

Vascular plants in Porirua Scenic Reserve and the bush on Pikarere Farm including Mill Creek catchment

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INTRODUCTION

Porirua Scenic Reserve (previously known as Elsdon Reserve) has been the subject of a large amount of botanical survey over the years. Its proximity to Wellington (located at grid reference NZMS 260 R27 625054–630076) and ease of access means that Wellington Botanical Society members will know the place well. The authors have spent many days in the reserve, and its surroundings, over a 2-year period.

PREVIOUS SURVEYS

A number of plant checklists have been prepared for Porirua Scenic Reserve (below) and these are held by the Department of Conservation. They were all used in the compilation of this paper. Often we think that because botanists have surveyed an area in the past it is not worth going to. Our experience from this exercise is that even when expert botanists have surveyed extensively in a reserve it is still worth going back to have another look. In this case we found a number of species that had not been recorded previously including several nationally and regionally threatened species.

Plant checklists for Porirua Scenic Reserve (taken from Sawyer 2001)

- Anonymous. 1980. Native plants in the Porirua Recreation Reserve off Gillies Place. Unpublished list held by the Department of Conservation.
- Anonymous. No date. Elsdon Reserve – Native plants. Unpublished list.
- Mead, A. 1974. Porirua Scenic Reserve. Native Plants in Bush Blocks around Wellington. Unpublished list.
- Wassilieff, M. C.; Clark, D. J. 1986. Porirua Scenic Reserve. Scenic Reserves of the Lower North Island. Biological Survey of Reserves No. 14. Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington.
- Wellington Botanical Society. 1977. Native Plants of Porirua (Elsdon) Scenic Reserve. Unpublished list and report prepared for Porirua City Council.

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VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Porirua Scenic Reserve is mainly composed of a mosaic of primary and secondary forest dominated by kohekohe and māhoe. In addition, tawa occurs scattered throughout and sometimes dominant on ridges and occasionally on south facing slopes. One gully in particular is dominated by pukatea and tawa with tall rewarewa and rimu on the slopes.

On the upper slopes of the main reserve are patches of regenerating secondary māhoe and tawa scrub supporting pigeonwood and rangiora. One the lower edges are areas of grassland (cocksfoot and Yorkshire fog).

NOTABLE PLANT SPECIES

The reserve supports a range of notable plants some of which are nationally threatened whilst others are regionally rare. Most of the most notable species are either orchids or ferns. Notes are made about each of these species:

Adiantum diaphanum: A maidenhair fern that is local in its occurrence around Wellington. It is found growing at the base of a rock face on the true right at the top of the stream that descends to the Ngahue street entrance.

Adiantum fulvum: A maidenhair fern that occurs locally around Wellington. It was seen on the true right of the stream that descends towards the Ngahue Street entrance.

Adiantum viridescens: Another localised maidenhair fern. It can be found along the Rangituhi track starting at the first decking on this track.

Drymoanthus adversus: This epiphytic orchid is probably more common than reported, but due to its preference for growing quite high up in its preferred trees, it is hard to find. A few plants were seen well up the logging track above the Mill stream catchment growing on a rather stunted tawa.

Gastrodia cunninghamii: Ken Wright, formerly of Greater Wellington Regional Council, reported finding this orchid. Following his directions, a patch of 10 plants was found in full flower (15 January 2000).

Microsorium novaeseelandiae: This record comes off an old Wellington Botanical Society list and must remain open to question pending the finding of the species again or the locating of a herbarium specimen. This fern is usually found in montane areas like the Tararua Forest Park.

Mida salicifolia: The willow-leaved maire is recorded in a botanical society species list and was verified by A.P. Druce (J Coulter pers. comm.). It was also recorded by Maggy Wassilieff in 1986.

Ophioglossum coriaceum: The adders tongue fern while not uncommon on the likes of Mount Kaukau is not widespread in the Wellington area. There is a small patch to be found on the Waiho Terrace track.

Pittosporum cornifolium: This species is recorded on various lists and is probably epiphytic growing in *Collospermum* clumps but has not been recently sighted.



