

RAMBLING ON IN KARAMEA

by Jack Ballin

Out after latiuscula to ring her neck ... pulling my and others legs into believing it was Coprosma arborea of lat. 38 ... quite a jump but anything can happen in this mad paradise ... can't find it and now nothing left but the memory of a mild rebuke from Bryony "stipules are very important in coprosmas". Up the hill to bush edge ... C. areolata is the urchin around here with C. rhamanoides, C. rotundifolia and C. propinqua not far behind. The locals all born and bred here taste the miki-mik berries warily, "why they're sweet ... could have done with them in the depression" ... anything small is miki mik ... anything bigger small tree size is a karaka "No they're not ... well what do you call Karakas ... Karakas of course ... the cracker Doctor at it again. Mostly the locals haven't seen Karakas but they are there.

Paesia scaberula is a true curse here ... the stock won't eat it ... its shade form can be truly confusing.

Now I know where the golden totaras come from ... a lovely honey shade attractive in the flower gardens ? P. hallii.

"Where did you get it from?" ... change of subject, which is Karamean for find your own.

Cyathodes fasciculata even now (April) is ready for flowering with pale green drooping racemes.

Young rimus abundant ... nostalgia for my former northern days when another genus would have been called rikkers, in similar surroundings Carpodetus serratus gnarled and surly from cow bites but just a step away in the bush she is slender and gracious. Still no sign of the elusive C. propinqua var. latiuscula at the site of former discovery ... the cows have got it that single plant ... why not before this ... because cows haven't been here before ... it was growing on grassland.

Now Div have my specimen and all I have is a memory of a stipule. C. rotundifolia shade form is a lovely damson purple ... hard to transplant to my coprosma garden ... layer it and leave the poor thing there jibes Dr. Lucy. Botany the great humbler ... but wait till you hear about the rare fern, the ultimate in embarrassment.