

A difficulty in connection with the programmed venue of our September outing, led to its hurried switching to the Marguerite Track in the upper Piha valley. The Waitakere bush tracks are at their worst at this time of the year, but I was able to arrange for two of the rangers to spend a couple of days fascinating, trimming and reshaping some of the bad patches.

Along the West Coast Road in the vicinity of the two entrances to this track, we saw from the bus a handsome bush of Kirk's daisy in full bloom, sprays of Clematis and bunches of supplejack berries. There was a great profusion of flower buds on Olearia rani, and by the time this note appears it will be making a fine display on the roadside. We started down the KauriGrove Track, going a little past Marguerite Track junction to traverse the kauris, saved from the miller when the Government opened up the rest of the Piha valley for the sale of timber around the beginning of the century. In addition to kauri, this block of 140 acres now merged in the Centennial Park, carries a dense and varied stand of large trees, rata, rimu, miro, totara, as well as lower canopy trees and undergrowth, and is one of the most attractive pieces of nearly virgin forest in the Waitakeres. There was some discussion about the identification of a hooded orchid, probably Pterostylis montana, a species carved by Hatch out of Cheeseman's Pt. graminea. (It was Pt. montana rubricaulis - Mr. Butler brought me a specimen - E.D.H.) Returning from the kauris we entered Marguerite Track, where we found two more orchids in flower, Acianthus fornicatus sinclairii and Corybas rivularis. At the junction of Lucy Cranwell Track is the solitary specimen of Astelia nervosa (cockaynei) discovered by Dr. L.B. Moore on a Science Congress visit two years ago. This is a montane species and one wonders how it got into the Waitakeres. We stopped for lunch near a fine tree of Ixerba brexioides, coming into bud, where the forest floor has a specially dense carpet of Astelia trinervia. Returning to Marguerite track, the route soon leaves the older reserve, and enters cut-over forest acquired in the early stages of the Centennial Park project, just after it had been thoroughly combed for timber, but now regenerating fast. Marguerite Track links at its northern end with Home Track by which we returned to the road. A short diversion from this track leads to a stump offering a fine view of a large part of the Piha valley. Nearing the road we found Alseuosmia macrophylla in flower, and a small tree of Pittosporum kirkii bearing fruit. Among the rarer ferns seen during the day were Asplenium lamprophyllum, Leptopteris hymenophylloides, Hypolepis distans and H. rugosula. The last mentioned, which a few months ago was a fine spray, had died down, but young shoots gave promise of revival.