Figure 1. Notable plants of Porirua Scenic Reserve: (1) *Adiantum viridescens*; (2) *Pterostylis porrecta*; (3) *Drymoanthus adversus* (all Jeremy Rolfe); (4) *Microsorium novaezealandiae*, (5) *Mida salicifolia*, (both John Smith-Dodsworth); *Pittosporum cornifolium* (Jeremy Rolfe).

Raukaua edgerleyi: At least three specimens of this tree are to be found in the bush in the Mill stream catchment. This is privately owned land belonging to Pikarere Farms but which is fenced off and contiguous with the reserve.

Pterostylis porrecta: A greenhood orchid flowering in early December throughout to mid January just after *Pterostylis graminea* has finished. It was listed as rare until discovery by Peter Beveridge. There have been about five other small locations around Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa and Marlborough. It is reasonably common towards the top of the Rangituihi track and scattered occurrences lower down off the Waiho Terrace track.

Streblus banksii: The large-leaved milktree is local wherever it is found and in the reserve it can be found scattered throughout. There is a 4-metre specimen on the Ngahue Street track on the true left just before the ‘metal bridge.’

Winika cunninghamii: The lady’s slipper orchid is not common along the western hills (although common elsewhere) and the plants seen growing on tawa in the Mill Stream catchment were magnificent specimens.

WEED PROBLEMS

As with most reserves these days there are a number of weed problems that could be dealt with if some concerted effort was applied. Wandering willie (*Tradescantia fluminesis*) is the main problem species. It has quite a hold along the eastern boundary. The other naturalised plants are scattered, mainly along the boundaries and particularly where garden rubbish has been thrown over the back fence from neighbouring properties. Inkweed (*Phytolacca octandra*) is found occasionally and should be rooted out when found to prevent it becoming a major nuisance. Gorse is common on some



Figure 2. Notable naturalised plants of Porirua Scenic Reserve: (1) *Tradescantia fluminesis*, (2) *Asparagus scandens*, (3) *Lonicera japonica*, (4) *Phytolacca octandra*. Photos: Jeremy Rolfe.

ridges but is acting as a nursery plant for native species and will gradually disappear as these grow and shade it out. Other weeds that pose a threat include periwinkle (*Vinca major*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), climbing asparagus (*Asparagus scandens*), convolvulus (*Calystegia silvatica*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), cape ivy (*Senecio angulatus*), german ivy (*Senecio mikanioides*), montbretia (*Crococsmia × crocosmiiflora*), tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) and Jerusalem cherry (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*).

There does not seem to be a problem with the pines that bound the bush mainly on the western boundary. There is little evidence of wildlings and the thick bed of pine needles provides a great place for duck orchids (*Simpliglottis cornuta*) and seedling natives. There is some evidence of cannabis (*Cannabis sativa*) cultivation with old plots and water bottle dumps but no current activity was noted. *Carex longibracteata* is classed as a noxious weed and is found growing in a small patch on the clay track from Aparangi Grove to the Elsdon Camp car park and on the ridge track above Aparangi Grove.

WILDLIFE

A variety of bird life can be seen in the reserve. Some are vagrant, others more resident. Native forest birds have been observed such as fantail, shining cuckoo, morepork, NZ pigeon, tui, silvereye and grey warbler. Birds more commonly associated with coastal areas can also be seen, including black-backed gull and kingfisher. Exotic birds such as blackbird, song thrush, eastern rosella, goldfinch, sparrow and starling were also recorded. Paradise duck (with young) were also found in the reserve.

Forest gecko (*Hoplodactylus granulatus*) have been recorded in the reserve (Wellington Regional Council Operational Report 98/4). Possums, rabbits and goats (five shot by staff of Greater Wellington) have also been seen. Clearly there is a lot more to the reserve than just native plants.

CONCLUSIONS

The people of Porirua are truly fortunate to have such a wonderful native forest on their doorstep. The list of native plants for this reserve continues to grow and raises the question of what is still to be found in other scenic reserves in the region. The question of who is going to take responsibility for managing the significant weed problem remains unanswered but we hope that control will start soon.

