

Flowers in Greece. An outline of the Flora - by A.J.Huxley
M.A. The Royal Horticultural Society, Vincent Square, London S.W.1.
(English price 3/6). The flora of Greece includes 6000 species -
probably more. The booklet deals with the main vegetation groups
and includes sections on the more important families such as
lily, iris, arum, orchid and amaryllis. There is information
about the wild cyclamens and we are told something about the
trees and shrubs. Like New Zealand, Greece suffers from erosion
and has learnt only too much about the depredations of goats.
Geography, soil and climate are discussed, and brief accounts
are given of seashore, alpine and parasitic plants, and those
that adorn stony places and rocky walls. The illustrations are
a feature of this admirable little work and no less than 23
species are shown in full colour. The colour reproduction is
very fine indeed. The writing is popular without being superficial,
and the amount of information that is crammed into fortyfour
pages is really quite astonishing. M.C.

LABOUR DAY WEEKEND AT TAUMARUNUI - - - F.M. Warren

At a few minutes after 4pm on Friday 23. October 1964, we
set off on the first stage of this trip. Through illness and
other unforeseen causes the party had been reduced to 24. Of these
22 were in the bus, and 2 followed in the 7.40pm train. After a
pleasant journey to Hamilton, we stopped by the lake where the
wind was a little cool, but not cool enough to ruin our appetites.
The next stop was a short one at Te Kuiti. We then carried on to
Taumarunui, arriving about 10pm and being treated to supper in
the hotel kitchen.

Arising on Saturday morning we found the sky heavily overcast,
and as we left for Ohakune after breakfast a light drizzle set
in. The climb up the road by the spiral rewarded us with views
of heavy bush and beautiful patches of Clematis peniculata in
flower. The Makotote viaduct was of considerable interest to
those who had not seen it before, and several found it hard to
believe that the trains actually crossed it.

The mountain road from Ohakune to Blyth Hut was quite
satisfactory until we reached the first bridge. Here the approach
is a bad one, but skilful driving by our old friend Bill Shears
soon had the bus across, he having first taken the precaution of
making us walk, while he drove over the bridge alone. The second
bridge was negotiated without difficulty and we were soon up at
the carpark near the waterfall, from which it is only a 20 minute
walk to the hut. By this time the wind and rain had increased
and conditions were most unpleasant. Some elected to follow the
trek up to the hut, a few stayed in the bus and others, of which
I was one, were content to fossick about in the bush and scrub
near the bus. Without going far I noted Podocarpus nivalis,
Phyllocladus alpinus, Dacrydium laxifolium, Cyathodes empetrifolia,
Hebe odora, Hebe venustula, Dacrydium biforme, Dacrydium bidwillii,
Gelmisia incana, Dracophyllum recurvum, Gleichenia dicarpa var
alpina, Neopanax simplex and others I have now forgotten. A very
good lunch provided by the hotel proprietress was eaten in the
bus.

The waterfall was a fine sight, due in part to the great amount of water now racing down the stream, and most of the party took the opportunity to view or photograph it. As the rain and wind showed no sign of easing it was decided to enter the bush at a lower level. No trouble was experienced getting back over both bridges, and we were soon at the entrance to Blyth track.

Fortunately the wind was hardly noticeable here although it was still raining, and most of us followed the track for some distance looking for the unusual. The upper canopy was mainly beech - Nothofagus fusca, menziesii and solandri var cliffortioides. Libocedrus bidwillii was also quite common. The lower cover comprised Blaeocarpus hookerianus, Aristotelia fruticosa, Neopanax simplex, Neopanax colensoi, Cordyline indivisa, Pseudowintera colorata very beautiful, Pittosporum colensoi, Coprosma foetidissima, C. tenuifolia, C. parviflora and others, the names of which now escape me. The more unusual ferns seen were Hymenophyllum malingii, Phymatodes novae-zelandiae, Grammitis billardieri and Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum. One member was observed examining Luzuriaga parviflora. Strangely, orchids were conspicuous by their absence. The rain becoming heavier, and the track much wetter, it was pleasant to return to the shelter of our bus and head back for Taumarunui.

