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## Kakabeak under attack

#### C J Green & G Atkins

During August - September 2004 an area of the threatened plant *Clianthus maximus* (kakabeak) was being monitored (by GA) near Te Puia Springs on the East Coast. Increasing levels of damage were recorded and there was concern for the plants survival so samples were sent to CG for identification. Initially it was presumed the culprit was the well known kowhai moth (*Uresiphita polygonalis maorialis*) (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) which is a well known native

defoliator of various Fabaceae, particularly kowhai (*Sophora* species) and broom (*Carmichaelia* species) and is known from kakabeak.

On receipt of the caterpillar sample it was clear that two species were involved and neither of them being kowhai moth. Caterpillars were reared through to adult on the foliage sample to reveal one native and one exotic species. The majority were the native *Pasiphila melochlora* (Lepidoptera: Geometridae), a somewhat uncommon looper species - see Fig. 1. The second species represented by just a few individuals, was a well known Australian leafroller pest, the light brown apple moth (*Epiphyas postvittana*) (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae).

*P. melochlora* is widely distributed from mid-North Island to West Coast - Otago and is usually associated with native broom (*Carmichaelia* species). Thus it is perhaps not unexpected to see it on kakabeak but despite that the present record is the first known from this host. It is of some entomological, not to mention botanical interest that the caterpillars clearly took to the host with some vigour. The site consisted of about 20 six year old kakabeak planted on a roadside area of about 0.25 ha. Every plant was infested and damage progressed to near defoliation thus requiring an insecticide application to save the plants.

The second caterpillar species, the light brown apple moth, was somewhat incidental compared to *P. melochlora*. It is an Australian leafroller which has a very wide host range of both New Zealand native and exotic plants. The leafroller is well known to the horticulture and nursery industries with some crops,

e.g. apples, requiring regular insecticide applications to produce blemish-free fruit. Thus it is no surprise to see a few of these on kakabeak.



Fig 1. Pasiphila melochlora

Larval and adult *P. meochlora* material has been lodged with the New Zealand Arthropod Collection, Landcare Research Ltd, Tamaki, Auckland.

# New exotic plant records, and range extensions for naturalised plants, in the northern North Island, New Zealand

P J de Lange, T J P de Lange & F J T de Lange

### Introduction

This article reports the naturalisation of 32 new exotic taxa from the northern portion of the North Island of New Zealand (that area roughly north of latitude 38°S). Three families (Blechnaceae, Ginkgoaceae, Dilleniaceae), and ten genera are additions to the New Zealand Naturalised Flora (see Webb et al. 1988, Webb et al.1995; Heenan et al. 1998; Heenan et al. 1991; Heenan et al. 2002; Heenan et al. 2004; Sykes 1992, Sykes 2005). Of these 32 additions, only two species of *Oxalis* are regarded as fully naturalised.

We also provide range extensions for a further 24 vascular plant taxa that have been recorded as partially established in past weed listings (ibid.). Most of these records stem from urban habitats where they have arisen as garden escapes. Previously the distinction between naturalised species, casuals, garden escapes and discards has never been precisely defined in New Zealand literature. Some may not see a need to do this but we suggest that it is vital first-step toward understanding the processes of exotic plant establishment, and also to help provide some guide to determine whether control measures are needed. In our view the New Zealand flora is already well endowed with exotic plants which, had steps been taken to control them during their initial phase of establishment, they would not be the problem they are

now. We have found that a useful guide toward the development of such a classification is the work of Clement & Foster (1994). We borrowed two of their terms, "Established" and "Casual", in more or less the sense they used them.

### **Proposed Classification**

#### Established

These are, in our view anyway, taxa which are now as a rule, a permanent part of our day to day landscape. They have achieved this status through successful spread by sexual, asexual or a combination of both reproductive pathways, and their complete eradication now seems unlikely. There are many examples of plants which fit this definition, here we choose two, pampas grass Cortaderia selloana, and monkey apple (Acmena smithii). Both species are abundant, self reproducing, and are now fully integrated into the New Zealand landscape. The notable exception to this definition are those species with bird dispersed fruit which, while spatially uncommon, have the ability to spread rapidly, and often undetected for considerable lengths of time. A good example of this would be the Mickey Mouse plant (Ochna serrulata) which was regarded as "fully naturalised" by Heenan et al (1999), though at that time the authors noted that it was never common. Whilst still uncommon, it has now