

OUTINGS

KAURI GROVE TRACK. --- 15th March 1969 --- A.D.Palmer.

The continuously dry weather during the first two weeks of March lasted long enough to give us a fine, warm day for our walk down the Kauri Grove track to Piha.

The steep climb on the latter part of the West Coast road proved to be too much for the poor old bus which boiled and poured out clouds of steam in protest. After a short stop at a service station to replace a few gallons of water we were on our way again. We arrived at the head of the Kauri Grove track, our bones well and truly shaken by the terrible surface of the neglected Piha road.

We set off down the track, our aim being to reach the Kitekite falls in time for lunch. Very prominent were the brilliant blue berries of Dianella intermedia, at one point there were two plants growing side by side, one with dark blue and the other very pale blue berries. This seems to be a commonly occurring variation, the pale blue berries usually being plumper than their dark blue counterparts. The climbing rata, Metrosideros fulgens was in flower in several places. A large rimu had growing on it several good-sized clumps of Dendrobium cunninghamii, not, as far as I could see, with any flowers on.

At one point we passed several large kauris and growing ramrod straight up one of these was a kie-kie with four heads of leaves equally spaced up the otherwise bare stem. In the group were one or two dead kauris, their borer-ridden limbs standing out starkly against the blue sky.

On the higher part of the track, the only orchids in evidence were Earina mucronata, which had finished flowering, the seed heads of Thelymitra on some of the dry banks and one Pterostylis in seed. Low herbs included Nertera depressa, Elatostema rugosum and Lobelia anceps, some of which had flowers of quite a deep blue colour.

Some fine specimens of Dracophyllum latifolium, were seen. Coprosma lucida, C.robusta, C.australis, Dodonaea viscosa, Griselinia, Knightsia excelsa, Quintinia serrata, Schefflera digitata, a good specimen of Asplenium bulbiferum, Cyathea dealbata, C.medullaris and a very tall nikau were also noted on the higher part of the track.

Lower down the track, along by the stream, the nature of the bush changed, the canopy consisting mainly of teatree. Beneath this were Coprosma areolata, C.rhamnoides, and C.arborea, which hadn't been in evidence higher up, the two mingi-mingis, Cyathodes fasciculata and C.juniperina, Eugenia maire and Ixerba brexioides. At a crossroads in the track known as Usher Cross, Mr.Mead suggested

a short detour to look at the diminutive fern, Schizaea bifida, and the tiny orchid Prasopphyllum. Several Olearia furfuracea were in flower here.

Flagging a little, we arrived at the head of the Kitekite falls and stopped for a very welcome lunch. It is an attractive spot, the bush surrounding the pools included kowhais, Brachyglottis repanda, Dodonaea viscosa, Hoheria populnea, Corokia buddleioides, Geniostoma ligustrifolium and Coprosma sp. A mystery Pittosporum was finally identified as P. ellipticum.

After lunch we followed the track down the side of the gorge. The dry banks sprouted several small Phelipium nudum and the rengarenga lily, Arthropodium cirrhatum. A patch of kidney fern struggled against the drought and looked rather the worse for wear. Bulbophyllum pygmaeum was spotted. As we neared the stream again Peperomia urvilleana made an appearance on the damper rocks. On the far side of the stream there was a large puriri, Vitex Lucens, a tree we were to see more of from now on, together with Corynocarpus laevigatus and Dysoxylum spectabile. We were now at the base of the falls, which were an impressive sight in spite of the recent lack of rain. They would certainly be well worth seeing after heavy rain, the water cascading down the three almost equally spaced steps in the rock visible from where we were standing. Parataniwha clung to the rock in masses, luxuriating in the continuous moisture. Pratia angulata crept amongst the wet rocks.

The track climbed again from the base of the falls. Looking back from higher up we could see that there was more to the falls than was apparent from their base. Helichrysum glomeratum, Coriaria arborea and Rhabdothamnus solandri were all seen growing in the banks bordering the track.

We arrived back at the bus at Piha to join those who had botanised on the flat after a thoroughly enjoyable day's walking through some very interesting bush. Our thanks are due once again to our leader, Mr. Mead.

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COSSEY'S CREEK DAM. ----- 19th April 1969 ----- L.W. Butler.

Although the weather was doubtful when we left in the morning, it turned out reasonably pleasant when we arrived at the Dam at about 11 a.m. Mr. Mead gave us a short talk on his discovery of the Dam site and development that followed subsequently.

We strolled around in the immediate vicinity for about an hour, seeing one or two interesting specimens, especially a large miro in full berry, an unusual sight as specimen was out in the open and fully visible.