

SEA SPLASHED AND LIKING IT - - - E.D.H.

I wandered the other evening, out on to the point of Taumatarea. Dracophyllum sinclairii, some 6 feet high, flowered serenely among the encroaching, but equally beautiful gorse, and in the background, slightly taller, stood a dozen or so plants of Pimelea longifolia, their perfectly symmetrical fistfuls of white blossom standing out against the darkening sky. I pushed through to the edge of the cliff, where the local urchins had worn a trail. (why they dont tumble off and drown themselves is a mystery) Twenty feet below me the full tide gurgled and splashed, while a couple of hundred yards out to sea a coastal tub (loaded with cement from Golden Bay) chugged up the Wairoa channel towards Onghunga. At my feet a group of 6 plants of Pterostylis banksii were showing pink-tipped bud. Interest aroused - I looked around me. Thelymitra and Microtis in leaf; the remnants of a large patch of Pt. trullifolia gracilis, the younger rosettes still thriving; a few withering leaves of Acianthus fornicatus sinclairii; Gahnia gahniaeformis in flower; the common sundew, Drosera auriculata, a mass of pink flowers and sticky, insect-spotted, tentacled leaves. And joy of joys, a large clump of kidney fern, Trichomanes reniforme, 3 feet square, obviously fit and well, with shining pale green fronds unfolding. Who said ferns needed shade ? Who said Pterostylis banksii was a forest plant ? Who knows anything about anything anyway ?

GASTRODIA SESAMOIDES - OBSERVATIONS PLEASE - - - E.D.H.

I have mentioned several times before, the nitrogen-fixing bacteria which are part of the nutritive mechanism of Gastrodia sesamoides. At Silverdale the orchid was growing in association with Acacia melanoxylon and had been for over 20 years (I first saw it there in 1947); at Foxton, among lupins beneath pines; and at Glorit with kahikatea. In each of these cases the host plant carried root-nodules and associated nitrogen-fixing bacteria. This suggests that Gastrodia sesamoides will always be found attached to legumes or other nodule-bearing plants. Apart from these 3 localities, no one appears to have ever recorded the details of the subassociation in which the orchid was found growing. Should the Bot. Soc. come across this plant in the course of its rambles, I should be most interested to know what grows in the immediate vicinity. The permanent attachment of Gastrodia to a particular host plant means that (if it is not disturbed), it will remain in a locality indefinitely, and can conveniently be revisited for study purposes. The species has recently been vaguely reported from the Henderson Valley. It would be interesting to know just where and with what. Might be worth a search.