REFERENCES

- Sawyer, J.W.D. 2001: Bibliography of plant checklists and vegetation survey data sets for Wellington Conservancy (excluding Chatham Islands). Department of Conservation, Wellington.
- Wellington Regional Council. 1998: Operational Report 98/4. Wellington.

APPENDIX

Indigenous vascular plants of Porirua Scenic Reserve

Compiled by Pat Enright, Peter Beveridge, Olaf John, Arnold Allen, Arnold Dench and Ian St George. A list of naturalised plants was also compiled but this has been omitted. Copies of the naturalised plant list are available from the Department of Conservation (Wellington Conservancy).

Key to symbols used:

* Herbarium specimen lodged (AK or WELT)

? Doubtful record

1 indicates a species not seen on current survey but listed by others

2 planted or seeded into the area

3 Found only in the Mill Creek area

4 in pasture just outside Pikarere farm fence line

Gymnosperm trees and shrubs

Dacrycarpus dacrydioides kahikatea

Dacrydium cupressinum (unc) rimu

Podocarpus totara tōtara

Prumnopitys ferruginea miro

Prumnopitys taxifolia matai

Dicotyledonous trees and shrubs

Alectryon excelsus subsp. *excelsus* titoki

Aristolelia serrata makomako, wineberry

Beilschmiedia tawa tawa

Brachyglottis repanda rangiora

1 *Carmichaelia australis* native broom

Carpodetus serratus putaputāwētā, marbleleaf

Coprosma areolata

Coprosma crassifolia

Coprosma foetidissima hūpiro, stinkwood

Coprosma grandifolia raurēkau

Coprosma lucida

Coprosma propinqua subsp. *propinqua* mingimingi

2 *Coprosma repens*

Coprosma rhamnoides

Coprosma rotundifolia

Coprosma robusta karamū

Coprosma propinqua × *C. robusta*

Corynocarpus laevigatus karaka

Dysoxylum spectabile kohekohe

Elaeocarpus dentatus hīnau

1 *Elaeocarpus hookerianus* pōkākā

Fuchsia excorticata kōtukutuku

Geniostoma ligustrifolium var. *ligustrifolium* hangehange

Griselinia littoralis puka, broadleaf

Griselinia lucida puka, broadleaf

	<i>Hebe stricta</i> var. <i>atkinsonii</i>	koromiko
	<i>Hedycarya arborea</i>	porokaiwhiri, pigeonwood
2	<i>Hoheria populnea</i>	lacebark
	<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	rewarewa
	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>	kānuka
	<i>Laurelia novae-zelandiae</i>	pukatea
	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	mānuka
3	<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>	mingimingi
	<i>Lophomyrtus bullata</i>	ramarama
	<i>Macropiper excelsum</i> subsp. <i>excelsum</i>	kawakawa
	<i>Melicope ternata</i>	wharangi
	<i>Melicope simplex</i>	poataniwha
	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i> subsp. <i>ramiflorus</i>	māhoe
	<i>Metrosideros robusta</i> (unc)	northern rata
1	<i>Mida salicifolia</i> (unc)	willow leaved maire
	<i>Myoporum laetum</i>	ngaio
	<i>Myrsine australis</i>	red matipo
	<i>Myrsine salicina</i>	toro
1?	<i>Nestegis cunninghamii</i>	back maire
	<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i> (unc)	white maire
	<i>Olearia paniculata</i>	akiraho
	<i>Olearia rani</i>	heketara
	<i>Olearia solandri</i>	
	<i>Ozothamnus leptophylla</i>	tauhinu
	<i>Pennantia corymbosa</i>	kaikōmako
1	<i>Pittosporum cornifolium</i>	
2	<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>	karo
	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>	tarata, lemonwood
	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	kōhūhū
1	<i>Pomaderris phyllicifolia</i>	whatitiri
	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>	five finger
	<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	horoeka, lancewood
3	<i>Pseudowintera axillaris</i>	
3*	<i>Raukawa edgerleyi</i> (unc)	rauakawa
	<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	patē
3	<i>Solanum aviculare</i>	poroporo
	<i>Solanum laciniatum</i>	poroporo
	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>	kōwhai
*	<i>Streblus banksii</i> (unc)	tōwai
	<i>Streblus heterophyllus</i>	tūrepo, milk tree
	<i>Urtica ferox</i>	ongaonga, tree nettle

