

OLEARIA FURFURACEA Var. ANGUSTATA ( KIRK ) IN THE HUNUA RANGES.A.J. DAKIN.

This variety of Olearia furfuracea is described in the Flora of N.Z. Vol. 1 and the type location is given as "northern portion of the Auckland district" T. Kirk, 1899.

In February, 1972, specimens matching this description were collected from scattered plants on the road to Mangatawhiri Reservoir - grid reference N 48-648292. About six plants were seen, these being confined to banks near the road. The specimens were confirmed as Olearia furfuracea var. angustata by Mr. A. Esler of Botany Division, Auckland.

In February of this year a further group of four to six plants answering to the description were located on the Moumoukai Hill Road above Ness Valley, grid reference N 43-645417. Plants are again confined to roadside banks and have apparently established since road construction was carried out.

Unfortunately recent earthworks on the Mangatawhiri Reservoir road have destroyed several of the large plants, and only one or two smaller shrubs survive. It will be of interest to see if they re-establish, at some future date, on the clay banks.

The variety is conspicuous in flower with 2 or 3 broad ray florets - my specimens have mainly 3. In some plants the phyllaries were distinctly red in colour.

It should be noted that flowering of this variety, at least in this area, is usually later ( Feb/Mar ) than Olearia furfuracea.

SECOND BLOOMINGMrs. L. WORTHINGTON.

This last summer our cabbage trees had two periods of blooming, the normal one in October and November and then again in March and April they were white with blossom, much to the delight of the birds, especially the starlings and blighties which feasted on the honey first and then the berries. The second crop of flowers were not completely new as they developed on the seemingly dead spikes of the first flowering.

The tuis are so busy in the kohekohe trees with their lily of the valley like flowers growing from such woody branches. I could not see that the tiny flowers would have much nectar and when I split flowers open none could be seen, but the tip of my tongue proved there was sweetness there.

We have several starling nesting boxes made from tomato cases which seem to be just the right size. We did make one shallower nest and though the birds looked in, none would claim it till we added three inches to the bottom when it was claimed straight away. Even in the off season the birds make periodic inspections of their nests and pity any interloper. One day there was such a commotion in one nest and lo and behold out backed one starling dragging another one out through the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " opening by the beak. As soon as it was released it took off, while the owner settled on top of its box preening its ruffled feathers.

### LECTURE

April. ----- Mrs. M. Taylor. ----- How to Look at Coprosmas.

No doubt there are many of us who are easily put off by the seeming difficulties involved in the identification of Coprosmas, especially as they have such a nasty habit of hybridizing freely. We become lazy about them and in the end satisfy ourselves by merely establishing that the plant before us is a Coprosma species! Those of us who attended Mrs Taylor's excellent lecture will, I'm sure, have a somewhat different attitude in future. She showed us that they are not impossible but only require a little extra care - and a good hand lens.

We were told that there are 40 different species in New Zealand, of which 10 are large leaved, the remainder having much smaller leaves. The first species were collected on Cook's first voyage by Banks and Solander and some beautiful plates of them were prepared. They were never published, however, and therefore the names they gave to them are invalid. On Cook's second voyage, the Forsters collected and pressed specimens of Coprosma foetidissima which stank out their cabin and led them to coin the name Coprosma, which comes from the Greek for the smell of dung. This was a little unfair on a genus that has only two members with a really unpleasant smell.

It was pointed out that vegetative characteristics are the most useful when identifying Coprosmas. They have opposite leaves, usually in pairs, although they have been reported as occurring in threes occasionally on some species such as C. robusta and C. australis, and Mrs Taylor mentioned a Coprosma repens which had leaves arranged spirally up the stem. Domatia are usually present. These are the depressions on the underside of the leaf, in the angles between lateral veins and the midrib.

Another most important characteristic is the stipule, which, as one theory has it, is formed by the fusion of the two leaf bases. Their function is thought to be to give some protection to the young leaves at the growing point, by secreting a mucilaginous substance. In Coprosmas the stipules have one or more tooth-like outgrowths called denticles. These are juicy if squeezed when young but dry up, wither and sometimes drop off when older. Stipules and denticles are fairly standard for a particular species and are therefore a most useful guide to