

MOSSES ON SAND DUNES:

Bryum truncorum  
Ceratodon purpureus  
Triquetrella papillata  
Campylopus introflexus  
Bryum dichotomum

Adventive species are marked \*. It can be seen that of the salt meadow plants only two are not natives, while only four of the dune plants are natives and none of these is abundant.

In winter Scirpus americanus, Carex pumila, and Calystegia soldanella are not seen as their aerial shoots die down. Seeds of many of the adventive plants germinate in the autumn and seedlings are abundant, especially Lupinus arboreus, Vicia angustifolia and Plantago coronopus. Gorse, hawksbeard and ice-plant are flowering in July and small cushions of the moss Ceratodon purpureus are massed with immature capsules.

I am grateful to my father who chose this place with its good view of Banks Peninsula across the estuary, for a painting expedition on which I accompanied him.

FURTHER READING:

Mason R.	The Vegetation of the Coast, in The Natural History of Canterbury. Ed. G.A. Knox, 1969, pp 95-105.
Moore L.B. & Adams N.M.	Plants of the New Zealand Coast. 1963.

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A CONSERVATION PROJECT

By: Lester H. Kyle

McLennan's Bush lies at the South-East flank of Mt. Hutt, in Mid-Canterbury, taking up the floor of a small valley between the 1700 and 1800 ft. contour lines. It is part of the still extensive nothofagus forest that once extended unbroken from Mt. Hutt to Mt. Somers, and here at McLennan's Bush the beech reaches to the edge of the plains, as it does again at Alford Forest, five miles further south. This valley, which lies between Pudding Hill Stream, and a small area of downland to the north, has had the flat partly cleared for grazing, and over the cleared land a few black beech still stand scattered. There is also a fair bit of open swamp, a little cleared

hillside facing north, a small patch of mixed Kowhai - Ribbonwood bush at the entrance, and one permanent stream with a narrow shingle bed.

An area of the valley floor, approximately 7 chains long by 2 chains wide, is owned by the Ashburton County Council as a reserve; the rest belongs to the Forestry Department, and the whole is intended as a bush and recreational reserve.

A group of people from Mid-Canterbury, mostly amateur or professional horticulturists, have obtained permission from the Ashburton County Council, to use its reserve as a Rhododendron Garden, to be officially called the AWA AWA RATA RESERVE, though known locally as 'The Rhodo Glen'. Rata did once grow in the reserve, and still does grow on Pudding Hill and in some gullies a mile to the north, but none has as yet been found on this site.

By carefully using the present natural features of open grassy land, bush patches, scattered mature trees, swamp, ponds and streams, the group plan to create a garden of unusual beauty. Only the choicest specimens of rhododendron will be planted, and so sited as to harmonise with the native forest environment. Bush walks will be made, and the more interesting native species named by label where practicable, and, as members of the Canterbury Botanical Society found on a visit early in the year, there is much of interest, as well as beauty, for the area is given much botanical variety by the belt of mixed bush which forms the eastern boundary. An estimated annual rainfall of 65 inches a year gives a good collection of ferns and mosses for Canterbury, while some sunny slopes and some swamp give a further variety of environments for the local flora. Some young matais can be found in the swamp, and five species of orchids (including Gastrodia cunninghamii) have been found in the bush.

A high altitude and much shade give a very cold winter, and during this July the valley has been under a mantle of frozen snow for three consecutive weeks, so that it is not as yet known how well the Rhododendrons will grow. If they do stand up to the prolonged frosts (and it is thought that they will) members of the planning Committee will proceed to make the valley a place of outstanding beauty, botanical interest, and educational usefulness. Membership of the committee is well balanced between rhododendron enthusiasts, and respectors of the Native Flora, and by the two interests combining in this project, a botanically valuable area which until this year was grazed and otherwise neglected, is now protected, tended and its public use carefully supervised.

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