Monocotyledonous trees and shrubs*Cordyline australis*

tī, cabbage tree

Rhopalostylis sapida

nikau

Monocotyledonous lianes*Freycinetia banksii*

kiekie

Ripogonum scandens

supplejack

Dicotyledonous lianes and related trailing plants*Clematis forsteri*

	<i>Clematis paniculata</i>	puawānanga
	<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>	akatea
	<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>	
	<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>	akatea
	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>	pōhuehue
	<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	pōhuehue
1	<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i> × <i>M. complexa</i>	
	<i>Passiflora tetrandra</i>	passion vine
1	<i>Parsonia capsularis</i>	
	<i>Parsonia heterophylla</i>	kaihua, N.Z. jasmine
	<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	tātārāmoa, bush lawyer
3	<i>Tetragona trigyna</i> (unc)	native spinach
Psilopsids, Lycopods and Quillworts		
3	<i>Lycopodium varium</i>	
	<i>Lycopodium volubile</i>	waewae koukou
Ferns		
	<i>Adiantum cunninghamii</i>	maidenhair fern
*	<i>Adiantum diaphanum</i> (unc)	
*	<i>Adiantum fulvum</i> (unc)	
*	<i>Adiantum viridescens</i>	
	<i>Anarthropteris lanceolata</i>	
	<i>Arthropteris tenella</i>	jointed fern
3	<i>Asplenium appendiculatum</i> subsp. <i>maritimum</i> (unc)	
	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	manamana, hen and chicken fern
	<i>Asplenium flabellifolium</i>	necklace fern
	<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>	hanging spleenwort
	<i>Asplenium gracillimum</i>	
	<i>Asplenium hookerianum</i>	
	<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	huruwhurwhenua, shining spleenwort
	<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	petako, sickle spleenwort
	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i> × <i>A. hookerianum</i>	
	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i> × <i>A. flaccidum</i>	
	<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i> × <i>A. flaccidum</i> (unc)	
	<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	nini
	<i>Blechnum discolor</i>	piupiu, crown fern
	<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>	thread fern
	<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	kiwakiwa
	<i>Blechnum membranaceum</i>	
?	<i>Blechnum montanum</i>	
	<i>Blechnum novae zelandiae</i> (both forms)	kiokio
1	<i>Blechnum pennamarina</i>	
3	<i>Blechnum procerum</i>	
1	<i>Blechnum vulcanicum</i>	
*	<i>Blechnum chambersii</i> × <i>B. membranaceum</i> (unc)	
	<i>Cyathea cunninghamii</i> (unc)	gully tree fern
	<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	ponga, silver fern
	<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>	mamaku

	<i>Cyathea smithii</i>	
	<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki
1	<i>Grammitis billardieri</i>	
	<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	mata, water bracken
	<i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i>	
2	<i>Hymenophyllum dilatatum</i>	
3	<i>Hymenophyllum nephrophyllum</i>	
3	<i>Hymenophyllum rarum</i> (unc)	
	<i>Hymenophyllum revolutum</i>	
1	<i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i>	
	<i>Hypolepis ambigua</i>	
3	<i>Hypolepis lactea</i>	
	<i>Hypolepis rufobarbata</i>	
	<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i>	
	<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>	
	<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i>	××
	<i>Lastreopsis velutina</i>	
1	<i>Leptolepia novaezelandiae</i>	
	<i>Leptopteris hymenophylloides</i>	
1?	<i>Microsorium novaezelandiae</i>	
	<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i> subsp. <i>pustulatum</i>	kōwaowao, hound's tongue
	<i>Microsorium scandens</i>	mokimoki, scented fern
	<i>Ophioglossum coriaceum</i> (unc)	adders tongue fern
	<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	matata, scented fern
	<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>	tarawera, button fern
	<i>Polystichum richardii</i>	pikopiko
*	<i>Polystichum silvaticum</i>	
	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>	pūniu
	<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	pākauroharoha, gully fern
	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	rauaruhe, bracken
	<i>Pteris macilentia</i>	sweet fern
	<i>Pteris tremula</i>	turawera, shaking brake
	<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	ota, leather-leaf fern
	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	
	<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>	
	<i>Trichomanes endlicherianum</i>	
	<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	
Orchids		
	<i>Acianthus sinclairii</i>	
	<i>Chiloglottis cornuta</i>	duck orchid
	<i>Corybas trilobus</i>	spider orchid
3	<i>Drymoanthus adversus</i> (unc) on tawa	
	<i>Earina autumnalis</i>	
	<i>Earina mucronata</i>	
3	<i>Gastrodia cunninghamii</i> (unc)	
	<i>Microtis unifolia</i>	onion leaved orchid
	<i>Pterostylis banksii</i>	tutukiwi
	<i>Pterostylis graminea</i>	
	<i>Pterostylis montana</i>	

