

Winter 1985. The Titahi Bay *C. nana* has survived the long, dry summer and autumn quite well and might be expected to continue indefinitely but for the presence nearby of gorse. Unless this is eradicated while it is still only a small patch, the future of the *Coutula* cannot be assured. While *C. nana* has been transplanted to other sites close to the present colony, attempts to establish it elsewhere in the wild have so far been unsuccessful.

Book Reviews

"Collins Handguide to the Native Trees of New Zealand" Ken Stewart. (Pub. 1984. 151 pages. 84 species described, mostly with one or more colour plates.)

At \$9.95, this handbook is at the cheap end of what must be an already well-served market; viz. books on native trees. As so often happens, you will get what you are prepared to pay for. The advantages of this book are obvious at first glance: portability (115 x 190 mm), shower-proof cover, colour plates, simple and clear text, glossary, and index.

The book's limitations may not be quite so obvious. The first relates to the degree to which the reader might *expect* to find in the book the tree encountered in the field. Not counting tree ferns, or trees confined to islands, New Zealand's tree flora numbers about 116 species (A P Druce, unpublished checklist). This handguide contains 84 species, which, at 72 percent of the tree flora, may seem to be fair value for money. But wait: these 84 include rangiora, manuka, kanuka, and four species of *Coprosma* which often do not achieve tree status. If the handguide purports to assist the reader to identify "trees" of this size, then Druce's list of 116 trees should be extended with his supplementary list of about 46 mainland species which are "shrubs that can become small trees". This means that Stewart's handguide covers 84 out of 162 species, i.e., 52 percent of the potential tree flora, which surely limits its usefulness.

Do the omissions matter? Presumably this would depend on where in New Zealand one used the handguide, but among the widely occurring species, or locally common ones, which the handguide does not contain are makamaka (*Ackama*) [and how often in forests in Northland are there arguments over the differences between this tree and towai (*Weinmannia silvicola*) — but then the handguide does not contain towai either!], mamangi (*Coprosma arborea*), hutu (*Ascarina*), mountain cabbage tree, tawari (*Ixerba*), pukatea, mangeao, kawakawa, *Mida*, white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*) [and wouldn't it be useful if such a guide distinguished *Mida* from *Nestegis*?], *Paratrophis banksii*, *Pseudopanax discolor*, *P. simplex*, *P. laetus*, *Pittosporum ellipticum* and *P. umbellatum* [there's another tricky pair], tawapou (*Planchonella*), and swamp maire (*Syzygium*). I do not know the author's place of residence, but suspect that he is a South Islander, since most of the obvious omissions are northern species, and for some northern species which are in the handguide he has used photographs by J. T. Salmon.

A second limitation, although maybe not too important for those starting out in tree identification, is the author's generally conservative

approach to formal names. In almost no cases are there synonyms given. For example all podocarps are placed under either *Podocarpus* or *Dacrydium*, without alternatives, except for kahikatea, for which the synonym of *Dacrycarpus* is given. A world-wide upsurge in taxonomic work means that names for many of our trees are currently in a state of flux, and this book would have been more useful had it used synonyms more widely. Alternative names to those in this book have appeared in the earlier tree books of J. T. Salmon and Audrey Eagle, e.g., *Toronia* (for *Persoonia*) and *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (for *P. alpinus*). The only obvious error in names in Stewart's handguide is *Coprosma australis*, which should read *C. grandifolia*.

A third problem with the handguide is the inconsistent quality of photographs and text. The printed quality of most photographs is reasonable, but the pictures are not always going to be much use in identifying a given tree. Some shots are too distant or cluttered, and a few (such as that of karo) are out of focus. Those of whole trees (as opposed to foliage, flowers, or fruits) of wharangi, hoary mountain ribbonwood, pigeonwood, and hard beech, in particular add little to the book's usefulness.

The text items on hard beech and red beech illustrate another problem in the handguide, that being the incompatibility of details given on one species with those on similar species. As an example, on p. 90, under hard beech, Stewart says (correctly) "no domatia" under the leaves, but under red beech (p. 82) there is no mention of its having domatia, yet those holes are one of the ready means of distinguishing the two species.

Another group of "problem species" to some field biologists comprises silver pine, pink pine, yellow-silver pine, and bog pine. This book will be of little help here, since bog pine is not mentioned (since it is usually a shrub, presumably), while pink pine is described but not pictured, and yellow-silver pine has a picture of its shade foliage only.

The handguide's fourth limitation relates to errors in distributions of species, errors which are always calculated to throw the student botanist off the "correct answer" to a plant's name when he or she finds that the plant in hand is north or south of a stated range. Three of the 17 errors of this type which were noted were on *Hoheria angustifolia* (it occurs near Dargaville, which is well north of the handguide's "Taranaki to Southland"), black beech (on Little Barrier, not just "East Cape to South Canterbury"), and yellow silver pine (which is on Great Barrier Island, the Kaimai Ranges, and near East Cape, but is *absent* from the range stated by Stewart for the North Island, viz. "from Tongariro and Ruahine Mountains southwards").

In conclusion, perhaps the best way to assess the worth of this book is to judge it against its own stated aim, which is "to provide easy and portable identification of all the major species likely to be encountered."

