

PITFALLS IN COMMON NAMESJ. Beever

Ever wondered how they use the roots of briar roses to make the well known briar pipes? Well, according to the dictionaries, Shorter Oxford and Chambers 20th. Century, they don't. These authorities say that briar pipes are made from the white heath (Erica arborea), grown in Algeria and known by the French common name, bruyère (= heath). The anglicisation of bruyère to the pronunciation briar, led to the erroneous identification of this product with the briar rose. It is an old and widespread error.

And now that you are on your guard, what is the botanical name of Scotch thistle? Well it appears to depend on where you live. In New Zealand it is Cirsium vulgare as many will know but in British reference books you will find that Cirsium vulgare is called spear thistle. So what plant do the Brits call a Scotch thistle?

It is the Onopordum acanthium, a similar thistle which grows in fields, waste places and roadsides in England, especially in Norfolk, but is rare in Scotland! In fact Chambers Dictionary says, "national emblem of Scotland (not native)". We in New Zealand call it cotton thistle and the 50 year old Hilgendorf "Weeds of New Zealand" recorded it as of uncommon occurrence appearing only in the West Wellington area and then as "uncommon".

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THE DISTRIBUTION OF MELICYTUS MACROPHYLLUS AND A NOTE ON M. RAMIFLORUSR.O. Gardner

M. macrophyllus is familiar to Aucklanders as an understory tree in forest and regenerating Leptospermum stands of the Waitakere Ranges and the North Shore. Surprisingly, though, its range southwards virtually finishes here at Auckland, and surprising too the species is absent from the Coromandel Peninsula and the northern offshore islands (except Great Barrier, where John Bartlett found a single tree in forest near Port Fitzroy). There are only two outlying southern localities, Matakana in the Bay of Plenty (Kirk, WELT) and, remarkably, Wakari Creek at the edge of Dunedin city (Cheeseman 1906, citing specimens of Thomson and Petrie, which I have not seen). At neither place does there appear to be any knowledge of the species subsequent to the original gatherings.

My attention had been drawn to M. macrophyllus by Dr Brent Maxwell who told me that this species is well and truly naturalized in the native shrubbery at Middlemore Hospital, Otahuhu, so providing a first record for the southern side of the Waitemata. Presumably there are or have been, older plantings here (necessarily several, since the species is dioecious) but I have not yet located them, and there remains the interesting possibility that this population has arisen by long-distance dispersal.

In their vigour and continuing successful reproduction the Middlemore plants do not give the impression of being confined by present-day environmental factors and it seems more reasonable to suppose that M. macrophyllus is a species still adjusting its range after Pleistocene restriction on the North Auckland peninsula.

The Great Barrier and Matakana plants may be supposed, then, to have originated through recent long-distance dispersal, and be isolated individuals unlikely to represent permanent range extensions. The Dunedin locality I feel can hardly be due to dispersal, nor can it be relictual with so many suitable sites between it and the main population. A status of "alien native" i.e., an old planting or naturalization would seem to be much more likely and Dr Peter Johnson of Botany Division DSIR Dunedin tells me that the collections might have come from what is now known as Woodhaugh Gardens, a streamside bush reserve that does contain old planted natives (including Hymenanthera chathamica 6 m tall !).

Melicytus macrophyllus has been recorded from several offshore islands but all the so-named material I have seen (AK, WELT) is large-leaved mahoe, M. ramiflorus. A distinction between these species is the fine pubescence on the new growth of M. ramiflorus (x10 lens, best seen on the face of the stipules, also on petiole margins and stem); M. macrophyllus is completely glabrous. There are also some differences between the species which might interest a chemical taxonomist, namely the fragrance of drying M. macrophyllus leaves compared to the "leather and mutton fat" smell of M. ramiflorus, also the tendency of M. macrophyllus to stain its pressing paper and herbarium sheets.

The several specimens I have seen of mahoe from elsewhere in the Pacific (Kermadec Is., Norfolk I.) differ from N.Z. material in their lack of pubescence. Those who want to find some evolutionary explanation for this difference might also try to explain why a reversal of this pattern holds for M. (Hymenanthera) novae-zelandiae between Lord Howe Island and N.Z. (Green 1970).

#### REFERENCES

- Cheeseman, T.F. 1906. Manual of the New Zealand Flora.  
 Green, P.S. 1970. Notes relating to the floras of Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. I. J. Arn. Arb. 51: 204-20.

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#### ROSES NATURALIZED IN AUCKLAND

R.O. Gardner

Two English shrub roses, sweet briar Rosa rubiginosa and dog rose R. canina were probably introduced to New Zealand early last century, being useful and decorative hedge plants and valued for the vitamin content of their fruits. Around Auckland they have persisted and naturalized in a few semi-rural or neglected places — sweet briar grows along old drystone walls and hawthorn hedges while dog rose is sometimes to be found in cemeteries (Symonds Street, St Lukes Mount Albert) where the older individuals have perhaps sprung from rootstock material.

Both species are relatively abundant in the dry scrub on the lava flats at Mount Wellington and Southdown. Sweet briar is the smaller of the two, with narrower curved thorns, and glandular-backed leaflets that smell of apple when crushed.

Several other roses have been recorded as naturalized in Auckland but these are perhaps no more than garden relics — there are no supporting AK specimens.

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