

Myrsine nummularia Hook.f. on Banks Peninsula

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Myrsine nummularia was first reported from Banks Peninsula by J.B. Armstrong (Armstrong, 1880), and his specimens from Sugar Loaf, Port Hills are now in the Canterbury Museum herbarium. However, when R.M. Laing wrote of the vegetation of Banks Peninsula, over thirty years later, he did not have access to the Armstrong herbarium and, surprisingly, he did not come across M. nummularia during his own extensive explorations on the peninsula. Hence, we find in his publications, doubt is expressed as to the occurrence of the species there (Laing 1914: p. 58, 1919: p. 399).

A. Wall writing in 1953 did know of the Armstrong specimens, but did not include the species in his Catalogue of native plants in the neighbourhood of Christchurch, assuming that it was no longer to be found in its old locality (Wall, 1953: p. 9).

Burrows (in Knox, 1969) does not record the species for Banks Peninsula.

Last summer while seed and moss collecting with Misses E.M. Chapman and B.H. Macmillan we found a thriving colony of Myrsine nummularia growing in crevices of shattered rock on the flat summit of Stony Bay Peak, alt. 881m, and again on the unnamed peak, alt. 882m to the south of the saddle on the road from Akaroa to Stony Bay. It was from Stony Bay Peak that Wall collected Pentachondra pumila; at that time this was the second record of this species for the peninsula, and it seems incredible that the M. nummularia plants should have escaped his sharp eye. P. pumila incidentally is quite common on the peninsular summits, at least on those behind Akaroa.

When we speak of the Sugar Loaf today we refer to the peak of 543m on the Port Hills summit, but I wonder whether the Armstrong locality was not the Rhodes Sugar Loaf, alt. 778m south east of Purau Bay. The altitude here would be more suitable for M. nummularia.

A visit to this area would seem to be necessary - perhaps next summer.

References

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BEECH FOREST NEAR LONG BAY ROAD, BANKS PENINSULA

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In the 1970 Journal I wrote briefly about the small remnant of beech forest near Long Bay Road, Banks Peninsula, and included a list of the species noted or collected during one visit. Last summer with Miss E.M. Chapman, Dr. L.B. Moore and Mrs. J.B. Moss a full collection was made of species present in the beech forest and the surrounding fringe of kanuka. Species additional to those recorded in the earlier note are listed below. The mosses and hepatics, all identified by Miss B.H. Macmillan and Mr. K.W. Allison include some which were collected during the earlier visit.

Hepatics:

Chiloscyphus coalitus
Frullania squarrosula
Hymenophyton flabellatum
Plagiochila deltoidea Coll. 7/2/68
Symphyogyna hymenophyllum

Mosses:

Camptochaete gracilis Coll. 7/2/68
C. ramulosa
Cyathophorum bulbosum Coll. 7/2/68
Dicranoloma billardieri
D. dicarpum
D. menziesii
D. robustum
Ditrichum cylindrocarpum Coll. 7/2/68
Hypnodendron arcuatum Coll. 7/2/68
Hypnum cupressiforme