

COPROSMA IN THE GARDEN

By: Ross Elder

The Note by Dr. P. Wardle 'Effectiveness of Distant Pollen Sources in Coprosma' N.Z.J.B. 9 : 223, prompted a closer look at the flowering habits of Coprosma species growing in our garden. Two Coprosma australis were raised from seed three to four years ago. The male plant now 2.1 m. tall flowered profusely in November 1970 and again this year from April to mid-July. The female plant 1.2 m. tall, with a better branching system than the male, and about 20 m. away, also flowered last November but set no fruit. It had started flowering again in April and still had flowers with protruding styles in the first week of August. However, no fruit had set by mid-June and pollen from the male was dusted over the flowers. From this pollination, apparently, four drupes have developed, one to a peduncle, not three as is usual for this species.

There is no evidence for anemophily but this may be because the plant has not yet settled down to producing receptive ova. A further point is that the possibility of an australis X robusta hybridisation is negated by the fact that two male C. robusta plants nearby, though covered in flower buds, are not in the first week of August producing pollen.

URTICA LINEARIFOLIA

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Urtica linearifolia is not a plant that has aroused any special interest. It is true that it has stinging hairs and stinging hairs are not common in the New Zealand flora, but it is a nettle and the sting of the nettle is a familiar idea. Besides, among the native nettles there are two that are commoner and much more widespread, one being the fierce and even dangerous tree nettle, Urtica ferox.

Allan's Flora describes U. linearifolia as growing at Waikaremoana and locally southward from 40° S, on the east of the divide only in the South Island, and Dr. Burrows in the last number of the Bulletin, when