

THE FLORA OF "NANCY'S HOTEL"

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In April 2003, work began on the demolition of a well-known Christchurch landmark, Nancy's Hotel, situated at the city end of Riccarton Road opposite the entrance to Hagley Park. Demolition was completed in June 2003, and the site formerly occupied by the building, covering an area of about 1600 m², was cleared of debris and leveled and has remained vacant ever since. Nancy's Hotel, a relatively modern building, had replaced others on the same site, the first of which was built in 1852 and known as the "Traveller's Rest", and subsequently the "Plough Inn" and the "Riccarton Hotel" (Hopwood 1994). Thus this site had been covered effectively for the last 153 years, and at the time of demolition was surrounded by asphalt car parks, footpaths, roads, and other buildings.

Colonisation of the cleared site by a wide range of plants was rapid, resulting in a more or less continuous cover of vigorous vegetation after about 18 months. Such vigour can be attributed to the moderate to high levels of soil fertility generated by disturbance and exposure. For two consecutive summers I noted the species that arrived and colonised the site. A total of 108 species was recorded during that time (Table 1). At present, the flora appears to have reached a state of equilibrium with no newcomers apparent.

The species recorded and listed in Table 1 are not all that remarkable. Some like pansy and snapdragon are clearly garden escapes. Many others like shepherd's purse and the docks are common weeds of gardens and vacant urban land. Two nearby sites, the northern rail corridor and the derelict former Canterbury Saleyards, are potential seed sources of many of the species listed. Nearby gardens and possibly Hagley Park are also likely sources of most of the woody plants present such as seedling silver birch and elm. The invasion of gorse and broom, including white broom, is a little surprising so close to the city centre. So too is the presence of the site specific floating sweet grass *Glyceria declinata* and the bristle grass *Setaria parviflora*, a novelty in Christchurch.

The dicot herbs present are a familiar lot, although it is unusual to find so many species of clover in such a relatively small area; no doubt a reflection of the enhanced fertility of the site. Not surprisingly, naturalised plants

dominate the flora, but apart from the initial abundance of the scentless mayweed *Tripleurospermum indorum*, most of the species are evenly spread across the site. Of particular interest is the presence of a small number of widespread "weedy" plants, including the endemic rush *Juncus distegus*, and four, *Juncus pallidus*, *Lachnagrostis filiformis*, *Senecio quadribacteolata*, and a form of *Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum*, that are usually regarded as native but for which nativity is actually very much in doubt.

The Nancy's Hotel site is one of several in Christchurch where older buildings have been demolished recently to make way for redevelopment such as urban infill. Many of these cleared sites remain vacant. In the meantime, they are readily invaded by naturalised plants, providing a useful source of study of these highly competitive and successful elements of the New Zealand flora. These plants deserve our attention if only to record their continued presence and possible new additions to the naturalised flora. New Zealand in general and Canterbury in particular are well served by the comprehensive treatment of our naturalised plants, beginning with the pioneer studies of the Armstrongs, father and son (J. F. Armstrong 1870, 1872; J. B. Armstrong, 1880), Allan (1940), Healy (1959, 1969, 1995), and Webb et al. (1988). These studies are valuable benchmarks for future observations.

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Table 1. Vascular plants of the former site of Nancy's Hotel, Riccarton, Christchurch, 2003-2005.

Dicot trees, shrubs and lianes

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Betula pendula</i>	silver birch
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	buddleia
<i>Calystegia silvatica</i>	great bindweed
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	old man's beard
<i>Cytisus multiflorus</i>	white broom
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	broom
<i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy
<i>Lupinus arboreus</i>	tree lupin
<i>Malva neglecta</i>	dwarf mallow
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	large-flowered mallow
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	bittersweet
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	gorse
<i>Ulmus xhollandica</i>	elm

Monocot herbs

<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	browntop
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	ripgut brome
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	soft brome
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	barren brome
<i>Bromus willdenowii</i>	prairie grass
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	pampas grass
<i>Critesion murinum</i>	barley grass
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	twitch, couch

<i>Glyceria declinata</i>	floating sweet grass
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	toad rush
<i>Juncus distegus</i>	rush
<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	rush
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i>	NZ wind grass
<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	Italian ryegrass
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial ryegrass
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual poa
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	rough-stalked meadow grass
<i>Setaria parviflora</i>	bristle grass
<i>Vulpia myuros</i>	vulpia hairgrass

Dicot herbs

<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
<i>Amaranthus deflexus</i>	prostrate amaranth
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	pimpernel
<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	snapdragon
<i>Arctium lappa</i>	burdock
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy
<i>Brassica rapa</i>	wild turnip
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	shepherd's purse
<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>	annual mouse-ear chickweed
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fathen
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Californian thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Scotch thistle
<i>Conyza albida</i>	broad-leaved fleabane
<i>Conyza bilbaoana</i>	Canadian fleabane
<i>Conyza bonariensis</i>	wavy-leaved fleabane
<i>Coronopus didymus</i>	twin cress
<i>Cotula australis</i>	soldier's button
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	hawksbeard
<i>Dianthus armeria</i>	Deptford pink
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	tall willow-herb
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	storksbill
<i>Euphorbia pepus</i>	milkweed
<i>Fumaria muralis</i>	scrambling fumatory
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	catsear
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	prickly lettuce
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	red dead nettle
<i>Lepidium pseudotasmanicum</i>	twin-leaved cress
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	oxeye daisy
<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	purple linaria
<i>Lotus tenuis</i>	birdsfoot trefoil

<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>	rose campion
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	rayless chamomile
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	black medick
<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>	garden forget-me-not
<i>Orobancha minor</i>	broomrape
<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	wild parsnip
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	narrow-leaved plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	broad-leaved plantain
<i>Polycarpon tetraphyllum</i>	allseed
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	wireweed
<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>	willow weed
<i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i>	cudweed
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	clustered dock
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	procumbent pearlwort
<i>Senecio glomeratus</i>	fireweed
<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	cotton fireweed
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	groundsel
<i>Senecio skirrhoden</i>	gravel groundsel
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	hedge mustard
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	black nightshade
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	sow thistle
<i>Spergula arvensis</i>	spurrey
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	sand spurrey
<i>Stellaria media</i>	chickweed
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	dandelion
<i>Trifolium arvense</i>	haresfoot trefoil
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	suckling clover
<i>Trifolium fragiferum</i>	strawberry clover
<i>Trifolium glomeratum</i>	clustered clover
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
<i>Trifolium striatum</i>	striated clover
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	scentless mayweed
<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	woolly mullein
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	field speedwell
<i>Veronica persica</i>	scrambling speedwell
<i>Vicia hirsuta</i>	hairy vetch
<i>Viola xwittrockiana</i>	pansy

Dicot trees, shrubs and lianes = 14; Monocot herbs = 22; Dicot herbs = 72.
Total = 108