

DAY 3 MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2015

BEEBY'S KNOB, MARLBOROUGH

Paul Maurice

Another warm sunny morning saw us making our way up the 4WD vehicle track to Beeby's Hut, near the summit of Beeby's Knob (alt. 1442 m). Here we spent an enjoyable day botanising in the tussock grasslands, herbfields and on the occasional rocky outcrops.

At the upper limit of beech forest near the hut were *Coprosma pseudocuneata*, *C. pseudociliata* and *C. tayloriae*. The latter two species were superficially similar, but the leaves of *C. pseudociliata* are widest at the middle rather than towards the tip, and more consistently hairy than those of *C. tayloriae*. Out in the open were the typical alpine coprosmas *C. cheesemanii* (sprawling), *C. fowerakeri* (more upright with thick leaves, ageing yellow) and *C. perpusilla* ssp. *perpusilla* forming a turf. Three species of gymnosperm shrub were noted: *Halocarpus bidwillii* near the treeline, *Lepidothamnus laxifolius* and *Podocarpus nivalis*. *Olearia nummulariifolia* and *Myrsine nummularia* were also seen.

The showy alpine herbs included six celmisias, *Celmisia semicordata*, *C. spectabilis* ssp. *spectabilis*, *C. laricifolia*, *C. sessiliflora* (Fig. 6, p. 53), *C. sinclairii* (both leaf surfaces green), and *C. discolor* (upper leaf surface greenish, lower silky white), *Raoulia grandiflora*, *Gentianella montana* ssp. *montana* (Fig. 7, p. 53), *Brachyglottis bellidioides*, *Epilobium alsinoides* agg., and *Euphrasia monroi* (Fig. 8, p. 54). Cushions of *Phyllachne colensoi* were also putting on a good display. *Epilobium brunnescens* was common in wet areas. Some close-up botanising yielded *Forstera tenella*, *Prasophyllum colensoi* and *Pimelea oreophila* ssp. *hetera*. *Ranunculus verticillatus* had finished flowering.

We were able to compare three southern heath species, *Acrothamnus colensoi* (a stout shrub up to 40 cm tall), *Pentachondra pumila* (forming mats, with leaves of a similar colour above and below), and *Montitega dealbata* (also forming mats, but with leaves whitish on the underside). *Dracophyllum pronum* was common. The Gillers found a herb that looked not unlike the surrounding *Anisotome aromatica*, but which turned out to be *Chaerophyllum colensoi*, distinguished from the former in one respect by having leaflets extending only half-way down the rhachis, rather than the whole way. I shall not mistake these two species in future!

Pittosporum anomalum was growing as low flat bushes looking very much like *Melicytus alpinus* at first glance, but distinguished on closer inspection by some of the leaves having weakly toothed margins. With Alastair's help we were able to identify several hebes during the day: *Hebe odora*, *H. canterburiensis*, *H. cryptomorpha*, *H. macrantha* var. *brachyphylla*, *H. decumbens*, *H. masoniae*, *H. lycopodioides*, *H. hectorii* ssp. *coarctata*, along with *H. vernicosa* and *H. leiophylla* below the treeline. See Alastair's informative article "Hebes of the Summer Camp" below, reproduced from the February 2015 edition of the Canterbury Botanical Society Newsletter.

A rocky outcrop and stonier ground yielded *Raoulia bryoides*, *Aciphylla monroi*, *Colobanthus acicularis*, *Scleranthus uniflorus* (golden-green mats, single flowers, four sepals), and *S. brockiei* (bright green mats, paired flowers, five sepals). I find the newly-named *Montia* species difficult to tell apart, but the appearance, the locality and the species recorded on the 1992 Nelson Botanical Society list for this area made *Montia calycina* the most likely identity for an attractive species growing on gravelly ground. This was another enjoyable day, with magnificent views and interesting botanising.

DAY 4 TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2015

MOUNT ARTHUR SUMMIT SUB-GROUP

Paul Maurice

While the rest of the group explored the forest above Flora Saddle, four of us took advantage of the glorious weather to tramp to the summit of Mount Arthur (altitude 1795 m) and enjoy the alpine flora and expansive views on the way. Being a marble mountain, Mount Arthur is home to some interesting plant species and also offers some good karst landscapes.

The day started auspiciously with the sighting of a pair of kakariki flying across the track in front of us and of numerous riflemen seen quite close up. *Hebe vernicosa* was growing just below the tree-line. Above the tree-line we were soon seeing a great variety of hebes, including the glaucous *H. albicans* and *H. topiaria*, the low, round-headed *H. masoniae*, *H. macrantha* var. *brachyphylla* covered in white flowers, the low-growing *H. macrocalyx* var. *humilis*, the whipcords *H. ochracea* (At Risk – naturally uncommon), and *H. hectorii* ssp. *coarctata*, and the semiwhipcord *Leonohebe ciliolata*.