

Field Trips

AUG. 7: NGAIO RESERVE

Leader: Dr. I. MORICE

An intrepid party of five set off in a light drizzle from Wadestown terminus. The drizzle became heavier but it did not deter the party from seeing some of the little known and little frequented bush of the Ngaio reserve. It consists of what is apparently second growth of good age on a very steep side of the Ngaio gorge. Seen from the Wadestown terminus the regular spacing throughout of an unusual number of spiral-shaped honeysuckle (*Knightsia excelsa*) gives it a distinctive appearance. Inside honeysuckle regeneration is profuse in places. Otherwise the flora of the reserve is similar to other forest remnants around the Wellington hills. Karaka, titoki, hinau, tawa are all common trees. The N.Z. passion-fruit (*Tetrapathaea tetrandra*) was seen in fruit. On the way from the reserve Balm of Gilead (*Cedronella triphylla*) was seen growing commonly along the stream banks. A.L.P.

OCT. 2: DAY'S BAY HILLS

Leader: Mr. A. MORRIS JONES

Ten people, including two children, joined in this lengthy outing from Day's Bay, along the summit of the hills behind the Bay, down into Gollan's Valley and over to Muritai. The many types of vegetation passed through made the trip well worth while. Few realize that the heights behind Day's Bay are over 1000 feet. On them the northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) forms a forest without developing the usual epiphytic habit. Roots almost as thick as the trunks spread for great distances over the forest floor. On these summits, too, plants such as *Libertia pulchella* and *Coprosma foetidissima* are commonly present. In the beech forests, which were passed through most of the way, *Nothofagus truncata* had just finished flowering at the lower elevations but was in full flower higher up. *Nothofagus solandri* was just coming out. There was ample evidence of an exceptionally heavy flowering season. Other plants flowering profusely were *Cyathodes acerosa* and *Leucopogon fasciculatus* on the dry slopes. *Coprosma lucida* and *C. robusta* were seen in flower side by side. At the higher elevations horopito (*Pseudowintera axillaris*) was in flower.

The leader explained that much of the bush passed through was privately owned and that its permanence was therefore by no means secure. Its decimation would be a blow to Wellington citizens, for few cities anywhere in the world have such a fine recreation forest so near at hand. A.L.P.

NOV. 6: AKATARAWA SUMMIT

Leader: Miss R. MASON

About twenty-five members travelled up the Akatarawa Valley in private cars arriving at the summit (1455 feet) at about 11 a.m. The day was fine and sunny with little wind—altogether ideal for botanizing.

The bush close to the road had been milled some years previously but old logging tracks ran here and there between the tangle of second growth and fallen logs. Kamahi was the most prominent tree remaining after the rimu had been taken out. Down the valleys and further up the ridge the bush was in its original state with rimu, kamahi and rata conspicuous. Miro and matai were present but not in any quantity. Hinau was common. The only beech seen was a clump on an exposed ridge facing north-west and scattered trees, probably red beech, along the upper part of the Akatarawa River below the road. These trees along the river were in full flower.

Several plants were seen that do not grow lower down: thin-barked totara (*Podocarpus hallii*), Prince of Wales's Feather (*Leptopteris superba*), mountain cabbage-tree (*Cordyline indivisa*), stinkwood (*Coprosma foetidissima*), enargea (*E. parviflora*), and native calceolaria (*Jovellana repens*) growing on a wet bank. A blackish-green fern (*Blechnum nigrum*) that only grows in the dampest and shadiest places in the bush was also seen. The road-cuttings were well covered with ferns and other plants, gnaphalium (*G. keriense*) and the small cabbage-tree (*Cordyline banksii*) being particularly abundant on wet banks, the former in flower, the latter in bud; on the drier faces there were a few shrubs of *Senecio kirkii*, and *Blechnum vulcanicum* with its young fronds coloured a beautiful red. *Clematis indivisa* was still in flower; some of the male ones were larger than usual and very striking. Other plants seen flowering were: hangehange (*Geniostoma ligustrifolium*), horopito (*Pseudowintera axillaris*), bush lawyer (*Rubus cissoides*), pigeonwood, wineberry and fuchsia. *Helichrysum bellidioides* occurred in one or two places by the roadside and has probably been introduced by means of wind-blown seed. One of the most interesting discoveries during the day was an unusually large morel (*Morchella*) growing on rotten wood.

The society is grateful to those members who took the party in their cars when the usual lorry transport could not be obtained.

A.P.D.

Hypoxis Pusilla

Under Amaryllidaceae Cheeseman lists one genus *Hypoxis* and some of us have long treasured a wish to find this demure and rarely seen relative of the showy *Amaryllis* and *Narcissus*.

In early September, 1948, it fell to my lot to make the rather close acquaintance of part of the vegetation of the Wither Hills, near Blenheim. They are the dry sunny slopes that rise abruptly on the eastern side of the Wairau Plain. The plant cover is thin and discontinuous, mostly of native and introduced danthonias with much annual hair grass in spring. Yet here, on bare patches between the grasses, *Hypoxis* flourished in thousands.