

40 YEARS ON ... LOOKING FOR AND FINDING LINDSAEA VIRIDIS

by Jack Ballin

Ever since I started interest in our native plants 40 years ago I had wanted to find L. viridis - not only see it - I did see it once on Mt. Burnett, N.W. Nelson, a miserable solitary specimen that somebody else found. An expert who ought to know said it might be the only plant of its kind on the range which is extensive.

Karamea was virgin country to me but when I first spotted Tidal Creek from Highway 67 I fell in love with it and determined to take a closer look. When I got settled in this beautiful part of the country the first move was to go to the Flowing Goddess as I had immediately begun to call the stream. The easiest approach is down a little road a few chains long and opposite the entrance to Lake Hanlon. It was late February - the water was warm and I began to amble down stream - here the creek side is steep true right and the opposite side is sloping - I came across a little beach and had to scramble up and over back to the water where a log and some corrugated iron are useful markers .. anyway round the corner and there it was. It took me some time to get my breath back and get a specimen. If I thought this was a unique site I was wrong because patches of it occur in the middle reaches for at least 3 kilometres, on steep wet rock with overhanging Blechnum capense and/or Adiantum cunninghamii mostly the former.

It can have a juvenile plant of about 2 cms taking up one whole position or a hundred plants in a quarter of the space, fronds mostly 10 to 25 cms. In this area at least Allens site description is more accurate than either Crooks or Field.

Karamea is wide open to the botanist. My report of this fern is the first report of any sort from the Karamea area so I expect hordes of invaders and all welcome!

On finding Lindsaea viridis at Tidal Creek

Old Timer's lone gift yields
Flowing Goddess, swift westering stream,
fair tresses parted
baring self to sentry sheer,
steeped in tender spray,
soft light just subdued.
From the tryst
spawned Lindsaea viridis.
Silent siren, how did you
this green gold treasure hold
in fast enraptured sleep
a century more -
from mind's excited wonderment ..
what now the secret's out?