

Notes supplied by J. Cartman Jnr.

1. The area around WHALTON is quite a bit colder than Christchurch and has snow every winter, sometimes several feet. It has regular heavy frosts of up to 15^oc - 18^oc and had very severe frosts - 29^oc at least twice in early 1977. The area is far enough inland to escape the warming effect of the sea; the altitude is 650 feet (200m) approximately. Winter lasts about six months.
2. "Cuckoo Spit" is a local (Northumbrian) name for an insect called a Frog Hopper. The insect is green, about 4mm long and it exudes a frothy mass to presumably hide it from dehydration. The insect sucks the sap from the plant. The name "cuckoo spit" comes from the fact that the insect appears in Spring at the same time as the migratory European cuckoo arrives from Africa. I think the insect has been introduced into New Zealand in recent years.

STEMONITIS FUSCA A MYXOMYCETE

By Tessa David

An intriguing specimen found on the cut surface of Radiata Pine. The base appeared as a spillage (not unlike blackcurrant jelly) from this a very fine, shiny black hairlike growth, 5mm in length then spore cases, mat black 6-7mm in length and much thicker. A specimen was sent off to Dr. Greta Cone at Victoria University, and my thanks to her for the naming and information received. "An organism halfway between animals and plants, the first stage an Amoeba which spills out on the surface of wood or bark, and crawls or flows about, then it dries and produces the sporangia".

It is of world wide distribution and Dr. Cone has seen it in Native bush areas. This specimen was collected early May, at Peel Forest and although it is not rare, it is seldom noticed.
