

5

A BOTANICAL TRIP TO THE NORTH CAPE.

On October 16th, Mr. Beddie gave us an account of a trip to the North Cape in the middle of June. Arrangements were made by Mr. Cameron Finlayson of Warkworth and Mr. Ross Michie of Kaitiaki, who were joined by Mr. Potts of Opoitiki and Mr. Beddie. The party was about a week away from Kaitiaki, travelling northwards via Te Kao to Parengarenga Harbour and on to a camp at Haukin's Nook. From there they botanized on the North Cape Peninsula. The return trip was by the Ninety Mile Beach. An account of the trip was contributed by Mr. Potts to the September Newsletter of the Auckland Botanical Society, and Mr. Beddie read to us a description which was published in the Journal of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture for July.

Mr. Finlayson has kindly forwarded the following notes. Many of the species mentioned were displayed as pressed specimens at Mr. Beddie's talk.

"Some thirty miles north of Kaitiaki we ran into Casuarina paniculata, a wiry parasite belonging to family Lauraceae. The local name of "tanglefoot" is apt. It grows on everything and sometimes even draws nourishment from grass.

South of Te Kao Coprosma parviflora formed an upright rigid bush, and seemed to hybridize with C. rhomboides.

We ran through acres of pink manuka, not yet in full bloom, but fairly putting our garden forms (Keatleyi, etc.) in the shade. Leptospermum ericoides var. lineatum with its fine silky-looking foliage was a general favourite. The ordinary L. ericoides was not noted north of Kaitiaki.

At Parengarenga Harbour plants of Hibiscus trionum were growing amongst recently disturbed stonework, where the seed had probably lain dormant for many years. Later this species was seen coming up after scrub fires; when closely cropped by sheep it forms mats, with here and there a seed-head popping up.

On the harbour Hebe diosmaefolia grows just above high tide mark, and the soft furry Lycopodium cornutum comes right down to the water's edge. - Nine p.m. found us visiting, by torch-light, a fine patch of Todea barbara!

From Dyson's Landing northward from Parengarenga Harbour the low-growing Pomaderris edgerleyi lined the path for two miles.

Near the base of the North Cape Peninsula, in a little meadow between low sand-hills and the higher country was Hibiscus diversifolius some hundreds of adult plants in seed, many young plants and a few yellow flowers. Not far away were the showy purplish flowers of Ipomoea palmata, and Hebe ligustrifolia, a strictly northern plant that is abundant on the peninsula itself.

Reaching the North Cape volcanic plateau, at an altitude of some hundreds of feet we were in a new land - there is nothing like it in the whole of North Auckland. Over an area of some 200 acres there are stones everywhere, and every plant is stunted and prostrate, even the tanekaha Phyllocladus trichomanoides. One just walks on the plants, Pomaderris edgerleyi, Corokia cotoneaster, manuka, and we even trampled underfoot the aristocratic local endemics, Cassinia amoena and Hebe speciosa var. brevifolia. This Hebe is smaller-leaved than the real speciosa which is now very rarely seen growing naturally; the flowers are at first wine-coloured, and then change to red; it was not seen growing except on the volcanic soil. When H. ligustrifolia grow near by the two seemed to hybridize. A few plants of Botrychium australe were seen on the plateau, and a Pomaderris, low-growing like P. edgerleyi, but with the non-scarbid leaf surface of P. rugosa. - very unlike the strictly upright shrub of the Hauraki Gulf.

The North Cape Hyloragis cartilaginea has plum-coloured leaves, but where it was growing on the poorer soil the leaves were much more green, and when they dry they lose the colour. It will be interesting to see how they behave in the garden.

We almost missed Leucopogon richii. It was growing along with L. fasciculatus and was too much like it, except that the flowers are vastly different.

Asplenium obtusatum was found on the coastal rocks, and within 300 yards of the North Cape proper masses of Sicyos angulata grow right out on to boulders that at spring tide would be swept by the sea."