It rained heavily throughout Saturday night and we had visions of better weather on the morrow. However it was not to be, and Sunday showed no material improvement. Immediately after breakfast we set off for Pureora. The back-country road gave us splendid views of hills and gorges, swollen streams, waterfalls and the main trunk railway. The rain eased at times to a very light drizzle, but on arrival at Forestry Headquarters it came on again accompanied by fairly strong wind. A Forestry officer kindly guided us up the road to a point where we could enter the heavy bush for a considerable distance, by following a track used for bringing out posts obtained from large fallen totaras. The forest trees in this area are genuine giants, rising to over 100 feet in height. The more common are Podocarpus ferrugineus, P. spicatus, P. totara and Dacrydium cupressinum. Although the rain still fell it was quite pleasant in the shelter of the bush. Both Pseudowintera axillaris and P. colorata were noted, also Pseudopanax edgerlyii and Melicope simplex. Blechnum patersonii was plentiful, as also were Hymenophyllum ferrugineum, H. scabrum and Grammitis heterophylla. Dicksonia fibrosa attains considerable size here and one specimen admired had a stem circumference of about 7ft 6 ins. Clematis paniculata was in full flower everywhere, one vine showing beautiful blossom some 60ft up in one of the large trees. The Rubus (bushlawyer) was also in flower in places and panicles about a foot long were observed. After lunch in the bus, with Bill acting as waiter to avoid congestion, we returned to Forestry Headquarters, and went for a short time into the bush at the rear of the houses. Here we found Alseuosmia pusilla in flower, Hymenophyllum scabrum everywhere on the ground, and an interesting hybrid which is no doubt the one which was known as Nothopanax simplex var parvum. Orchids were still absent, the only one seen being a Pterostylid not yet in bud.

A mile or two down the road from Pureora, we entered a shallow gully which could not be explored properly as it was carrying a deal of rain water. On the edges however, we saw Hymenantha angustifolia, leafless but carrying many flower buds of a light bluish-grey colour, and also an adult specimen of Pittosporum turneri. Entering a grove of Phyllocladus alpinus, some commenced a search for that curiosity the wooden rose, Dactylanthus taylori. Their efforts were soon rewarded and after a couple of smallish ones had been found, two large ones were unearthed well and truly fixed to their hosts. These are of course still where they were discovered. While all this scratching and rooting was going on, one member was quietly working in the gully on the fringe of the bush, and came across Renunculus rivularis, a solitary specimen of Botrychium australe, Oreomyrrhis ramosa and Potentilla anserinoides. Our return journey to Taumarunui was as interesting as the outward, all the streams and rivers were now in full spate.

Monday dawned cool and fine. How pleased we all were to see the sun again! After a very enjoyable breakfast we were soon on our way, climbing over the Hauhangaroa range towards Tokaanu. Again we were treated to a wonderful display of Clematis paniculata. It seemed to be around every bend in the road. On stepping from the bus at the top of the range to take the track to the lookout, we were much surprised to find ourselves in a shower of sleet and very light snow. This soon passed, the sun came out and took the chill out of the air, and the photographers were able to record the beautiful vistas of snow covered mountains, bush clad hills and lake which lay before them. Those more interested in the vegetation soon noticed Olearia ilicifolia and Quintinia elliptica. Resuming our journey we were soon at Waihi village at the southern end of Lake Taupo. The most interesting things here were a pretty waterfall of considerable height and the hot water bubbling up at the edge of the cold lake. One member came across a solitary Microtis unifolia in flower, otherwise the plant life there held little appeal. The drive to Taupo was most enjoyable with lovely views of sun-kissed water and many kowhai in full bloom. The lunch spot was behind the Information Office, where we were able to enjoy the sun to the full, out of the cool breeze which swept across the lake. It was not long before we were on the road again and gazing with awe at the great volume of water rushing over the Huka falls. Then down we went to see the new power project on the Aratiatia rapids. It must be confessed that the rapids are not ruined. We were of course seeing them at the best time, when the water was being released. However when the trees and shrubs planted in the vicinity reach maturity, the spot should be a picturesque one. After an interesting run along the road through N.Z Forest Products pine forests we found ourselves in heavy traffic - somewhat amusing but also annoying, especially when it was discovered that the primary cause of the long procession was a traffic officer. A short stop at Rangiriri preceded the last leg of the journey to Auckland, which was reached about 8pm. F.M.W.