

BULLETIN  
of the  
WELLINGTON BOTANICAL SOCIETY

June 1941

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IN EXPLANATION

The Council has long been considering publishing a journal, preferably in collaboration with the Auckland Botanical Society. The project has found favour in both centres and difficulties that have arisen are mainly due to the uncertainties of the present times. To avoid disappointing members during the delay that seems inevitable it has been decided to issue as frequently as possible, notes of the present kind. Contributions, preferably short, are invited from all members and should be sent to the Secretary for consideration by the editorial sub-committee.

BARTON'S BUSH, TRENTHAM

by Dr W. R. B. Oliver

The interest of Barton's Bush, which the Society visited on June 7th lies in the fact that it is almost, if not quite, the last portion of Podocarp forest remaining on the floor of the valley of the Heretaunga or Hutt River. When Europeans first settled there in 1839 tall dense forest covered the entire flat ground of the river valley. It differed in composition from the forest of the surrounding hills, of which many areas are still in existence, with, for the most part, species of beech as the dominant trees.

Ernest Dieffenbach, naturalist to the New Zealand Company, explored the Hutt Valley in July

and August, 1840. He says that the immigrants, having at that time determined to place the town of Wellington on the banks of the River Hutt, he found many of the settlers busily occupied clearing the ground. How well they and their successors have succeeded in this work is evident today when even the fragment of the forest that now remains is by no means in the condition it was in 1840. Higher up the valley, continues Dr Dieffenbach, the alluvial land is covered with trees, of which the rimu and kahikatea pines are especially remarkable for their size. Other trees he noted as common in the valley were the pukatea and the rata.

Today 101 years after Dieffenbach's visit, the tall trees standing in Barton's Bush are a few kahikatea, matai, totara and rata. Numerous stumps of trees, however which appear to have been felled more than fifty years ago, show that the tall forest trees must have formed a continuous tier in Dieffenbach's time. The principal tree now standing is the tawa, and associated with it are the titoki, mahoe, hinau, mapau (Suttonia australis), patete, pukatea, kowhai, and kotukutuku, Epiphytes are not particularly abundant, but there are Collospermum hastatum, Earina mucronata, Cyclophorus serpens, and Polypodium diversifolium. The parasite, Loranthus micranthus, was observed on Melicope simplex and Myrtus obcordata. Lianes are common enough, especially Tetrapathaea australis, Rubus schmidelioides and the supple-jack; also rather common is Metrosideros colensoi. The smaller trees are Myrtus obcordata, hangehange, tarata, ribbonwood, kaikomako, putaputaweta, Melicope simplex, kawakawa, and others. The tree ferns are Dicksonia fibrosa, D. squarrosa, Cyathea dealbata, and Hemitelia smithii. The undergrowth is rather scant on account of grazing cattle. In one part, however, there are a good many low ferns and herbaceous plants, and in another a thick growth of scrubby Coprosmas, mainly C. rubra and C. rotundifolia, with what appear to be many hybrids

between them. Thickets of Teucrium parvifolium flower profusely near the river.

#### LAGENOPHORA, A SMALL NATIVE DAISY

I am sure that the cultivation of these small white native daisies would be well worth while, either as border plants, as the little English daisy used to be grown or in fair sized patches as one sees at Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum. That they respond to care and attention in the way of good soil and watering I have already proved, and they make such a brave show, flowering from Spring far into Autumn and sending up new rosettes of leaves from the rhizomes or under ground runners. Indeed they seem to be the friendliest little flowers and should be much better known, especially in native gardens. Seeds of Brachycome Thomsoni, another small native daisy from Stewart Island, produced seedlings in about a fortnight after sowing in a pot. This has given me the idea of gathering the seed of Lagenophora for growing. I find that the seed when ripe is so viscid or sticky that it has to be rubbed from the fingers with a little dry earth. There are seven species of these daisies and I should be very pleased to help anyone who cares to get in touch with me about growing them.

Mrs W. W. Samson

#### ALONG THE OHURA RIVER

The Ohura River, a tributary of the Wanganui, runs through valleys among great hills. There is very little wind at all, and misty conditions and intense sunshine provide perfect conditions for trees. On the river flats parklike areas are found. Kowhai are plentiful, often in groves, great spreading trees thirty feet in height, in late spring clothed with weeping cascades of blossom above the vivid green of the pastures. Tuis and bell-birds, filled with nectar, sing and warble. Other parklike areas have Oleas, both maire and narrow-leaved kinds, young kahikatea,

rimus, totaras, miro, and matai. One great kahikatea, snapped off about one hundred feet from the ground has a fair sized cabbage tree growing up through the foliage from the broken trunk top, the more remarkable as cabbage trees are rare in this area.

