

From Taupo we drove to Claudelands bush at Hamilton. From the roadside there appeared little to see except wandering jew under the kahikatea, but inside we found Athyrium australe, Lastreopsis glabella with beautiful long fronds and Arthropteris tenella, together with Paratrophis and pukatea with its buttresses at the base of its trunk.

At Ngaruawahia we turned across the bridge to Glen Massey and on to Waingaro. As we climbed over the hills we had extensive views over the country. We passed through Tuakau and Pukekohe before we reached the main highway at Drury, thereby missing most of the heavy traffic and arrived back at Auckland in good time.

THE HOME AND MARGUERITE TRACKS 15th NOVEMBER 1975

J. BEEVER

Who better to lead us on this trip than Miss Crookes. The tracks cut across an interesting part of the upper Piha valley and provide an excellent introduction to the Waitakere bush at its best for those who are studying it for the first time. The day was made most delightful by the spring season, for there were flowers everywhere, not in overpowering masses, but they were here, there and everywhere if you took the trouble to look. Many trees added to the show as they still carried berries from last year's crop.

On the forest floor numerous Pterostylis banksii (greenhood orchids) greeted us as we entered and later a few Thelymitra longifolia in bud, Microtis unifolia in flower and the epiphyte Barina mucronata also in bud above us added to the list of orchids. Hanging from trees in many parts were vines of supplejack, Ripogonum scandens, with berries and many with flowers as well.

Perhaps the most striking flowers were those of the kiekie, Freycinetia banksii. Male and female flowers are large and separate with white or pinkish bracts, 6 inches or more across, enclosing the tiny flowers assembled as in an arum lily on a finger-like axis. These were common along the track and did not seem to have suffered much damage from humans and other animals. Pigeonwood had just finished flowering but many had bunches of the red berries that give it its name. The tawa and taraire had insignificant flowers for large trees but they compensate for this by their large purple berries later. We were too late for Clematis flowers but the seed heads of C. paniculata were quite noticeably showy. Melicytus macrophyllus, the coarsely toothed mahoe, had berries while the ordinary mahoe, M. ramiflorus, still had flowers. The ramarama too was in flower with rather isolated white blooms standing out against the embossed leaves.

The most splendid show came from the twins of the Escallonia family, Quintinia serrata and Ixerba brexioides. In the Auckland province one is rarely found without the other and this year the Quintinia with its pale lilac racemes had a very good flowering year. Even from the bus it was eye-catching and intrigued most of us until we could get a closer look at it. The Ixerba or tawari has flowers

which at their best are comparable with Olema and although we were a little early for the best displays we saw a number of trees in flower, especially at the start of the Kauri Grove Track.

Among less common plants noted were a Pittosporum kirkii growing terrestrially, Mida salicifolia, Carmichaelia aligera and among the ferns, Cyathea smithii and the climbing fern Lygodium articulatum with its unusual fertile fronds.

At lunch time Miss Crookes revived a custom that is falling into disuse in our society by using specimens collected during the morning as the basis for identification of notable plants and for some discussion of their ecological place in the bush. Our thanks to Miss Crookes for this exposition and for the time and trouble she had gone to to make our trip worthwhile.

It was a happy day for us all and when we heard the following week that Mrs Wills had died suddenly, our sadness was lightened by the thought that this pleasant spring walk had been shared with her and that she had enjoyed it so much.

TAUMARANUI TRIP JANUARY 1976

V. RAMSAY

On Saturday 24th. January, 19 of us set off for Taumaranui. We stopped at the lake in Hamilton to enjoy our lunch, and were amused by the ducks and swans competing for lunch scraps. Our bus arrived at Taumaranui in good time and after settling into our comfortable Motel rooms, complete with colour T.V. sets, we had time for a stroll around the shopping centre before dinner at the Hotel. The new railway station is well on the way to completion and we all admired the beautiful flower beds and well kept lawns bordering the railway. Further along past the shops tall roses were in full bloom.

Sunday, 25th. January We set off for Chateau Tongariro and on arrival spent a short time looking around the Information Centre before setting out along the Taranaki Falls Track. On both sides of the track there was much of interest. Among Olearia nummularifolia were plants of Euphrasia cuneata, Celmisia gracilentia and the dainty Wahlenbergia pygmaea. Dracophyllum longifolium was flowering freely and on the banks we found D. recurvum. Hebe venustula was well established and many Coprosma were in berry. We saw Dacrydium bidwillii and the manuka, Leptospermum scoparium, was flowering profusely. We noted Astelia nervosa, Gaultheria depressa, G. antipoda, Cassinia vauvilliersii and Parahebe catarractae. Among the trees were mountain beech, Nothofagus solandri var. cliffortioides, Phyllocladus alpinus and Coprosmas including C. cheesemanii, C. foetidissima, C. tenuifolia, C. pseudocuneata, C. parviflora and C. microcarpa, Olearia arborescens, Pseudopanax colensoi, Griselinia littoralis, Libocedrus bidwillii, Podocarpus hallii and Aristotelia fruticosa. We found both tutu, Coriaria arborea and C. pteridioides and