

RANUNCULUS LYALLII

A flowering plant from seed in 21 Months

Joe Cartman

Freshly harvested seed of R. lyallii was sown in February, 1977. Within three weeks one seedling had germinated, this was potted into a small pot. The seedling disappeared sometime during the winter and reappeared in September, 1977. The remaining seed germinated at this time.

The seedling was potted into a larger pot, produced three leaves and sat plunged in sawdust for the remainder of the summer.

In the winter of 1978 the seedling lost two of its leaves and grew another during the winter. The seedling was planted out in September 1978, into a position of semi-shade, along with several of the later seedlings. Towards the end of October a flower stalk with two buds appeared, the first bud opened on November 6th 1978, 21 months from sowing.

The plant consisted of three leaves, almost circular, 7cm in diameter with the petiole attached to the side of the leaf. The flower stalk was 20cm long with a terminal flower 5cm in diameter. The lateral bud opened on November 14th 1978. This flower was slightly smaller than the first one.

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SIGNS OF THINGS PAST

R. Mason

In 1870 Thomas Kirk, addressing the Auckland Institute and Museum, told how he had recently found a number of species that usually grow only at the coast occurring in the Waikato much further up river than could be accounted for by any estuarine tidal movement. He regarded them as too many (there were eight) and too widely spread not to be of considerable significance, and suggested that their presence bore witness to estuarine conditions at a time long ago when the Waikato River flowed, not out to the west, but eastward into the Firth of Thames.

Certainly Tetragonia expansa was only in native garden plots, and his Ruppia specimens prove to be R. polycarpa, which has often been found in perfectly fresh waters well inland. Leptocarpus simplex (now L. similis) is now known from various inland localities where there is no suggestion of saline conditions. Selliera radicans is well known to occur in high country inland in both islands, but in a distinct form; it is presumably the coastal form that was found in the Waikato. The other species were Scirpus maritimus (presumably