Along the river banks Fuchsia perscandens with long thin trailing stems forms low mounds or climbs over stumps covering yards of ground. Clematis parviflora and various Muehlenbeckias are often part of the tangle while Myrtus bullata and many red and black berried hybrids and also Coprosma spathulata stand up amongst these trailers. Fuchsias appear also as semi-lianoid shrubs with scrambling branches, some like strong climbing roses, others having a trunk needing support. There are short trunked shrubs with many upright branches, longer trunks with slender drooping branches and variations of all kinds until the true type of Fuchsia excorticata is reached. Foliage varies too from the thin small rotund leaf of the trailer, through many forms, textures and sizes to the four-inch lanceolate leaf of the tree. Blossoms may be of many sizes and kinds, in no way corresponding to the leaf-types. Really interesting are their colours, green indigo-blue, soft blues, light reds, dark reds as the flowers mature.

In the silt at the river's edge grow that white blossomed small shrub, Teucridium parvifolium, the large flowered Pratia and a Violet. Plagianthus betulinus, with large bunches of tiny flowers, yellow-tinged instead of being entirely green, is one of the loveliest trees.

On the papa ridges Cordyline Banksii is a frequent companion of Dracophyllum strictum and Gaultheria rupestris, showy with masses of blossom. This Gaultheria is a good garden subject, forming compact bushes, flowering freely. In the papa wash area our tiny orange-berried Gunnera sometimes forms large colonies.

The rain forest of the Waitaanga Saddle above Ohura has great ratas, miro, rimu, towering often one hundred feet before branching. Below them Nothopanax laetum is at home - leaves are sixteen inches across, the separate leaflets nine inches long, sometimes glossy, sometimes dull, smooth-edged or toothed. N. Edgerlyi, lovely as a juvenile is plentiful, and N. arboreum and many hybrids. Schefflera digitata varies too, at times having enormous leaves.

Alseuosmia forms dense thickets on the roadside, seemingly coming up as second growth. The cane-like stems are four to five feet long and leaves large and broad, long and narrow, or short and narrow. The red blossoms too show differences, but all fill the air with honeysuckle sweetness. The red berries are quite attractive. Plants in the forest branch more and are often semi-prostrate.

This is a paradise for ferns. The filmy ferns, Hymenophyllum and Trichomanes are in profusion. The parsley fern, Botrychium ternatum var. dissectum is found in large colonies.

Mrs E. Gower

#### HINTS ABOUT SOWING SEED

Prepare your seed bed of light soil to allow the air to circulate. Have it well drained so that excessive moisture can escape; too much water is the cause of a large number of failures in germination, particularly with small seeds. Make the bed in as warm a place as possible, but if using heat to germinate seeds do not let it be above say 75 °F. If the sun is going to dry out your soil too rapidly shade with a piece of hessian or similar material. Always sow seed thinly to allow a sturdy plant to develop. Avoid sowing seed too deep. A good rule, especially for fine seed is to cover to twice the depth of the seed. Do not water after the first watering if it can be avoided but should this be necessary use water the same temperature as the seed box.

D. A. McLaren, Propagator for WCC

## SCUTELLARIA NOVAEZEALANDIAE

A note from Mr Beddick tells of a visit on a January evening to Mr B. C. Aston's garden in Karori. The main objective was to see Scutellaria novaezealandiae in flower. This little labiate herb, endemic to the Sounds-Nelson Botanical District, is hardly ever seen in cultivation, though its dainty white flowers and characteristic turk's cap fruits make it an attractive garden plant apart from its rarity interest. Members will recollect a small potted specimen displayed at Mr Martin's lecture. Its natural home is amongst stream-side rocks often in beech-clad gullies but it can be grown at least as far north as Opotiki and is said to be propagated fairly easily from seed. It is closely related to the scutellaries of the northern hemisphere and is the only native representative of a family of 200 species, widely distributed throughout the temperate regions.

This is only one of the treasures of this well-known garden which the Society hopes one day to visit, to see the unique collection of plants and to hear Mr Aston's tales about them.