Apart from the book's portability, I believe that this aim has not been met. The book's greatest use will be to the complete novice in the field, but sheer frustration will drive any enthusiastic beginner from this book to any of several recent, more comprehensive (but more expensive) books on the same subject.

Colin Ogle

AUDREY’S EAGLE EYE

“To illustrate all the trees and shrubs native to New Zealand” — whew! quite an ambition, reminiscent of some of those Norsemen’s oaths. Even with “help generously given” (a formidable array of institutions and individuals and presumably assurance of publication), most minds would quail at the thought of running every last native tree and shrub to earth, let alone getting it alive on to paper — AND calling it firmly by name. Not only that. Full botanical notes, maps, glossary and biographies plus bibliography take up about a third of the book. If genius really is “an infinite capacity for taking pains”, this achievement is well on the way to being a work of just that.

“The survival of all plant species” is Mrs Eagle’s concern — another tall order in a planet which has seen the rise and fall of many species in its time, and that long before *Homo botanicus* took an interest. If Mrs Eagle is thinking of *H. NON-botanicus*, good luck to her — if he’s a wealthy character, he’ll certainly be able to afford her book, and — who knows? — he might be persuaded to save some beleaguered patch of vegetation.

The systematic, severe and serious MAY begin with the text, but even they are likely to be swept away in bemused contemplation of the plates. Uncluttered by any lettering but the names, large as life, with flowers and fruit shown enlarged as well, these handsome drawings say much for the artist’s eye, the clear colours she uses and the skill of her printers. Particularly appealing is the delicacy of transition from near-white through lime-green to lemon-yellow in the *Clematis* spp. illustrated, and the silken translucency of *Ipomoea pes-caprae* . . . and all those gleaming fruit! . . . and — but reviewers cannot spread themselves. Being out-and-out botanical drawings (not impressions), these lie shadowless on their white background, leaf-arrangement plainly shown, texture conveyed. All is formal but fresh-looking; occasionally as if ever so lightly pressed, but that does not matter — *trompe l’oeil* dimension would amount to adding scent to *Clematis foetida* and *Senecio* (oops!) *Brachyglottis revoluta*. Perhaps that will come!

The inclusion of some of the smaller things like slightly woody mountain daisies comes as a pleasant surprise (when is a subshrub not a shrubby shrub?) Proper botanists who are up with their latest *Journals of Botany* will be prepared (as I wasn’t) for another kind of surprise — finding all those senecios gone over with rangiora into *Brachyglottis*, for instance. C. Jeffreys of Kew will have it so, but I see Hugh Wilson has other ideas.

With “puheretaiko”, “tupare” and “teteaweka” one feels, for once, on steadier ground than when essaying botanical nomenclature. It’s a bit of a shock to realise the Allan *Flora* is twenty years old!

Slight exaggeration, here and there, is probably a fair enough way of drawing attention to features otherwise overlooked, as (say) the graininess of native spinach fruit. Mrs Eagle’s remark about leopards and spots is timely — trees, shrubs (and subs) growing where one best knows

them, on their own ground, have their own character, seldom to be found in tame cultivated examples. *Senecio greyi* (or *Brachyglottis greyi*, if you prefer) scrabbling about its own wild habitat looks like some outlaw compared with the disciplined-looking garden bush we all know. I see we're back to *rotundifolius* for the muttonbird or puheretaiko, but nobody ever seems to illustrate the near perfect circle its leaves so often describe, where there has been no hanky-panky with "narrower-leaved forms". (I met a very Stewart Island looking muttonbird bush somewhere near Cape Foulwind, and am still beating about the bushes as to why this plant should look so different at Half Moon Bay, Mason Bay and in Queen's Park, Invercargill. I've pinched a bit of the last-named to grow at Stewart Island.) As for the teteaweka-type olearias, I'm just going to wait and see who wins, lumpers or splitters. Two or three fugitives got away, Mrs Eagle tells us; rarely, herbarium material had to be used. And keeping up with the time has meant recourse to the "unnamed, unclaimed" here and there. Can the last plant ever be run to earth, the last word pronounced? Of course not, that's the fun of it.

If Audrey Eagle was undaunted by her task, should we be at the price we have to pay for her achievement? Up to the buyer — people pay more (I don't) for clothes. It would make a wonderful gift for a retiring botanist — except that no botanist has ever been known to retire.

Sheila Natusch

Index to Areas for which Check-Lists of Vascular Plants have been Compiled Supplement 2

A. P. Druce, Wellington

In this second supplement further check-lists (Nos 194-251) are indexed. Many of these are for areas in N.W. Nelson and in order to make the index complete for that part of the country earlier check-lists from there have been included (Nos 24, 29, 66, 117, 142, 189, 192, 193). The original index appeared in Bulletin No. 39, and the first supplement in Bulletin No. 41.

Corrections that should be made to the first supplement are as follows:

- Page 73: For "Wairapa" read "Wairarapa".
For "Tokokino" read "Tikokino".
Page 74: For "Mauia V." read "Maruia V."
For "Tokokino" read "Tikokino".
For "Wairapa" read "Wairarapa".