

A. Carnichaelia aligera with leaves 1cm broad; Dracophyllum latifolium; miro, Podocarpus ferrugineus; putaputaweta, Carpodetus scriatus; Coprosma lucida, australis, arborea and rhannoides; Pittosporum cornifolium; tanekaha, Phyllocladus trichomanoides; nikau, Rhopalostylis sapida quite plentiful; a few small kauri, Agathis australis; native honeysuckle, Knightia excelsa; tawa, Bellschmidia tawa; the ubiquitous hangahange, Geniostoma ligustrifolium; also mangemange Lygodium articulatum, climbing prettily alongside the track. After lunch, which we had on the track under an overhanging rock, the party went a hundred yards or so further up to a weird creepy looking semi cave under a huge vertical cliff. The roots of a large pukatea, Laurelia novae zelandiae, wandered or should I say undulated through a slimy pool, looking like a number of sea serpents; or perhaps the Maori taniwha - who knows? A very large liverwort covered the stones, and on the overhanging cliff we could see Blechnum filiforme with numerous fertile fronds from which the fern gets its second name. For half an hour or so we wandered here and there, some in the bush and some on the banks of the stream. One of our junior members working upstream reported the remains of a log jam left behind by the bushmen. Eleven orchid species were encountered on the journey, none worth remarking, although Mrs. Wood did say she had not previously recorded Thelymitra aemula from the area.

Wandering slowly back we caught our bus at 3pm and drove to Mr. and Mrs. Woods place at Huia where we were given a very welcome cup of tea and strolled round their excellent garden, marvelling at what these two enthusiasts had created out of nothing. A list of their plant possessions would fill a small book and has to be seen to be believed. After a vote of thanks by our President Mr. Lediard, which was carried by acclamation, we left Huia at 4pm.

IN PRAISE OF WESLEY SPRAGG - - - E. D. H.

Mr. Butlers disappointment with the Wesley Spragg reserve prompts me to write a few words in its praise. The top of the ridge is a veritable oasis of gum scrub flora - in a coastal setting. The short windswept manuka barely prevents erosion and bare clay patches are frequent. The scrub includes Dracophyllum sinclairii, Persoonia toru, Hakea acicularis, Pomaderris kumeraho and Phormium colensoi. The ground cover reminds me of the Albany Hills and includes Haloragis procumbens, Schizaea fistulosa, Lindsaea linearis, Gleichenia circinata, Pterostylis barbata, Prasophyllum pumilum, Thelymitra carnea imberbis and aristata, Pomaderris phyllifolia, Pinckea prostrata, Cyathodes fraseri, Wahlenbergia gracilis, Gahnia gahniiformis, Gaultheria antipoda, Cordyline pumilio and Drosera auriculata.

The coastal slopes are fairly normal kauri-pohutukawa association, with salt-marsh and sea-cliff for variety. I record 20 species of orchids from the area and the white flowered poroporo, Solanum aviculare var albiflorum. I notice this year in particular that the pohutukawas have been badly chewed, presumably by opossums.

On 5 January 1964, by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. J. Beever and their family, I was able to have a look at the mixed taraire forest at Glorit, the type locality for Yoania australis. Over 50 plants had been located and staked some days previously by Ross and Mr. Beever, and this preliminary work was most helpful. The Yoania seems to prefer open debris-covered slopes beneath the shade of the larger trees, not necessarily taraire, although the taraire was in no case out of root-reach. They were well scattered, singly or in groups of 2-3, the flower stems varying from 3cm high with a single flower, to 21cm with 7 flowers. One stem had a branch arising from the axil of one of the leaves, and this branch carried flowers of its own. Some plants were growing in leaf mould only, but most in a sandy clayey loam and always entangled in a network of living tree-roots. Four excavations I made, succeeded only in breaking the extremely brittle rhizome, but Mr. Beever subsequently managed to isolate a plant with 4 flower stems connected, and a total of 26 meristems on the rhizome. No branch is very long, and each seems to be heading in a different direction. The rhizome of a plant 20cm high with 5 flowers, occupied an area some 6cm square and 2cm deep. Into this was packed an aggregate of 20cm of branching rhizome with 16 meristems. The development and maturation of the seed capsule is unusually rapid - 12-18 days from the fertilisation of the flower to the dispersal of the ripe seed. One plant with 7 flowers, the uppermost open and still unpollinated, the second uppermost open but with pollen on the stigma, had its lowest flower with the seed-capsule dehiscent and empty and all the seed dispersed. The fact that the bulk of the plants examined were well embedded in loam disposes of any doubt that they might not survive the summer without forming tubers. The rhizome is in fact perennial and no tubers are formed. The 1962 material, from which the species was described has survived the twelvemonth in cultivation.

Corybas cryptanthus (as far as I could judge from the seeding peduncle) proved to be plentiful in the area also, favouring the same conditions as Yoania and often in close association. Ten plants were examined and in most the tiny leaf had developed some chlorophyll, although this is rarely present at flowering time. All too were bearing tubers.

Another unexpected discovery was a colony of Gastrodia sesamoides with 3 flowering stems, growing only 12cm from a buttress root of a large kahikatea, in an open grassy clearing on the edge of the stream. The distinctive buff-white flowers with the long column, are reversed like those of Prasophyllum, the labellum being uppermost.

Other orchids in the area were- Acianthus fornicatus var sinclairii, Corybas oblongus and trilobus, Merina mucronata (on nikau and puriri), Microtis unifolia, Pterostylis banksii, and Sarcophilus adversus (on kahikatea).

Many of us have been interested in the distribution of the variety of Blechnum capense known as the Green Bay form. This differs from the common type in that its pinnae are not narrowed down at the base. It has been found at several places on the cliffs of the Manukau Harbour and at Bethels Beach. A few years ago I found plants at Kauri Point near Katikati, and Mr. Warren reported that locally gathered specimens were brought in to the New Plymouth native flower show last year. (See Bot.Soc.News Letter November 1963 - p4. two localities on the coast near Hawera.) About last October I was showing Miss Crookes round our section at Huia when she discovered a self sown plant growing from beneath the tank stand !

Now I can add some further records to this, for while in Gisborne during the holidays we drove 30 miles inland to Rere Falls, and there I found it again. Later, nearer Gisborne, we visited a small bush reserve called Waihirere Domain and there, growing all along a little stream, were fine large specimens of Blechnum capense, all of the Green Bay form. We travelled from Gisborne to Te Araroa on the East Cape and there found that the Awatere River had been newly bridged. This allowed us to cross by car and drive a few miles along the road towards the East Cape lighthouse. Several times we stopped, and every plant of B. capense that I examined beside the road was of the Green Bay Form. Which shows that this form is much more widely distributed than we realised. Perhaps it extends to the South Island and further reports would be of interest.

It is with regret that I learn of the recent death of Mr. M.C.Gudex of Hamilton. A country member of many years standing, his enthusiasm and versatility never ceased to amaze me. I only met him once, but we corresponded regularly for over eleven years and became firm friends on paper. A retired schoolteacher, he was not only a member of our Society; but of Forest and Bird, the Institute of Horticulture and the Royal Society of N. Z. An amateur botanist, geologist, horticulturist and photographer, his favourite activity was initiating young people into the wonders and beauties of nature. As a teacher he had few equals. He published fifteen papers in Transactions, mainly on forest remnants in the Waikato, and was an interesting speaker, giving many lectures to groups, such as ours, keen on mountain, mire and forest and all that lived therein. A man who himself lived life to the full and encouraged others to do the same. E. D. H.