- * *Pterostylis porrecta*
Thelymitra longifolia
- 3 *Winika cunninghamii* lady's slipper orchid
- Grasses**
- 1 *Cortaderia toetoe* toetoe
Microlaena avenacea bush rice grass
Microlaena stipoides
Poa anceps subsp. *anceps* (unc)
Rytidosperma gracile
- 3 *Rytidosperma unarede*
- Sedges**
- 2 *Carex comans*
Carex dissita
Carex flagellifera
Carex forsteri
Carex geminata
Carex lambertiana
- 1 *Carex lessoniana*
Carex secta pūrei
Carex virgata
- 3 *Carex* cf. *testacea*
- 1 *Cyperus ustulatus*
- 1 *Eleocharis acuta*
Gahnia pauciflora
Isolepis inundata (unc)
Isolepis prolifer
Isolepis reticularis
- 1 *Schoenus maschalinus*
Uncinia banksii
Uncinia scabra
Uncinia uncinata watu, hook grass
- Rushes and allied plants**
- Juncus australis*
- 1 *Juncus pallidus*
Juncus planifolius
Juncus sarophorus
- 3 *Luzula picta* var *picta*
- Remaining Monocotyledonous plants**
- Astelia fragrans* karearea
Astelia solandri
Collospermum hastatum
Libertia grandiflora
Libertia ixioides (unc)
- Daisy-like herbs (Composites)**
- 1? *Anaphaloides bellidioides*
Cotula australis
Gnaphalium audax (unc)
Gnaphalium gymnocephalum
Gnaphalium involucreatum (unc)

Helichrysum filicaule
Lagenifera pumila (unc)
Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum
 1 *Raoulia glabra*
Senecio hispidulus
Senecio minimus

Dicotyledonous herbs other than Composites

- Acaena anserinifolia* bidibidi
- 3 *Aciphylla squarrosa* (unc)
Cardamine sp. (*C. debilis* agg.) (“Glossy Leaf” of Pritchard 1957)
Cardamine sp. (*C. debilis* agg.) (“Long Style” of Pritchard 1957)
Cardamine sp. (*C. debilis* agg.) (“Narrow Petal” of Pritchard 1957)
Centella uniflora
Dichondra repens
- * *Dichondra* sp. Lamina glabrous on top and sparsely hairy below, upto 12 mm in diameter, emarginate, petiole to 37 mm length with sparse appressed hairs, 23 mm between petioles. Flower 5–6 mm diameter, sepals and petals about equal length, sepals obovate with appressed hairs. Capsule 2 mm in diameter, round and hairy
- Epilobium chionanthum* (unc)
- 4 *Epilobium komarovianum* (unc)
Epilobium rotundifolium
Galium propinquum
- 3 *Geranium microphyllum*
Haloragis erecta
Hydrocotyle heteromeria
Hydrocotyle moschata
Hydrocotyle novae-zeelandiae var. *montana*
Leptostigma setulosum
- 1 *Nertera depressa*
Oxalis exilis yellow oxalis
Parietaria debilis
- 3 *Plantago raoulii*
Ranunculus reflexus mārūrū, hairy buttercup
Stellaria parviflora chickweed
Urtica incisa nettle
- 4 *Wahlenbergia racemosa*
Wahlenbergia violacea
- 4 *Wahlenbergia racemosa* × *W. violacea* (unc) pale blue flowers