

hemp (*Furcraea foetida*) on the coastal cliffs in Mansion House Bay.

Sandra investigated the Redwood Track and reported a grand clump of coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), two bad weeds – lantana (*Lantana camara*) and moth plant (*Araujia hortorum*), and some noteworthy natives too: *Tmesipteris tannensis*

and a big kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*).

By 4.30 pm most had had enough walking, and the ferry was ready for the return trip to Sandspit, which we did via a stop at the South Cove wharf. Thanks to Mike for a great botanists' picnic day.

Previous Bot Soc trips to Kawau Island on record have been reported as follows:

Gardner, R.O. 1993: Some plants of Kawau Island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 48: 2-5.

Goffart-Hall, L. 1997: Notable trees of Mansion House, Kawau Island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 52: 63-64.

McSweeney, C. 1997: Kawau Island botanical dilemma. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 52: 61-63.

Wilcox, M.; Young, M.; Beever, J.; Kooperberg, R. 2004: Vegetation and flora of North Cove, Sandy Bay and Vivian Bay, Kawau Island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 59: 16-30.

Wilcox, M.; Young, M.; Cruickshank, G.; Millett, J. 2005: Plant records from the Swansea Bay – Mt Taylor area, Kawau Island. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 60: 31-33.

The Florida gooseberry or tropical apricot

Mike Wilcox

Ever on the lookout for interesting trees and shrubs in Auckland, I recently came across a strange tropical fruit tree in a garden at Woodlands Park, Titirangi. The owners, Raman Lee and Alexis Dromgoole, proud new residents of Minnehaha Avenue, said they were told it was a Bermuda apricot. On tasting the sour fruit, and doing a bit of digging in reference books, I identified the tree as Florida gooseberry or tropical apricot. It is a hybrid between the Abyssinian gooseberry (*Dovyalis abyssinica*) and the Ceylon gooseberry or ketembilla (*Dovyalis hebecarpa*) that arose spontaneously in Florida in 1953, where both parent species were in cultivation. Useful accounts of *Dovyalis* can be found in Verheij & Coronel (1992), Bryant (1997), and Barwick (2004).

Azara, *Casearia*, *Flacourtia*, *Homalium*, *Idesia* and *Xylosma*.

Dovyalis abyssinica × *D. hebecarpa* has the desirable features of being largely thornless (unlike its spiny parents). It is a sprawling, vigorous and hardy shrub, bearing heavy crops of fruit, which is a berry full of pulp, with few or no seeds. They are oblate in shape, ca. 2.5 cm across, yellowish in colour, ripening to reddish-pink, soft, and covered in a thin velvety skin (Fig. 1). The star-shaped calyx is retained at the base of the fruit, and the five pistils persist as a point at the top of the fruit. They taste very acidic but are said to be good in pickles and relishes.



Fig. 1. Ripe fruit of Florida gooseberry, Woodlands Park, May 2010. Photo: Mike Wilcox.

Dovyalis was at one time in the Flacourtiaceae, but this family has now been completely subsumed in the Salicaceae (Chase et al. 2002), joining willows (*Salix*), poplars (*Populus*) and other ex-flacourts such as



Fig. 2. Foliage of Florida gooseberry, Woodlands Park, May 2010. Photo: Mike Wilcox.

The alternate leaves have entire, undulating margins, are ca. 8 cm long, shortly petiolate, attractively glossy on the upper surface, duller below, and with a

reddish, hairy midrib and petiole (Fig. 2). Lenticels are abundant on the twigs. The Minnehaha Ave tree is a female, bearing small, green flowers singly in the leaf axils. The sepals are prominent, petals are absent, and the large superior ovary is capped by short pistils.

Russell Fransham of Subtropicals, Matapouri, Northland, grows and distributes the Florida gooseberry, and is the likely source of the Woodlands Park tree, and of a tree at Te Takou Bay – a sample from which is in the Auckland Museum Herbarium (AK), labeled *Dovyalis hebecarpa* (T.J. Martin 155, 29

Jul 2002, AK 257844). All his plants are a single female clone, originally introduced to New Zealand by the late Phil and Georgie Gardner who had a subtropical garden at on the Waikare Inlet in the Bay of Islands (Fransham 2009).

Dovyalis hebecarpa has been collected at Mansion House Bay, Kawau Island, by Alan Esler in May 1971 (AK 216576). Another species of *Dovyalis*, *D. caffra*, the kei-apple from South Africa, is sometimes seen in Auckland. There are specimens of it in the Auckland Domain and at the Auckland Zoo.

