

many set seed. A few shrubs or woody herbs I have persuaded to grow a leg or trunk  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 feet tall with a canopy reaching up to over 4 feet, a number of the smaller shrubs I "browse" with small clippers to form a middle storey while the small herbs and bulbs can fill the spaces in the "forest floor" in between. And when there is no vacant "forest floor" left the scramblers like some of the Helichrysums, Mesembryanthemums and trailing Indigofera spp. and other leguminosae just cascade over the edges. Every now and again I have a visitor from the veld of Table Mountain half a mile away as the crow flies. A small butterfly, one of the Blues like your small one came to suck the honey of an attractive biennial Lobelia but somehow neglected to see that the seeds were fertilized, one of those big mud wasps came for a thorough search of the plants for a caterpillar to stock his mud cell, another time a couple of white eyes very like your one came to steal the honey from a small red flowered legume, Sutherlandia frutescens. One spring our local dove built her nest in one of our boxes up against the window under a small bush with an unobtrusive entrance from the side of the balcony. Fortunately she was wise enough to build her flat nest of sticks higher than the water level so she was never incomodod by my daily waterings. We had an intimate view of their family life; one egg, one chick, 4 weeks to hatch, a fortnight for fledging and then the first flight and back again the 3rd day, for a short time and then their departure. The chick was evidently a male for next season he tried in vain to explain to his mate the advantages of a nest with a good food supply on the doorstep. She evidently wasn't with it and said very clearly "nothing doing". Later they came with their offspring for an occasional meal. He now occupies my balcony as his batchelor territory and defends it against all doves including his parents at meal times. When a big rock pigeon arrives he discretely turns a blind eye and moves to the other end of the balcony. I had better conclude here so as not to exceed your limited space.

7th April, 1973:

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EDITORIAL WANDERINGS

DIANELLA NIGRA

Once more following Arnold Wall's footsteps we sought the specimen of Dianella nigra recorded by him on Page 50 of the Botany of Christchurch as growing on the southern side of Cashmere Valley. To our delight we found that not only does that specimen still exist but three substantial clumps of Dianella are now growing in the crevices of the large rock he describes. We also came across the largest patch of Hypoxis hookeri yet seen by us on the Port Hills flourishing some 200 to 300 yards from the Dianella.

### MT. THOMAS

The summit ridge of Mt. Thomas at Christmas time last year was covered by an abundance of flowers. Celmisia spectabilis, Hebe odora, Cassinia vauvilliersii, Drapetes dieffenbachia and Dracophyllum acerosum, pleased the eye. Amongst these grew many other plants which included Chionochloa rigida, Geum parviflorum, Carex wakatipu and Uncinias rubra and fuscovaginata. The planting and proposals to plant pine trees on the summit and on this herbfield by the State Forest Service appals me. I would suggest that members visit this area next Christmas, one can drive on a good road up to the ridge, and pass on to the Committee their comments on the Forest Services proposals.

### CAREX FORSTERI

One does not normally consider Carex as quality garden plants. A specimen of Carex forsteri growing under my plum tree last season produced 92 graceful flowering culms. After fertilisation the culms lengthened and hung around the plant most attractively. No attention was given to the plant other than a very occasional watering.

### LEAFLESS LAWYER

Specimens of the Leafless Lawyer, Rubus squarrosus are not common around Christchurch. One smallish plant seen recently was growing amongst rocks on the ridge of the hill above the Sign of the Kiwi.

### ACACIA ELATA

The Flora of New South Wales, Vol. 2, No. 3 gives a Calendar of flowering times of some of the plants of the Sydney district. It is interesting to compare the flowering times of Acacia elata growing around Sydney with the mature specimen growing in the Christchurch Botanical Gardens. The Sydney flowering times are given as September and October whilst the Christchurch specimen was seen in flower this year from 19th February to the middle of April.

### SWAINSONA NOVAE-ZELANDIAE

Mr. and Mrs. Elder supplied me with a branch of Swainsona novae-zelandiae containing 2 fat pods on the 31st January, 1973. This was kept in water until the 14th February by which time the pods had darkened, and on opening they produced a number of small, brown, hairy seeds. I was at a loss as to what treatment to give these seeds to obtain germination, none of my books mention the sowing of Swainsona seeds. Were they to be sown as soon as ripening occurred, or did they require leaving for some months for maturing, or being alpines did they require stratification? Mr. L.J. Metcalf gave me his advice which advice I followed. I filled a pot with gritty soil, placed half the seeds on top of this, covered the whole of the top with a layer of small stones and poured plenty of boiling water over the lot. The pot was kept outside partly shaded and to my surprise

in two weeks a seedling had appeared. Within a month 12 seedlings came through with most attractive, orbicular, dark olive green cotyledons edged with a band of dark red. I thereupon sowed the remaining half of the seeds giving them similar treatment. Only 4 of these germinated which appeared to indicate that Swainsona seed need to be sown when very fresh for good germination.

