

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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The Society had a profitable and strenuous week-end during the 26th and 27th November. Our thanks to Muriel Fisher for her satisfying account of the highlights of the trip.

MAUNGATAUTARI WEEK END

The long-looked forward-to week-end came at last and a bus load of would-be Botanists, plus two car loads set off at 8.30 a.m. on the Saturday.

To many of us the back country behind Ngaruawahia was quite an eye-opener and we saw some fine patches of bush. Before lunching at Waingarō Springs, some of the crowd had a swim in the mineral baths. Although I did not actually see it myself, I believe Arthyrium australe was seen growing on the bank there.

After lunch we travelled over a very hilly, dusty road until we reached the Scenic Reserve in which is to be seen the beautiful Bridal Veil Falls. Here we were met by the Hamilton members of the Society and other friends.

One could not fail to be impressed by the magnificent bush scenery in this area. Along the path to the falls, Hydrocotyle moschata was found - also, Geranium molle, Parsonia capsularis - just off the track was Marattia salicina. Nearer the falls, the little native Oxalis lactea, in company with the tiny daisy, Lagenophora pumila were found in evidence. The bush itself consisted of some real forest giants - Vitex lucens, Metrosideros robusta, Laurelia novae-zelandiae, both members of the Beilschmiedia Family and many

others. Last but not least, the Ixerba brexioides was in full bloom and was much admired. Tree ferns were everywhere to be seen.

To me the whole picture could be summed up in two lines of Domett's poem, "The Bush".

"Forests, and I love them greatly,
Moss-encrusted, ancient, stately."

We farewelled our Hamilton and Ngaruawahia friends and set off for Cambridge where we spent the night.

Sunday was a gloriously fine day and we all set off full of enthusiasm to climb to at least the first look-out on Mt. Maungatautiri. Permission was obtained from the farmer and off over the grassy paddocks we went until we reached the bush which had the usual Scenic Reserve Notices prominently displayed. We were much impressed again by the tremendously big Titokis, Tawas and Tarairis. It was so peaceful walking along the track through the bush, the silence broken now and again by the melodious notes of the tuis.

We had a little trouble to pick up the track through the bracken but eventually did so. On the outskirts of the bracken there was masses of Blechnum discolor. I also remember our leader pointing out Tupeia antarctica to us. Clematis hexasepala was twining round the high bracken and was very plentiful.

Towards the first look-out which I should imagine would be upwards of a thousand feet, we found Blechnum patersonii, Lindsaea trichomanoides, Cardiomanes reniforme, Hypolepis rugosula and the more common Aspleniums. At this point, too, we noticed Olea lanceolata and Mida salicifolia.

The last 100 feet or so was terrifically steep, but we were well rewarded when we finally reached the look-out. The view was wonderful but we soon settled down to eat our lunch on the big rocky outcrop. When we had 'refueled' we could once again take an interest in the plants around us - Gaultheria antipoda, Celmisia gracilentia and Quintinia serrata.

Mr. Caldwell, one of our Hamilton members had come up with two young people and when they announced that they were going on up to the summit, adding the vegetation was even more interesting higher up, the writer could not resist the temptation to go with them. Eventually four of us got permission from the Leader to go on up - and what a distance it was!

Nothopanax edgerleyii was everywhere to be seen and we found a variegated Senecio kirkii. (Incidentally we took a cutting which we planted in the bush house and it has rooted.) It was a thrill to find Microsorium novae-zelandiae. Also there was plenty of Drimys axillaris, but unfortunately time did not permit us to do any serious botanising although it was interesting to note that Quintinia serrata was growing quite scrub-like on the summit.

I feel I cannot conclude without making some reference to the fun and games we had getting down dear old Mt. Maungatautiri. In my

little article I have named the plants I remember seeing and I am indebted to Mr. Warren for the names of the ferns. There is however, one plant I have not mentioned.

To quote Laing and Blackwell, "This particular plant is one of the most curious plants of the lily tribe. This strangling creeper forms one of the chief obstacles in getting through the bush and occasionally renders progress impossible. The brown and black ropes hang and twist everywhere, binding one tree to another and forming loops and nooses above and below."

Those who went will know what I mean.

Good-bye.

Muriel Fisher.

The summer camp held on Ruapehu from Saturday, 21st January to 27th January appears to have been a distinctly rewarding one and it is obvious that members made the most of their time. Our thanks to Ruth Coyle for a description of what must have been a delightful and in some instances a diverting trip.

SUMMER CAMP - RUAPEHU

The summer camp this year was spent at Ruapehu. We were very lucky to have the Rangatira Ski Club Hut, which has the reputation of being the best hut on the mountain. This is not hard to believe with its hot showers, central heating, modern electric stoves, radiogram and even carpets on the floor!

We arrived by bus on Saturday, 21st January in a torrent of rain and thunderstorms all around. By the time we had managed to unpack the necessary foodstuffs for our tea and struggled up the slope in the teeth of the gale, the rain suddenly stopped and allowed us to get our bedding and packs up dry.

The next day was showery but this did not prevent us from taking our lunch and visiting the 'Silica' springs. This being our first day out among the alps, each plant was a thrill to find. Euphrasia cuneata var. tricolor, Hebe hookeriana, H. catarractae, H. tetragona were all in flower. Dacrydium bidwillii, D. laxifolium Pentachondra pumila, Epacris alpina, Cyathodes empetrifolia, Coprosma repens, Olearia nummularifolia and Myrsine nummularia with its blue berries were also found on the slopes. The small orchid Prasophyllum colensoi was flowering and Anisotome aromatica appeared