References

- Barwick, M. 2004: *Tropical & Subtropical Trees. A worldwide encyclopaedic guide*. Thames & Hudson, London.
 Bryant, G. (ed.) 1997: *Botanica. The illustrated A-Z of over 12,000 garden plants and how to cultivate them*. David Bateman Ltd, Auckland.
 Chase, M.W.; Zmarzty, S.; Lledó, M.D.; Wurdack, K.J.; Swensen, S.M.; Fay, M.F. 2002: When in doubt, put it in Flacourtiaceae: A molecular phylogenetic analysis based on plastid *rbcL* DNA sequences. *Kew Bulletin* 57: 141-181.
 Fransham, R. 2009: Tropical apricot. *TreeCropper* 60: 31-33.
 Verheij, E.W.M.; Coronel, R.E. (eds.) 1992: *Plant resources of South-east Asia. No. 2 Edible fruits and nuts*. Prosea Foundation, Bogor, Indonesia.

***Podocarpus elatus* and *P. macrophyllus* (Podocarpaceae) distinguished**

Rhys Gardner

Two foreign podocarps, *Podocarpus elatus* and *P. macrophyllus*, have a minor presence in Auckland's cultivated flora. The former, a forest-canopy tree from eastern Australia, is known from a number of our older parks etc., while the latter, which is from China and Japan, is of smaller size (at least in the generally offered bushy cultivars) and is seen mostly in modern amenity-plantings and suburban gardens.

Their fruits resemble those of totara (*P. totara*), having a smooth-surfaced, swollen and fleshy receptacle topped by a subglobose seed. They are much larger though and the receptacle eventually becomes very dark - hence the common name for *P. elatus*, plum pine. Whether rats might be eating most of a year's crop of fruit is not clear but certainly in places where both sexes are present a few seedlings can always be found (for example, *P. elatus* at St Kentigerns College, Remuera; *P. macrophyllus* near the eastern side of the New North Road to Dominion Road flyover).

The fruit of *P. elatus* is nearly sessile, but that of *P. macrophyllus* terminates a peduncle somewhat more than 1 cm long. The seed of the former is c. 1.5 cm in diameter, half as large again as that of the latter. There are also differences in the size and degree of clustering of the pollen-cones (Eckenwalder 2009). However, sterile material presents identification problems, and it does not take long to find that gardening books and cultivated-plant Floras give rather ineffectual advice. The following improvements and illustration (Fig. 1) are offered.

Firstly, the leaf blades of *P. elatus* are generally

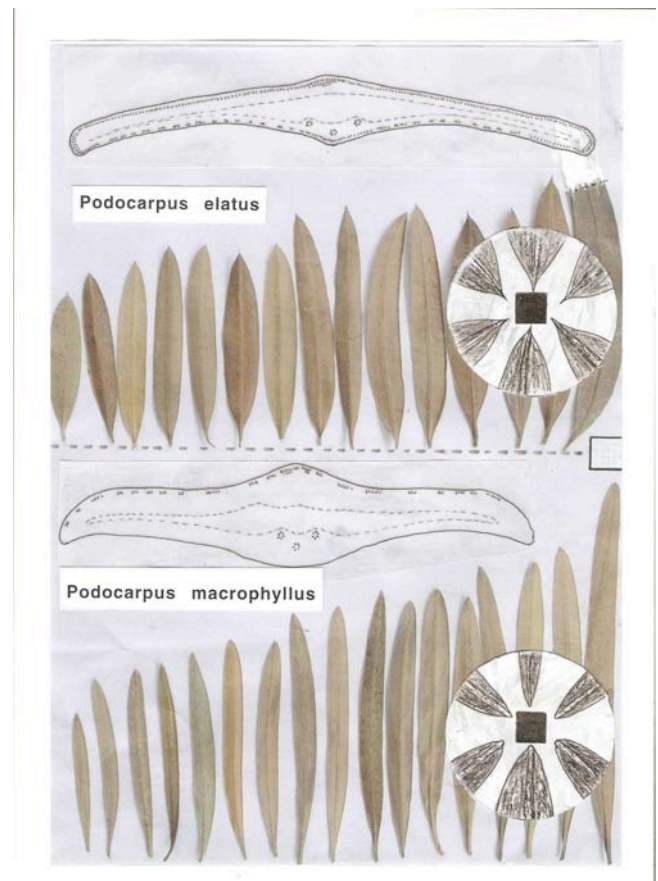


Fig. 1: Leaves of *Podocarpus elatus* and *P. macrophyllus*. Leaves: selections from specimens in AK. Scale (middle right) 1 cm². Leaf apices: selections from specimens in AK. Scale (central, dark) 1 cm². Leaf in transverse section, after Gray (1958: figs 3, 5). Each c. 8 mm wide. Dashed lines: vascular and associated tissue, including 3 resin canals towards undersurface. Hypodermal fibres as short vertical lines.