

MISCELLANY - - -

Mr. Warren records Pittosporum cornifolium growing on a nikau in Sharps Bush - an uncommon combination.

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This time last year Mr. Butler found a seedling Acianthus with a serrated leaf, on the Kauri Grove Track near Piha. I went to have a look at it a couple of weeks back (in the middle of a thunderstorm). The colony is quite large, spreading on both sides of the track, and the leaves of all the plants, both juvenile and adult, are regularly serrated. The flower however is perfectly normal Acianthus fornicatus var sinclairii. I doubt if the plants could spread vegetatively across the track and suppose therefore that the serrated leaves are an inherited seedborne characteristic. It will be interesting to watch the colony into the future and see if it spreads any further down the valley.

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Additions to the flora of Laingholm -
Asplenium lamprophyllum - a colony some 10 feet square in a boggy patch of rather heavily shaded puriri forest.
Meliccytus micranthus - half a dozen plants beneath a stand of rimu - the seed possibly carried by birds ?

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Opossums in the garden of Hatch - When we first came to Laingholm in 1925 we were not unduly worried by opossums, but by the mid - 30's, in order to keep a garden, we were having to trap them systematically. We tried strychnine and a .22 rifle with indifferent success, and finally settled for box traps made from 26g P.G. iron. The captives were drowned in the fish pond (immersing trap and all), and the remains interred in the garden. For the last 4 years we have been keeping records -

1960-61	- 26	these were made up of -
1961-62	- 46	80 males
1962-63	- 44	50 females
1963-64	- 28	14 young in the pouch
Total	<u>144</u>	<u>144</u>

This is not a bad haul for a 3/4 acre section. For a large animal they are remarkably gentle. They will eat a peach and leave the stone hanging on the tree, or skin a Meyer lemon and leave the naked fruit still on the branch. They will eat anything green that is at all succulent - rose shoots, leaf buds, cabbage heart, silver beet - and chuckle gleefully while they do it. I have seen them strip the bark from a young Neopanax arboreum and trim the growing points out of a Hebe. They appear to be passionately fond of weeping willow shoots and I suspect that they also go for pohutukawa. All in all an interesting addition to the suburban garden. EDH.