

ENDANGERED GORGE FLORAS?

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The recent trend in hydro-electric development has led planners to look at a wide range of potential sites including, for example, the upper Hurunui, lower Poulter and Rakaia gorges. If most of our gorges are inundated, so will be the interesting and often beautiful flora and vegetation, some of it well-nigh restricted to such sites. If members of the Society would like to be involved with a worthwhile conservation task, may I suggest that they begin to accumulate information about the flora and vegetation of Canterbury gorges. The Rakaia gorge is probably most at immediate risk and I aim to start botanizing it as thoroughly as possible within the next year. If anyone else is able to do some investigation here it will help to build up the conservation case. Members may remember John Thompson's work on the flora of Flock Hill. (Canterbury Botanical Society J. No. 5, 1972). This is now being put to work in the enlargement of the Cave Stream Scenic reserve, an example of the very useful nature of local studies of this kind.

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THE DISAPPEARING ORCHID

By Yvonne Elder

On November 26th 1977 we had a pleasant and interesting walk from the cars in the Kaituna Valley, up through the reserve, where we had lunch, then on up to the Packhorse Hut. On our homeward trip, down the west side of the valley, right on a grassy ridge, I found three little brown stems 7-12 cm tall with buds on them. A little stranger to most of us. Some one suggested Gastrodia. The only sure way to tell was to dig one plant up and there were the unmistakable tubers. The specimen is preserved at Botany Division, DSIR.

About four or five weeks later Dr. Moore and Bruce Irwin went back to the spot, which had been clearly marked, in the hope of finding flowers but the cupboard was bare; not a plant to be found. Marauding stock must have had a tasty meal. Not even the Pterostylis mutica, of which we had seen plenty, were to be found.

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Some people have fairies in their gardens, we have little tree frogs, Hyla ewingii. We also have, to our delight, seedling beech trees, Nothofagus fusca, which we hope are the offspring of the large tree planted some twenty years ago.