

## SMALL-LEAVED SHRUB PROJECT

Hugh Wilson

This is a short account of the Society's project to publish a field guide to the small-leaved shrubs of Canterbury and Westland. The Norman Sutherland bequest.

During the 1986-87 summer Tim Galloway, a talented young artist from Wellington, based himself in Christchurch and worked steadily on the drawings for this project. He used fresh material collected by us from throughout both provinces, and on several occasions made time to join us on these collecting forays. Towards the end of the summer cultivated material of known provenance helped fill some difficult gaps. Thanks are due to John Lovis and the University's living collection of *Hebe*, to Alastair McDonald who is working on a key to the *Hebe*, to Lynda F Delph for helpful discussion on the genus *Hebe*, to Tony Druce for some *Coprosoma* and *Hymenanthera*, to Andrew Purdie for *Carmichaelia*, and to the Christchurch Botanic Gardens for a few last knotty problems in *Hebe*. Tina Troup, of Mount Cook, also cooperated readily when we requested *Hebe cupressoides* and juvenile foliage of *Halocarpus bidwillii*. As a result of all this activity and Tim's skilled productivity, all the drawings are now complete and safely lodged in Hugh Wilson's fire-proof cabinet awaiting publication\*.

Now we are working on the text and drawing the keys together. So now is the time for any members who have responded to the request for observations on any one or several species to feed this information in to the project committee - Ross Elder, David Norton, and Hugh Wilson. To make this easy a suggested draft format for the text on each species and a distributional map are printed in this issue of the journal. We have already had some comments on the format, style, and content, and further comments would be very welcome. Just make sure it reaches us, better now than late. Any bit of information provided it comes from a plant growing in the wild, is grist to our mill - don't feel anything is too trivial or too much.

Note on the map (p 38): The grid pattern shown is the one we have decided on for displaying distributional information for each species. Edith Shaw is coordinating this part of the project and is drawing on herbarium specimens; reliable, published checklists; and records now being actively collected by members on their travels. Any member, particularly those intending to travel through little-visited grid squares, could make a valuable contribution here. Please contact Edith for field maps and any further instructions you may need.

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\* The illustrations reproduced here (p 39) are from photocopies and may not adequately reflect the quality of Tim's art.

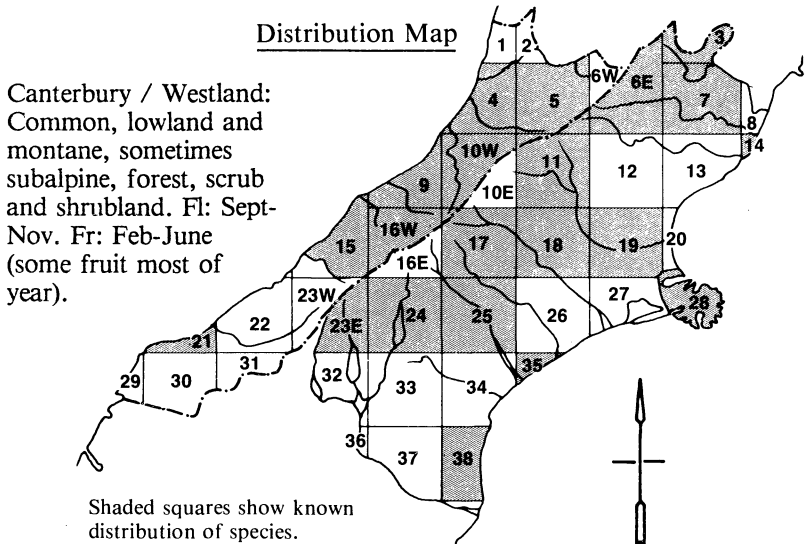
***Myrsine divaricata***

myrrh - with interlacing branchlets

**weeping mapou**

Shrub or small tree up to about 4 m, with stiffly weeping, more or less interlacing branchlets. Leaves alternate, usually heart-shaped, dotted with glands visible when held up to the light (use hand lens), smooth-edged (except in very young seedlings, when often toothed); often dark-stained at junction of leaf and leaf stalk. Fruit berry-like, bright purple or mauve, sometimes paler, but rarely white, hardly palatable.

Similar species: Easily distinguished from *Lophomyrtus obcordata* by the stiffly weeping habit and alternate rather than opposite leaves; from *Neomyrtus pedunculata* by the weeping habit, alternate heart-shaped leaves, and rounded rather than 4-angled final branchlets; and from some forms of *Coprosma* sp 't' (aff. *C. parviflora*) by the heart-shaped leaves and the absence of stipules between the pairs of opposite leaves.



Native to: North and South Islands, Stewart Island, Auckland and Campbell Islands.

Family Myrsinaceae. About 1000 species in 32 genera, widely distributed from subantarctic to tropical regions. N.Z. has eight species of *Myrsine* and one of *Elingamita* (Three Kings Islands). *M. divaricata* is the only small-leaved shrub; *M. nummularia* (see illustration) is a trailing subshrub with similar small leaves; the other six are larger leaved shrubs and small trees.

DISTRIBUTION MAP *Myrsine divaricata*