## AWARD of the HUTTON MEDAL

On June 25th, at a meeting of the Wellington Branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand, the Hutton Memorial Medal was presented to Dr H.H. Allan, M.A., D.Sc., F.L.S., F.R.S.N.Z. This medal, which commemorates the work of Capt. F. W. Hutton, one of the pioneers in natural science in this country, has since 1911 been awarded once in every three years "to persons who have made some noticeable contribution in connection with the Zoology, Botany, or geology of New Zealand". On only three previous occasions has the recipient been a botanist, Dr Cockayne in 1914, Dr Holloway in 1920, and Dr Cunningham in 1935. The Society is pleased to see the name of one of its Vice-presidents added to this select list and congratulates Dr Allan on the high and well-deserved honour that has come to him.

## OBITUARY

Members will learn with regret of the death of Mr C. G. Bond of Petone at the age of 74 years. After joining the Society in 1940, Mr Bond regularly attended meetings and excursions and in the latter especially showed his keen and indefatigable interest in native plants and his determination to learn all he could about them.

## NEWS of MEMBERS OVERSEAS

K. Given, a member of the Society's first council, is in a medical corps of the third Echelon. He wrote from Cyprus in May and is now probably back in Egypt.

Lieut. A. L. Poole, after serving some months with the 15th Forestry Corps in England has been seconded to the High Commissioner's Office to a post where his wide knowledge of economic botany should be most useful. He writes enthusiastically about the high standard, even under war conditions, of the trade displays at the Royal Horticultural Society's show in the spring.

Miss Betty Lorimer is in Egypt in charge of a YWCA hostel catering especially for Army nurses off duty.

## LIST OF MEMBERS

Dr H. H. Allan	Mrs G. Cone
Mr A. Ainsworth	Mr S. Duncan
Mr G. A. C. Ashbey	Miss S. Donne
Mr A. D. Beddie	Mrs M. M. Davidson
Mr P. C. Barclay	Mr I. W. Davey
Mr J. W. Butcher	Mr W. H. Field
Mr C. E. Bryant, jr	Miss H. Filmer
Mr D. Cairns	Mr A. W. Fyfe
Mrs Clarkson	Mrs A. R. Gower
Mrs J. Cowan	Miss M. Gibbons
Miss P. Craig	Mr D. Gordon
Miss C. Cox	Mrs Knox Gilmer
Mr R. Carter	Mr Hope B. Gibbons

Mr J. T. Glover	Miss V. M. Norman
Miss P. Gibbons	Mr M. Nankivell
Mr K. Given	Mr A. Neil
Miss M. E. Hunt	Mr A. Norton
Mr E. V. Hall	Dr W. R. B. Oliver
Mr L. D. Haggett	Miss J. Osborn
Mr P. Haggett	Mr A. L. Poole
Mr H. Harris	Mr C. Lannie
Miss M. Hollings	Mr F. S. Pope
Miss J. Inglis	Mrs E. Quayle
Miss D. Johnstone	Mr M. E. Roberts
Mr A. Morris Jones	Miss B. Ranish
Miss D. King	Mr J. T. Salmon
Mrs H. Kirkcaldie	Mrs G. Smith
Miss D. Filmer	Mrs W. W. Samson
Miss A. E. Lorimer	Mr W. W. Samson
Miss G. Lovell	Mr W. A. Scarfe
Mrs C. Lorden	Miss P. Self
Miss L. Moore	Mrs J. G. Sinclair
Mrs M. M. Martin	Mr J. G. Stirling
Miss R. Mason	Mrs Stickells
Miss M. Mellish	Mr W. B. Stewart
Mr P. Macpherson	Mr C. Stewart
Miss W. Mather	Mr J. Sweeny
Miss E. Miles	Miss G. Swinson
Mr Wm Martin	Mr E. Grant-Taylor
Miss G. MacDonald	Miss S. Tipling
Miss J. Marks	Miss B. Taylor
Mr D. A. McLaren	Miss E. Truebridge
Miss M. McBride	Miss D. Vyner
Mr D. A. McNeur	Mr R. Walpole
Mr F. Newcombe	Mr A. S. Wilkinson
Dr I. V. Newman	Capt. G. F. Yerex
Miss M. M. Neumann	Mr V. D. Zotov

### SOS

Lycopodium spores in large quantities are required by the Botany division of the Plant Research Bureau for a war emergency project. The Society has been invited to assist in collecting and particulars are available to members interested.