

TING 6 May 1964

A talk by Mr. John Seabrook on street-tree planting, and conservation and afforestation in general, was followed by three fascinating films arranged and commented on by Dr. Rattenbury.

The first showed the life history of a fern, the English bracken, through all its stages from the prothallus to the sporophyte. Microscopic shots showed unexpected and relatively intense activity within the cells, and detailed the opening and dispersing mechanism of the sporangia to perfection. Also unexpected, to me at any rate, was the bowing, bending and waving of the opening fronds. I had read all this in the books and knew it in theory, but to see it in action put a slightly different complexion on the matter and brought home to me, and probably to others, the basic animal nature of the seemingly stolid plant world, or which is probably more accurate, the basic vegetable nature of the animal kingdom. Excellent pictures of the royal fern, Osmunda regalis, rang a clear bell. It is only a couple of weeks since I squelched ankle deep in the swamps at Heremere, searching fruitlessly for Spiranthes, and brushing Osmunda aside with a careless hand. I little thought to see it so soon on the screen.

This was followed by a coloured film of Kew Gardens - and another, along the lines of the first, dealing with pollination in the flowering plants. These were much less active than the ferns, and the bees and birds and the wind did much of the work that the ferns did for themselves. A thoroughly enjoyable evening. If Dr. Rattenbury has any more of these films, I for one will welcome them. E.D.H.

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A NOTE ON SENECIO KIRKII - - - A.D. Head

Senecio kirkii ( Kirk's daisy ) has been flowering unusually well this past autumn, and in particular its variety angustior has put on a very good show on the road margins in the higher portions of the Waitakere Ranges. The variety, first named in the new Allan, differs from the normal species almost entirely in the shape of the leaves. From two small trees growing almost side by side in Mr. Irwin's section, Turanga Road, a typical leaf of S. kirkii was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and 1 inch wide, the broadest place being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the tip. The leaf of the variety angustior was 4 inches long and  $\frac{3}{4}$  and inch wide, symmetrical in outline. These shapes would be described as obovate and lanceolate respectively. All plants of the variety seen were terrestrial; the normal type is frequently epiphytic. Flowering extended from March to May.