

of berries from green to orange-scarlet. The season appears to have suited the Myrtus family as all kinds on our tramps have shown a fine lot of flower -- some bushes were almost white -- like the faintly aromatic scent of their flowers.

One of the party found a clump of very long Dendrobium on an old piece of rata vines by the side of the track. He decided to take it home, and carrying it on his shoulder had to gather up the long stems as they trailed on the ground.

E. C. PARSONS.

#### COLONIAL KNOB, 26.2.44.

The excursion to Colonial Knob (between Tawa Flat and the Ohariu coast) was attended by 13 members. Resisting the temptation to stay in Mr. Duncan's garden we soon reached the small stream below the Mental Hospital dam, where small frogs and tadpoles proved a further and more unexpected counter-attraction. The bush filling one main gully and petering out into more or less scrubby growth on the ridges, was cool and damp even after the dry summer. Half-ripe tawa berries along the track showed opossum trademarks, and there was considerable evidence that farm animals graze from time to time within the bush. This seems a pity when it is considered that a few years ago money was spent on fences to keep stock from this valuable forest remnant.

Billies were boiled in a glade of nikau, beside a rapid little stream flowing over rocks stained with the bright maroon colour of the alga Hildenbrandia. Toasted mushrooms were a special feature of menu.

From where the scrub abuts on a grassy ridge we could see that the Knob was fogged over, and there would be no view. Some of the party decided to go on to the top to see the interesting scrub, dominated in parts by Coprosma foetidissima, and the single surviving plant of Nothopanax anomalum. The rest returned by a steep side gully where mangora, mahoe and supplejack were especially noted. This took them into the upper part of the stream bed, where the wealth of lush growth especially of bryophytes, was so attractive that progress was very slow. The two parties joined forces again over a second billy + mushrooms interlude, and then returned to Mr. Duncan's garden. Only a few of the high lights can be mentioned. The climbing Senecio sciadophilus with dainty yellow flowers; Fuchsia procumbens with erect little flowers and disproportionately big fruits; the kauri tree, planted about 70 years ago and now 70 feet high, 50 inches in girth a foot above the ground, and bearing dozens of almost ripe cones; Olearia pachyphylla (the one that has a very restricted distribution in the Bay of Plenty) and Olearia avicennaeifolia, in flower; Meliccytus ramiflorus with a wonderful show of purple fruits; Marina autumnalis in perfect flower here and there along tracks.

The Society's thanks are due to Mr. Duncan for his hospitality and leadership, and for his enthusiasm towards preserving one of the few representative patches of damp forest in his immediate district.

#### THE VEGETATION OF THE WAITAKERE RANGES.

On March 20th Miss J. Hillary gave an account of the plant covering of this low range to the north west of Auckland City. After a brief sketch of the geological history of the area she described the chief plant communities, with the help of lantern slides.

The mixed-dicotylous rain forest is extensive, mostly dominated by tawa though rimu-rata forest is characteristic especially of the heads of valleys to the west and south. Taraira, Litsea calicaris, Phyllocladus glauca, tanekaha, the large flowered Alseuosmia, Weinmannia silvicola, Libocedrus plumosa, all common species there, are notably absent at the latitude of Wellington. Platostemma rugosa, there very abundant, extends to the Tararua foothills.

Beech is sparsely represented by Nothofagus truncata, and kauri forest is the second important vegetation unit, occupying ridges in particular. The kauri itself and its characteristic bark pattern were fully illustrated, and an interesting account was given of climbing the trees for gum. Root-grafts were specially mentioned. Species accompanying kauri were shown, and the extensive kauri regeneration of this area was referred to. An all-too-brief account of the gum-lands, once dominated by kauri but now covered with low scrub, included reference to ground orchids, Drosera, gumdiggers' soap (Rondeletia elliptica), and the ephemeral pygmy lycopod, Psilopsidium drummondii.

As a separate contribution Miss Hillary brought for our inspection a very fine set of Australian plants collected by one of her pupils. They were beautifully pressed and arranged, and retained much of their gay natural colours.

A showy collection of berries, brought by members who had spent the weekend in the Orongorongo Valley, included three species of Coprosma, winberry with fruit like black currants, Gaultheria antipoda both red and white, Pratia, Vertera, Dianella, and Maire Tawake with flower buds a few inches away from its big crimson fruits.

EXCURSION TO KHANDALLAH RESERVE. 29th January.

Although only six members made this trip, to the younger members of the Society, who were in the majority, it proved a very profitable outing.

The plants visible from the main track seemed mostly very young. Genostoma ligustrifolium, hangehange, lined the track for most of the way. Small Parsonsias, for the most part P. heterophylla though one or two P. capsularis were to be seen, were just beginning on their liana life. Dysoxylum spectabile, kohokoh, was seen in quite large numbers and its statelyness was admired by all. Hedyocarya arborea, pigeon wood, and Nothopanax arboreum were less numerous than the kohokoh, and some N. edgerleyi was seen.

The only orchid noticed was Dendrobium cunninghamii, almost at the end of its flowering season. Amongst the ferns noted on the upwar track were Asplenium bulbiferum with plenty of small bulbils, species of Polypodium and kidney fern, Trichomanes reniforme. Dicksonia squarrosa was sought after by one member, but without success. At the top of the hill Coprosma foetidissima made its presence known after one tripper had toyed with it.

After a short rest, half of the party proceeded to walk over the hills to Karori, whilst the others took the more leisurely ride back in the train.

H. E. COMMON.

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