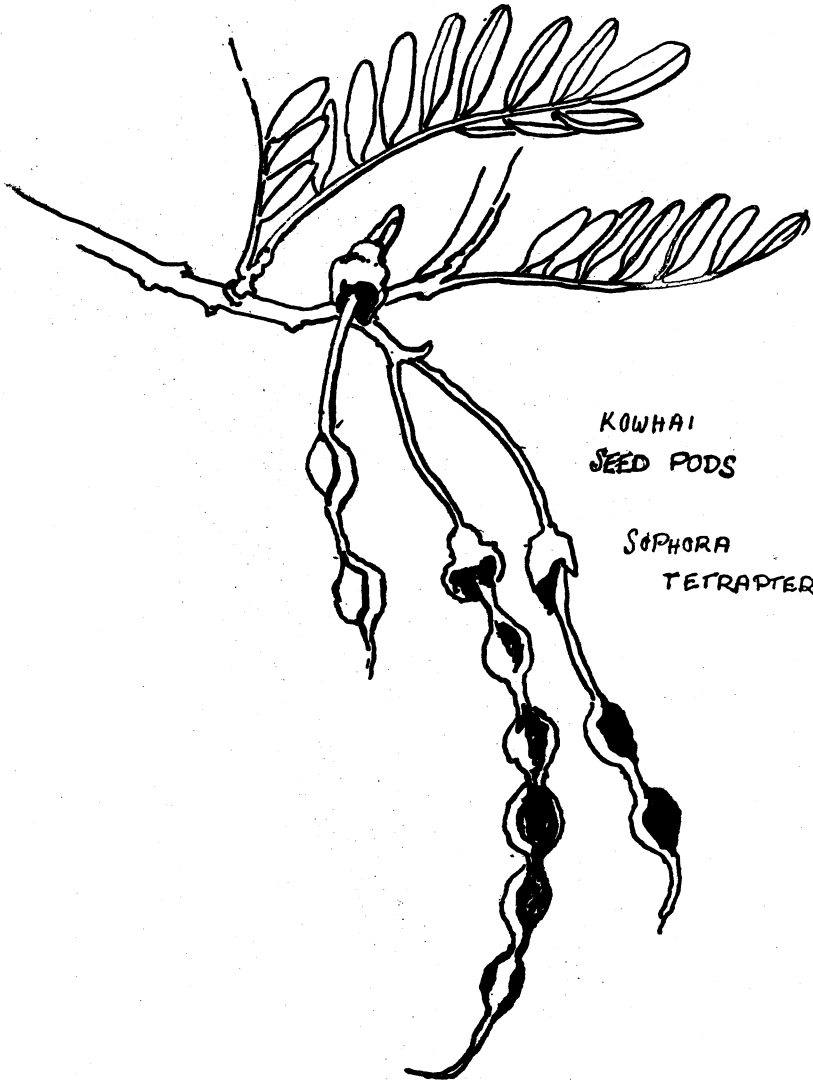
It is one thing to obtain germination of alpine seeds and another to continue to grow them to maturity. Losses have been heavy but I am keeping my fingers crossed and hope that next year I may see at least one flower.

#### SPENCER PARK

Early in December is a good time to visit the sand flats at Spencer Park. Here you will find, in variety, flowers of salt tolerant species. These include Microtis uniflora (Stout plants), Cassinia fulvida, Trifolium arvense, Lagurus ovatus, Epilobium billardieranum, Rumex acetosa, large specimens, Scirpus cernuus, Carex pumila and Carex literosa.

In the lagoon area a first finding for me was a plant that appears to agree with a description and painting of Sisyrinchium angustifolium, a visitor from America. This plant produces a succession of dainty sky blue flowers that remain open for a day only. The flowers are followed by globular striped fruits which persist for quite some time. Four flowers opened on different dates in June on a plant grown in a glass house.

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KOWHAI  
SEED PODS

SOPHORA  
TETRAPTERA