

# Matagouri in the North Island

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*Discaria toumatou*, tumatakuru, wild Irishman, or matagouri, is a conspicuous spiny shrub or small tree of shingle fans, river terraces and sand dunes, particularly in eastern South Island. An article on matagouri in the South Island appears in the first issue of *Tussock Grasslands and Mountain Lands Institute Review* (July 1961), and some comments appear in the second issue (February 1962). In the North Island matagouri is nowhere a prominent species but occurs widely in small pockets. I know of three small colonies on rocky sites near Wellington: Cape Turakirae (N.S.M.S. 1 N164 246102), Mt. Victoria (*ibid.* 236121), and Red Rocks (*ibid.* 231114). I have not been able to locate the colony on Mt. Victoria since the 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

Along the west coast matagouri occurs intermittently from its northern limit, on sand dunes north of the Waikato Heads, to Manawatu. I am obliged to Mr. A. E. Esler for three recent records: Waitotara Beach, on hard sandstone (N137 286980); Parewanui, near Bulls, on sand (Mr. van Kraaynoord confirms that it is growing there); and Hokio, near Levin, between the beach road and the dune forest (N152 725055).<sup>2</sup> Mr. van Kraaynoord thinks he has seen it at Kawhia and I have an unconfirmed report of a colony on dunes north of Otaki.

I have observed three colonies inland. In the Wairarapa one lay just behind the Waingawa Freezing Works (N158 308163). I last saw it in the 1930s and believe it to have been obliterated in the course of clearing gorse from a terrace. Further colonies might be found near the Waingawa R. on the other side of the road, where there is still a good deal of scrub. In Hawke's Bay a somewhat similar colony survives on a rise above the Taumahapu Stm., near Tikokino (N140 385305). This consists of 100 or more bushes, 3 to 5 ft. high and fairly compactly grouped. The branches carry a good deal of lichen but the twigs are leafy. No young plants could be found in the short turf beneath the bushes. An unexpected discovery early in 1963 was a solitary plant in heavy flower on the margin of the Inland Patea Road, close to the entrance to Timahanga Station at 2,300 ft. (N123 371347). It was on deep pumice soil formerly occupied by tussock but now covered with manuka.

Reports of any other North Island occurrences would be welcome.<sup>3</sup>

#### Editor's notes:

<sup>1</sup> A colony was still present on Mt. Victoria in 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. H. H. Allan recorded it from this locality in 1945 (*Bull.* 12).

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. F. C. Duguid reports, elsewhere in this issue, the former occurrence of a small colony near Ohau. There was a large colony at Uruti Pt. on the east coast in 1947, and in the same year one plant was seen on a stream bank between Featherston and Pigeon Bush.