

- 1) Washed away in a flood in 2008. The remaining propagation boxes were subsequently moved to higher ground away from the stream.
- 2) Without the appearance of sporophytes, the identity of the gametophytes remains uncertain.
- 3) Sporophytes appeared, but perished. However, after nearly two years, the gametophytes are still alive.

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Moth plant takes wing at Tawharanui

Maureen Young

When driving out to the car park at Anchor Bay, Tawharanui Regional Park (NE Auckland), a cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*) swamp leading up to a bush clad gully can be seen on the right hand side of the road. This gully has been given the, now inappropriate, name of Possum Gully. Between Christmas and New Year 2009, I went on one of my annual searches for the non-green orchid, *Danhatchia australis*, this time in Possum Gully. I was satisfied to count c. 45 flowering spikes of the orchid, and I also found a healthy sapling of the coastal milkwood, *Streblus banksii*, and a good population of the fern *Doodia mollis*. On the ground I came across a small bird's nest, probably that of a chaffinch, lying squashed at my feet. It had a lovely soft lining of a white thistledown-like substance. As both pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) and *Parsonsia* spp. have silky hairs that act as parachutes to help carry the seed away from the parent plant, and both grow in the gully, I was curious to know which of these was the source of the silk. At home I put the nest in a pot of soil and kept it watered. To my dismay, c. 5 weeks later a crop of moth plant (*Araujia hortorum*) seedlings began to appear. On checking with



Fig. 1. Moth plant seedlings, Feb, 2010. Photo: Alison Wesley.

Auckland Regional Council staff, Bec Stanley and Holly Cox, I was informed that there are half a dozen known sites for moth plant in the park, and these are regularly monitored and the plants treated. My experience shows that weeds have many allies when it comes to dispersal.

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Reference

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