

At first glance these swamps buried in the bush are an anomaly (there are several on Laingholm), but it must be remembered that one hundred years ago the area was in the open under grass, and that the scrub has come in since, and crowded but not subdued the swamp.

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Digression - Bidens frondosa* mentioned above, has temporarily colonised the drought-exposed mud flats of the lower Nihotupu Dam, along with the ubiquitous Aster subulatus*.

"STEWART ISLAND PLANTS" by Hugh D. Wilson

Field Guide Publications. 1982 528pp. \$17.25

Reviewed by R.O. Gardner

This book is the second of Hugh Wilson's integrated-and-illustrated regional floras, again a tour-de-force of field work and botanical knowledge most artistically and effectively presented.

Partly because of Pleistocene glaciation Stewart Island has only a moderate-sized native vascular flora of 580 species, and this conveniently has allowed the inclusion of all the island's wild adventives (185 species) and an ecologically-useful selection of bryophytes, lichens, fungi and seaweeds too.

Two non-technical keys lead to the plants arranged by taxonomic affinity and habitat (we are warned to expect many "temporary wetland" species!). Latin names are translated, which aids the memory and suggests some curiosities and armchair problems besides. (One also wonders about Maori names).

The illustrations and brief descriptions are excellent - nicely balanced between detail and appearance they get the plants to a t.; the habitat phrases are very good too. With this book in hand misidentification of a Stewart Island plant, that is, about a quarter of our native vascular flora, is hardly possible.

The latest in taxonomic "news" contained here are some thirty or so refined groupings and unfamiliar names - these are of interest mostly in the south but Aucklanders can note Coprosma grandifolia for C. australis, Galium trilobum for G. tenuicaule and the treatment of Nertera species and the Blechnum procerum group. And the illustrations of Hydrocotyle will be useful throughout the country.

In their several years of field study Wilson and his companions must have become very well acquainted with Stewart Island's diversity of natural habitats and it can be doubted that significant floristic finds among the native vascular flora now remain to be made there. Precise and exclusive then this book is a substantial contribution to New Zealand biogeography. The two illustrations in the introduction, one a misty forest interior the other a clear island landscape, and not forgetting to mention the photograph of bonny Hugh himself, complete the picture of a wilderness civilised.