

To complete our day we called in at the A.R.A. nursery on the new Botanical Garden site and heard a little of plans for the future development. We saw their stocks of trees and shrubs they will be planting soon. For those of us who have been looking forward so long for the establishment of such a place it was a satisfaction to see some action.

RANGITOTO - 19th. July

A small group of 19 spent a pleasant day on the lower slopes near Islington Bay. The morning route followed a loop starting on the coast opposite Motutapu and proved most rewarding, providing a sequence of very interesting small plants. The two ferns Cheilanthes sieberi and C. distans with its woolly young shoots were common among lichen covered rocks and provided practice in diagnosing the difference. Later Psilotum nudum was found right alongside the path on more than half a dozen occasions, sometimes with sporangia.

We soon began finding ground orchids and before long realized that they were present in hundreds. Pterostylis alobula was at its best growing on mossy banks everywhere in fairylike profusion. Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii, with its minute hooded flowers, was equally profuse and then we began to find Acianthus reniformis, still only at the early single leaf stage but here and there putting up a flower stalk. In fact in the rocky dells it was difficult not to stand on at least one orchid with each foot while botanising.

Other delightful small plants in the same setting were Asplenium flabellifolium and Drosera auriculata. Then there was the largest mass of Earina autumnalis I have seen but growing on the rocky ground in true Rangitoto fashion instead of as an epiphyte.

These were the genera among better known and commoner plants providing the background. The ferns Pyrrosia serpens, Pellaea rotundifolia, Microsorium diversifolium, Asplenium lucidum, Asplenium flaccidum, Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum; monocots Astelia sp., Collospermum hastatum and Stipa sp. provided ground cover, with an upper storey of shrubby dicots - Cyathodes juniperina, Dodonaea viscosa, Pomaderris phyllicifolia, Mycoporum laetum, Myrsine australis and above all of course Metrosideros excelsa everywhere. Scrambling and climbing in many places was Muehlenbeckia complexa.

On the coastal part of the walk, garden escapes from cottages were common, Smilax slipped insidiously everywhere, various succulents large and small thrived on the rocky environment, and one or two hedge plants, especially Rhamnus alaternus, are now taking over strongly. It would need a vigorous campaign to eradicate them now and in a few years, unless something is done, they will be quite out of control. Another plant which thrives is the sword fern Nephrolepis cordifolia which grows so well that it is probably the imported cultivated strain, rather than our true N.Z. strain which is much more difficult to grow.

In the afternoon parties went off in two main directions, the largest group to Boulder (Shipwreck) Bay and smaller

scattered groups towards the naval depot. The first party had a long walk with little additional botany, but a rough passage which finally caused our secretary a rather nasty fall. At the time of writing she has made a good recovery but it was very unpleasant and painful for her at the time. The other parties' main discovery was the orchid Pterostylis trullifolia, which was present as well as P. alobula which we had seen earlier.

Our species list of natives:-

FERNS AND ALLIES

Psilotum nudum	Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum
Asplenium lucidum	Microsorium diversifolium
" flaccidum	Pellaea rotundifolia
" flabellifolium	Pyrrosia serpens
Cheilanthes sieberi	
" distans	

MONOCOTYLEDONS

Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii	Collospermum hastatum
" reniformis	Astelia sp.
Earina autumnalis (on ground)	Stipa sp.
Pterostylis alobula	
" trullifolia	

DICOTYLEDONS

Cyathodes juniperina
 Dodonaea viscosa
 Drosera auriculata
 Muehlenbeckia complexa
 Myrsine australis
 Pomaderris phlicifolia
 Sophora microphylla

KIRKS BUSH AND CLEVEDON - 16th. August

A very sunny day after some wintry weather was welcome and made the day a very pleasant outing. We stopped first at Papakura to look at Kirk's Bush and the tiny reserve across the main road which used to be our Society's property. Some members present had planted trees there and were pleased to note their growth. Most notable, both there and in Kirk's Bush too, were the very large karakas and taraires which must be as large as any found anywhere. These two trees, with pukatea, dominate the reserves and make the bush open and easy walking, which is probably suitable for a city reserve.

The afternoon was spent at Clevedon at the quarry reserve by the Scouts Den. Again the open nature of the bush made for straightforward walking, but the slope made the exercise more vigorous and by no means everyone did a trip up both slopes.