

TEXTBOOKS:

Plants and Civilisation.	Herbert G. Baker
Economic Botany.	Albert Hill.
Plants for Man.	Schery.
The Story of Plants.	Hutchinson.
Plants that changed the World.	Bertha Dodge.
How to Know the economic Plants.	H.E. Jacques

I feel the Society should have supported Mr. Uhe's lecture in the University of Auckland's Winter Series fully when he spoke on 30th July about 'Prospecting for Medicinal Plants in the Pacific' - facts interspersed with a lively humour.

Mrs. D. White.

O U T I N G S

LA TROBE TRACK,----- 15th June 1968.-----M. Barr

Remembering from old tramping experience that easterly weather usually brought sunshine to the coast, I set out undismayed at daybreak on the 15th June. A beautiful pink dawn, giving hopeful promise of a better day than those preceding, kept me company as I sped down the road to Auckland. At the bus depot other optimists filled the bus and we were soon on our way to Lone Kauri junction near Karekare. The sun was shining from a blue sky as we stood at the entrance to La Trobe track while Mr. Mead pointed out the valley and ridges we would follow to Karekare.

A pleasant walk down the old logging track, well graded and comparatively clean underfoot, gave us ample opportunity to observe the very mixed forest which has been regenerating for the last forty years since logging ceased in this area. Among the larger trees we observed many young kauri, Agathis australis and even one or two older ones which had escaped the bushman's axe. Coprosma were in abundance, especially the large leaved Coprosma australis. We were pleased to find Pittosporum ellipticum - its only habitat in the Auckland district appears to be on the west coast north of Manukau Harbour. Quite near the track we found a matal, Podocarpus spicatus, which is rare in the Waitakeres. Our specimen was young, as yet only in the juvenile stage. We saw the two varieties of rata, Metrosideros diffusa & M. fulgens, the latter in flower. As the taller trees gave way to manuka we found several patches of Celmisa major, noted in this locality, on the cliffs from Manukau Harbour north beyond Piha and also on Great Barrier Island.

Lunching in the sunshine on a pleasant slope of low windswept manuka we were able to notice the varying stages of re-growth on the hillsides opposite. Sheltered in the manuka we saw several small plants of Hebe obtusata, which also seems to be confined to this stretch of coast, and also the beautiful

Pimelia longifolia which later on in the season adorns the dry hills in this area with its beautiful pink and white clusters of flowers and sweet scent. The coastal variety of kowhai, Sophors microphylla var. fulvida, was seen in several places as was another tree of this coastal strip, tawapou, Planchonella novo-zelandica.

When climbing a rocky outlook for the view we came across the small fern Cheilanthes sieberi growing in its usual dry sunny spot on the rocks and later Asplenium hookerianum was also found.

Our track now went downhill steeply and for quite some distance followed a delightful stream with all the familiar ferns growing in profusion on its banks. Of special note were Asplenium lamprophyllum and Pteris comans. The latter is the coastal form of Pteris and is plentiful in this locality but here we found it together with the other forms P. macilentata, P. macilentata var. saxatilis and P. tremula.

An interesting and varied walk indeed on the beach at Karekare and our thanks are again due to Mr. Mead for a very pleasant outing.

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QUINN'S ROAD. WAITAKERE RANGES.--20th July, 1968 ---A.D. Mead

Quinn's Road is a narrow blind road running south from the junction of Scenic Drive and West Coast Road at Waitatarua. It is a little over half a mile long, bordered on the west by the Nihotupu catchment bush and on the east by building lots on which houses and baches of a good type have been erected on the ridge line overlooking the city, harbour and Waitakere foothills. From the end of the metalled road a bulldozed track extends a further three quarters of a mile through water catchment forest just off the watershed ridge line. Our route led us to the end of this track and part way back by the remains of the earlier trail along the ridge top.

By some misunderstanding the bus was very late; several members had gathered at Waitatarua by car and while waiting the local waterworks foreman Mr. W. Beveridge kindly led the party into an adjoining 3 acre block of water supply land in a loop of the Scenic Drive, where he showed us two towhai, Weinmannia silvicola, trees which he had found. These, with another a little way down the eastern slope, are the only ones known in the Waitakeres. As they are on the edge of an old milling track, the suggestion was advanced that their seeds may have been brought in on sledge runners, horses' hooves or on men's clothing or boots, from the nearest natural stand a little north of Swanson. These trees have commenced to fruit in recent years and numerous seedlings are growing on track banks and stems of tree ferns close by. Just alongside is a patch of giant moss, Dawsonia superba.