

NOTES AND NEWS

Matagouri at Herbertville

It is some years since N. L. Elder summarised the distribution of matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*) in the North Island*. The discovery of another colony in May 1975 suggests that still more may yet be found in other unfrequented localities.

Among the low dunes beside Herbertville beach, about 6km south of Cape Turnagain, is a small colony dissected by a coastal roadway, south of the entrance to Pipibank station. A grassed bluff extends beachwards; at the semi-sheltered base of this, facing north and east, is a scattered group of about 25 matagouri bushes, with another 40 or so amongst the low dunes at the seaward side of the road. None would be more than about 1.25m high, and most are lower. The tops of the bushes on the exposed seaward side were dead, but on the island side there were green branchlets, some showing recent growth and small leaves. No young plants were seen. It seemed that only autumn rains had revived plants almost killed by the severe summer droughts of recent years. Other woody plants associated with the matagouri were *Coprosma acerosa* and *Muehlenbeckia complexa*.

F. C. DUGUID

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North Island and South Island forms of *Pratia perpusilla* Hook. f.

I have grown in my garden *Pratia perpusilla* collected from three different places; two North Island collections from damp ground beside a coastal lagoon south of Ohau river mouth, and from the shore of Dudding's Lake, between Bulls and Turakina; and one South Island collection from the dried bed of a winter tarn, in the Canterbury foothills near Lakes Camp and Clearwaer.

The North Island form sends up a dense and straggling mass of leafy stems forcing their way through other vegetation which is becoming rampant at the same time. It flowers reasonably freely. Later in the summer it dies down, sprouting again in the following spring unless smothered by more lasting vegetation in the meantime.

The South Island form is much less tolerant of wet, and is almost always flat to the ground, which means that it is easily smothered in garden conditions. It seems to prefer a semi-shaded gravelly site, partly because in these conditions other vegetation is not so competitive. This one flowers too, but not as freely as the North Island form.

F. C. DUGUID