

Then Jack Mackinder told me that Mr Jan Komsars had told him that there was a specimen of Nestegis cunninghamii on the roadside of Anawhata Road, before the start (finish?) of Cutty Grass Track. I regularly drive along this road but had never noticed anything unusual, so I decided the only thing to do was to explore on foot.

On 9 March, I set out from the junction of West Coast and Anawhata Roads on foot. The first tree I noticed was a Eugenia (Syzygium) maire covered in flowers and ripe red fruit, only a few yards off the road. Its "feet" were dry at the time, but it was obvious that most of the year it stands in mud or water. The ground beneath was covered in red fruit and white stamens of the flowers.

Also along this section of the road are a number of Pseudopanax edgerleyi with their shiny aromatic leaves. On one short side trip into the bush, I found a juvenile of this species growing on the trunk of a Cyathea smithii, with its trifoliate leaves deeply lobed, some with quite distinctive dark red undersurface. On the ground was Blechnum minus — an unexpected bonus, though it does grow along one section of Cutty Grass Track.

But to return to Nestegis cunninghamii. One false alarm (at least I think so): a white maire (N. lanceolata) which had been chopped about and which sported 'normal' sized leaves together with some extra large ones. But eventually I came across a N. cunninghamii — a good sized tree that was difficult to miss. Then another, and a few kilometers further along, two more big trees. It pays to get out of the car and walk!

MELICYTUS MACROPHYLLUS AT MIDDLEMORE

R.E. Silvester

Arthur Farnell ex Auckland Hospital Board grounds superintendent, a keen botanist, horticulturist, once president of Auckland Botanical Society, winner of the Loder cup, &c, &c, gathered and planted a comprehensive collection of native species, mainly trees and shrubs, at the southern end of Middlemore Hospital right to the creek's edge. Also on the east side behind a curtain of exotics, Arthur being scientifically aware, had plants of the same genus in close proximity for comparison, identification, and dioecious plants in groups of three hoping to have both sexes present. Melicytus macrophyllus was one of these, and the progeny of that planting is naturalized there. Arthur used to take interested individuals, and groups of Forest and Bird members, amateur botanists, naturalists showing his collection and enjoyed confounding everyone with numerous divaricating species in it. The largest Cordyline indivisa I have seen in Auckland was there but short lived after reaching full sun and wind. Some natural hybrids used to occur as seedlings; one season numerous hybrid Plagianthus betulinus X divaricatus appeared. Being a new arrival in N.Z. in the early '50s I often went to Middlemore Hospital botanising numerous N.Z. species growing there together in an easily accessible area. I am thankful to Arthur for this.

After Arthur's retirement the collection has dwindled through neglect, natural selection, the formation of Swaffield Road. This is regrettable as it would still be the best botanical garden specialising in native species in Auckland to the day.