

ORIGINAL FIELD NOTES

The need to ensure that field notes made by competent amateur botanists over their years of botanising are preserved for posterity, cannot be stressed too highly. It was therefore very pleasing to learn that Mr Frank Holman of Whangarei is having copies of his manuscript on the Northland flora made. It is to be hoped that funds will be available one day to publish his work, and so make it available to a wider public. The existence of so many fine colour photographs of our native flora would be a valuable adjunct to such a text. There is still a big gap in regional New Zealand botany to go with such books as Davies' "New Zealand Native Plant Studies," and the recent "Plants of the Southern Alps" by Philipson and Hearn.

Recently I tried to search out some of the early botanical work done in the Coromandel Range, but have so far been unable to locate many of the records which must have been kept by the resident and visiting botanists. Many invaluable records have been lost without trace where their value has not been recognised.

It is difficult today to better some of the more intensive field work of the pioneer botanists. With our fast means of travel we tend to overlook so much of that which was seen in former days through the hard trekking necessary to get anywhere, lacking roads. Much of the good bush has of course gone, or is much altered through the ravages of man and noxious animals. The spread north of the opossum is causing much damage to the forest canopy, but it is hoped we will be able to stem the spread of deer. The recording of the changes resulting from the animal build-up is particularly important.

In the next issue I hope to discuss the matter of Botanical Recorders for the province, after discussion by the Committee, and would welcome any offers to do this work, especially from our country members.

NEW FIELDS

The Need to explore New Areas.

There has been a tendency for the Society of late to return to the well known spots, largely I think due to a lack of offers from members to lead excursions to areas not previously visited by the Society, and there must be many such spots in the Auckland area. There is however always something to be gained from re-visiting known areas if only to observe any changes, and perhaps discover some new plant.

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New Fields - Cb'd.

The Secretary would welcome your offer to lead an excursion. He hopes to arrange a visit to one such little known area in the near future. There is much to be seen off the tracks, which so many people seem to stick too rigidly to, provided you don't wander too far into the bush. However the vociferous enthusiasm of certain members usually enables one to locate the main party readily again! More useful botanical discussion could be had on our excursions, and the leader should make an effort to explain what is to be seen before heading off into the bush, and the lunch-break could be used to bring to the party's notice what has been seen. This would be a great help to our less knowledgeable members who are eager to learn, and especially the younger ones we are seeing now.

There is a need too to introduce more discussion of our native flora at indoor meetings where specimens can be shown to very good profit. Such exhibits properly labelled would be welcome at any meeting, to discuss after the main business.

THE AUCKLAND SCENE

My comments on the lack in Auckland of suitably labelled live collections of the native flora is gradually being remedied in one park, Albert Park, though most trees there are "exotics". The Mount Smart Domain Rockery has a high fence now and locked gate. The varsity collection remains the only clearly labelled native collection of trees and shrubs but vandals still take their toll and very childishly think it funny to play with the labels. Every ingenuity is needed to try and beat these people, and it is a pity police and park rangers are never in evidence. Much of it is no doubt a result of the young people of Auckland having so little to do if they are not sports-minded. The botanist can always be thankful in having so much to do and see, and it is a pity more young people are not attracted to the hobby.

September saw the first constitutional meeting of the Auckland Junior Naturalists, of which there are three branches, and in which the Society takes a close interest. Not far away in Hamilton Mr P. Devlin has done an excellent job in this field, and we can expect to see some very competent biologists as a result of his efforts and those of helpers spurring the young folk along.

No further developments have materialised on the proposed further prospecting for copper on Coppermine Island. The issue has died down somewhat, but we still need to be on our guard. With the Newsletter you will find a copy of the Petition drafted in Whangarei seeking the protection of our valuable off-shore islands. Please add your signature and those of friends sympathetic to the cause and forward to the address shown. Members in Whangarei have done a good job in

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