

BAUMEA TENAX

by John Thompson

The fronticepiece, provided by Mr. Cecil Dunn, is that of Baumea tenax a plant rare in Canterbury. It was first recorded in Canterbury on the 25th March, 1922 by Arnold Wall from the lower slopes of Mt. Grey. The only other Canterbury record that I know of is that of Dr. C.J. Burrows in the Ashley Forest in December 1959.

A dozen tussocks were found by the writer and his wife on Ashley Forest land on damp slopes of Mt. Grey near Journeys End. This area, which at one stage was over-run with "old man" gorse, has been developed by the Forestry Service. All the large gorse has been destroyed with fire, the land pushed around with a bulldozer, pine trees planted, yet these plants of Baumea tenax have survived.

Those plants growing in the open are from 12 to 15 inches in height, those in the shelter of Leptospermum scoparium range up to 24 inches or more. All were flowering well with many leaves. A number of plants growing in a wet depression under thicker Leptospermum have produced numerous leaves 3 feet and over in length but only one inflorescence was noticed. One further tussock was found growing in the adjacent Beech forest close to the forest margin.

A suggestion made to the Forestry Service that these plants be preserved has met with a favourable response. Mr. R.G. Armitage and Mr. Wilkinson of the Service have been most helpful. It is understood that, as a preliminary step, a search will be made by the Forestry personnel to see if additional plants of this sedge are growing in other Ashley Forest areas.

---

LOBELIA ANCEPS IN CANTERBURY

by R. Mascn

When one moves to a new district it is always easier to notice unfamiliar plants than to notice the absence of familiar ones, especially if the latter are small and inconspicuous. I had been in Canterbury several years before I realised that I had not seen Lobelia anceps here. It is not a plant that makes much of a display, being an erect or sprawling, little-branched herb about 6-18 inches high, with few flowers out at any one time, quite unlike the much branched garden Lobelia with its profusion of flowers.

The stems of L. anceps are flattened or winged; the leaves are more or less upright and variable, becoming narrower and more straplike up the stem. The flowers are of the familiar Lobelia type and the books say white to pale blue, but it is certainly not a pure blue - there is a distinct pinkish tinge to it.

Reference to the Botany Division herbarium showed no Canterbury specimens although Cheeseman said "Common in lowland districts as far south as Oamaru and Okarito" and Hooker in his Handbook "abundant in wet places as far south as Banks Peninsula". Allan gives "Coastal to lowland to lat. 45° on east and throughout on west", that is near Oamaru on the east and about Chalky Sound at 46° on the west. I had not found it anywhere in the swampy areas about Kaikoura or southwards, in the type of habitat where one might expect to find it, nor anywhere along the coast.