

King Fern

In response to my article on King fern in the last issue, Mr. Ross McKenzie wrote of its occurrence in the Clevedon bush, where it was apparently known for a very long time, though he is not sure whether it is still there. The Maoris living at Kawa Kawa Bay many years ago, when money was scarce, used to take it from the bush, and hawk it in Auckland.

Also received was a note from Miss N.R. Bamford, who points out that it is not an endemic fern of course, but occurs on the Islands, where she has seen magnificent specimens with long shiny fronds in the valleys of Rarotonga. Psilotum occurs there too.

King fern is also listed by Allan for Samoa, Tahiti and Norfolk Island, where some of our members may have seen it. Does it differ at all on the Islands I wonder.

Any further sightings will be welcome, so please drop me a line if you know of more in the Province.

J.H.

REVIEWS

Botanical Periodicals.

N.Z. Journal of Botany. December, 1965

"Five-fingers and Lancewoods"

The correct generic designation of these woody plants has led to some confusion in the past. Writing in this issue, J.R. Philipson now concludes after examination of a number of characters that Neopanax be included in Pseudopanax, thus eliminating any doubt as to which prefix should be used. Neopanax was raised by Allan in 1961 to accommodate the species earlier referred to Nothopanax in Cheeseman. The character used to separate the genera, that of locale number, in fact shows continuous variation (from two to five), and so no clear sub-division can be made on this basis. The close similarities of species formerly placed in the different genera and their tendency to form hybrids readily supports the present union.

There are several other articles, but I intend to limit my comments to those of interest to field botanists, in reviews such as these, to bring to the notice of members articles which they should know of, but may not have the chance of seeing regularly.

N.Z. Journal of Botany. June, 1966

This issue contains much-needed revisions of two genera, which have been so puzzling in the past due to lack of study. A key to the Australasian Astelinds by Lucy Moore, together with useful distribution maps of the N.Z. species, should enable us to recognise them and perhaps add to their known distribution. Three maps showing the distribution of three species of Astelia appear on page 238 for the Auckland area, namely A. solandri, A. trinervia and A. banksii.

Also keyed are the N.Z. species of the genus Luzula, sometimes known commonly as the "wood-rushes". Some 11 indigenous species are recognized, along with 3 of the most common introduced species from Europe, which one must be wary of. Most species are however South Island plants, and include cushion alpine plants - a form not known elsewhere in this widely distributed genus. The only natives in the Auckland area is L. picta with var. picta to the North, and var. pallida to the South.