

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Secretary
14 Park Road
Titirangi
Auckland 7

19 August 1982

Chairman
Kirks Bush Scenic Board
403 Great South Road
Papakura

Dear Mr Brakenridge

Management of Kirk's Bush, Papakura

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the management of this Reserve. Our comments complement and amplify points made by Dr R.O. Gardner in the "Scenic Reserves of Lower North Auckland Land District" Biological Survey of Reserves Series No. 8, 1981, pp 94-98 (Department of Lands & Survey). The Reserve has been visited regularly over the years by members of our Society both as a club and as individuals; as you are aware we were involved in the early phases of management of the Butterworths Bush site. The following comments apply primarily to the Kirk's Bush site including the area of bushland located in Southern Park but the general points apply also to the Butterworths site, although as Gardner suggests weed control will be particularly difficult there.

Although only about 5.5 hectares in area, this reserve is of major botanical interest containing, as it does, one of the few relicts of lowland forest of the Auckland region that was not modified by burning or milling. Its striking feature is the presence of many large broadleaf trees including tawa, taraire, pukatea, puriri, titoki and karaka. There are few comparable examples of this forest type remaining, and none, for example, in the whole of the Waitakere Ranges.

While most of the plant species present are fairly common elsewhere in the region, the rare orchid Yoania australis was found here by one of our members, J. Horsman, in 1966. It is an unusual plant in that it lives most of the time underground intermingled amongst taraire roots and only advertises its presence when it pushes up its pale red brown flowering stalk in early summer. It is only known from five other localities in the country, and nowhere else in the world.

We suggest that emphasis should be placed in maintaining the scientific value of the reserve in its future management.

For convenience, our suggestions are listed under headings:

1. Weeds

Perhaps the biggest threat to the bush is from exotic weeds; if allowed to spread unchecked they will seriously alter the appearance of the reserve, and some such as wandering jew will smother native ground species including the rare Yoania. We realize, from a recent visit, that weed control is being actively pursued and commend and encourage your efforts in this regard. Specific problem species include:

Weeds (continued)

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- 1.1 Wandering jew (Tradescantia fluminense). Perhaps the most worrying weed. Mainly creeping in from the margins but occasionally, fortunately as yet limited, patches in the central region. Spraying will probably be needed.
- 1.2 Clematis vitalba. We had correspondence with the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland, about a small infestation of this important exotic smothering climber. We understand the Caretaker has been attempting eradication now for some time. Efforts must be continued.
- 1.3 Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica). A few vines along the playing fields boundary; attempts at control apparent. Another dangerous species.
- 1.4 Asparagus fern (Asparagus scandens). Occasional plants throughout. Its ability to grow under shade makes this a problem species.
- 1.5 Shrubs and trees. Species including spindle tree (Euonymus europaeus), wild cherry (Prunus avium ?), large and small leaved privet (Ligustrum spp) and the poisonous Jerusalem cherry (Solanum pseudocapsicum) are present especially around the margins. While less of a problem than the climbers and scramblers, their removal is desirable.
- 1.6 Herbs. Wild ginger (Hedychium sp.) was noted near the southern boundary spreading from a neighbour's property. A problem species in, for example, the Waitakeres. Important to control. Other weeds such as scotch thistle were noted but these are ephemerals and less worrying.

2. Death of native trees

On a recent visit some standing dead mature trees of rewarewa, tawa and kohekohe were noticed. No obvious cause could be seen and probably death was natural. In addition, some mature trees had fallen in recent winds. These deaths are of no major concern but the 'light gaps' they create should be monitored for troublesome weeds. Apparent possum damage to kohekohe was seen, but the abundant regeneration of this species indicates control is a low priority. Botanically it is of interest that apparently no seedlings or saplings of tawa or taraire are present; the next hundred years or so may see Kirk's Bush dominated by kohekohe and karaka. It will be of considerable interest to monitor these changes.

3. Planting with natives

Our thoughts on this management procedure have changed over the years and today our Society would not recommend planting natives in areas such as Kirk's Bush where much of the scientific value lies in the relatively unmodified nature of the Reserve. Our Society was, of course, involved in much of the plantings in Butterworths Bush and these plantings along with those at the entrances to Kirk's Bush enhance the appearance from the road and can be justified from this viewpoint. However we suggest further plantings of natives is undesirable except perhaps around the swampy area near the southern entrance, and as a protection for the big trees along the playing field boundary. A few plants of Pseudopanax laetum and variegated tarata (Pittosporum eugenoides) were noted in the Southern Park region of the bush - such plantings detract from the scientific value of the bush.

4. Paths and visitor assistance

Excellent progress has been made recently in forming paths through the reserve. These should go a long way to reducing indiscriminant trampling. Care must be taken not to introduce weeds if it is decided to metal the paths - such a procedure may prove necessary especially in muddy areas.

Paths & visitor assistance (continued)

Some trees have identification placards and information notices are present at the entrances but these could be supplemented by an informative leaflet which could be available free or for a small charge. The leaflet could give a brief account of the history and botany of the bush and perhaps key up with a "nature trail" marked by sturdy posts. It would help to encourage locals to take a pride in "their" bush.

5. Neighbours

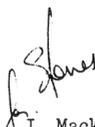
The bush is fortunate in having relatively short boundaries with neighbours. Unfortunately some of these do still regard the bush as a rubbish tip. Apart from the untidy appearance such rubbish is a source of weeds. Perhaps the margin of the bush could be marked with conspicuous pegs and neighbours contacted to ask for their cooperation and assistance.

6. Rubbish/vandals

These are ubiquitous hazards. The small amount of rubbish noted on a recent visit suggests that clearing is being carried out. Some vandalism of silver fern (*Cyathea dealbata*) was noted and remnants of huts seen, but it was considered relatively minor. Perhaps some local residents could be encouraged to act as "on the spot" rangers.

We hope these comments may be of help to your Board.

Yours sincerely


J. Mackinder
President

Asplenium polyodon - RIGHT OR WRONG?

E.D. Hatch

In 1769, in the *Primitiae Florae* (MS. p.1538) Solander described a fern from the forest areas of Tolaga Bay and Whitianga, as *Asplenium polypodon*, the specific name from the Greek, meaning 'many-footed'.

Solander's work was of course never published and it was left to George Forster to legitimise this name in his *Florulae Insularum Australium Prodromus* (literally 'A preliminary note on the little Floras of the southern islands') in 1786 p.80 n.428. Whether due to a slip on Forster's part, or to a printer's error, the name came through as *polyodon*, without the 'p'. According to article 82 of the Code (my copy is the 1952 edition which could conceivably be out of date) 'The original spelling of a name or epithet must be retained, except typographic or orthographic errors' (my emphasis). The examples following article 82 suggest that this fern's name should properly be *Asplenium polypodon* Forst.f.