Day 6 Thursday 15 January 2015 Te Kaainga Tawhai Covenant

Miles Giller

After several days clambering over mountain tops, this day offered the chance for a more leisurely stroll through some lower altitude forest at the Te Kaainga Tawhai QEII covenant of Scott Nicol and Maria Deutsch. Located in the upper Clarke River catchment, this 39 ha covenant backs onto Kahurangi National Park, and shares some of the park's botanical interest. The forest canopy is dominated by black beech (Fuscospora solandri), red beech (F. fusca) and silver beech (Lophozonia menziesii), with hard beech (F. truncata) and kanuka (Kunzea ericoides) more dominant on drier ridges above the valley floor. Occasional kahikatea (Dacrycarpus dacrydioides), rimu (Dacrydium cupressinum), matai (Prumnopitys taxifolia), mountain totara (Podocarpus cunninghamii) and pokaka (Elaeocarpus hookerianus) occurred throughout. The lush understorey supported ten species of coprosma including Coprosma colensoi and C. foetidissima, which along with Quintinia serrata and kamahi (Weinmannia racemosa) reminded us that we were getting close to the wetter West Coast.

Beside the walking track we were at first mystified by several delicate ferns. eventually realising that we were looking at not just Prince of Wales feather fern (Leptopteris superba) and single crape fern (Leptopteris hymenophylloides), but also a range of hybrids between the two. Filmy ferns were abundant, including Hymenophyllum bivalve, H. demissum, H. flabellatum, H. multifidum, and H. villosum. Two fork ferns *Tmesipteris elongata* and *T. tannensis* (the latter with characteristically biconic synangia) were both seen growing on deep litter mounds under hard beech. *Raukaua anomalus* was particularly abundant and several *R*. anomalus x simplex hybrids were seen, but with no sign of the latter parent. Two *Pittosporum rigidum* plants were spotted, their denser and less regular growth habit betraying their presence. The particularly glossy new growth of Pseudowintera axillaris differentiated it from the more familiar pepperleaf (P. colorata), whilst Alseuosmia pusilla could only be differentiated by its generally smaller size and its larger fruit. Up on the ridge crests southern rata (*Metrosideros umbellata*) and mountain celery pine (Phyllocladus alpinus) occurred as rather stunted shrubs or small trees. Both scarlet mistletoe (Peraxilla colensoi - Declining) and yellow mistletoe (Alepis flavida - Declining) (Fig. 19, p 60) were eventually located. In some cases protective metal bands have been installed on the host trees to prevent access by hungry possums.



Figure 19 Yellow mistletoe (*Alepis flavida*) hosted on hard beech.

All through the covenant area we saw traps for animal pests. It quickly became obvious to us that the area was lovingly looked after by enthusiastic and knowledgeable landowners. A species list was compiled, with a copy provided for Maria and Scott as thanks.

HEBES OF THE SUMMER CAMP 9-15 JANUARY 2015

Alastair Macdonald

Day 1 saw us heading up the DOC 4WD road to the Red Hills hut a long, steep and winding 7 km above the Wairau Valley in conjunction with the Wellington Botanical Society in a convoy of six vehicles and about 30 people. The red serpentine rock outcrop made the botany very interesting as there are species up there that are not found anywhere else.

As we came up the road we saw *Hebe leiophylla* on the track sides inside the beech forest. *Hebe leiophylla* is a tall spindly hebe of about 0.75-1.5 m. It has a rounded leaf bud sinus characteristically surrounded by hair from the lower leaf and petiole margin. The leaves are usually 15-40 x 4-8 mm