyathea dealbata ferns, while adjacent similar ferns were entirely destitute of this queer ancient plant. Our sojourn here was much too short, as usual one would have loved to have had double the time to spend in such an interesting area.

Before long the bus was climbing the East-West divide with the railway line and tunnel entrance looking ridiculously small away in the valley below. Thence we followed the Araparera Stream to the Kaipara Harbour immediately South of Glorit, stopping on the way to examine a most ancient dilapidated Turepo (Paratrophis microphylla) probably larger and older than any that members had previously seen. As usual its inflorescences were diseased and showed those peculiar