

As we walked through the damp bush with its rather boggy floor, I saw a charming little ground cover plant which in some parts made extensive tufts. The leaves, a dull brownish green, were crowded, sometimes overlapping on the creeping stems which rooted as they went along.

Above the leaves, on very slender peduncles of about 10 cm, were borne 2 to 3 very dainty flowers, and as many buds again on longish very slender pedicels. Fortunately back in the car I had a lens and some books. Consulting with the family which was obviously Scrophulariaceae Flora of New Zealand, Vol. I, soon told me that I had Mazus pumilio. On 20 Dec I revisited the area, mainly to collect pollen of Mazus pumilio for Dr Lucy Cranwell. This time Mazus was in full bloom and in the dappled light of the bush was an enchanting sight. The flowers were mainly pure white with a gold throat. There was a flush of mauve. Back at home on my first visit I consulted "The Record Book of New Zealand Plants" wherein is a fine coloured sketch of the larger flowered Mazus radicans, with detail of the flower clearly showing all the points of my identification - two long, two short stamens.

The botanists tell me that Mazus pumilio is not uncommon from Cape York van Diemen to Canterbury. I have botanised in many places, and have a garden for the small plants of the forest floor as well as for the forest plants and their companions, yet this was my first encounter with this delightful little plant and I found the experience to be a memorable one - highlight in 1981!

A SPECIES OF HYPOLEPIS NEW TO AUCKLAND

R.O. Gardner

In December last year a friend Dr Brent Maxwell showed me a fern he had taken into cultivation from a small but rapidly expanding colony in nearby Lynn Park. Growing on the damp sides of a clay drainage ditch, against a nondescript piece of tea tree scrub, the colony resembled at first sight a patch of sturdy bracken. It proved however to be the first Auckland record of Hypolepis "giant" (only this MS. name of Bob Chinnock can be used here as the genus in N.Z. is under revision; it is Carse's "very robust form" of tenuifolia).

Its northern distribution (from at least the Kermadecs and Norfolk Is. south to Nelson) and its abundance and vigour on the thermally-heated soil at Imungu Valley indicate its tropical affinities, and like other Hypolepis species it seems to be somewhat "weedy", i.e., it likes open places and disturbed ground. However, even in northern New Zealand it has been seen only infrequently. It is an attractive plant easy of cultivation; perhaps breeding experience will tell us why such a "healthy" plant should be so sparsely distributed.

Thanks to Patrick Brownsey for information.
A specimen is deposited at AK.