

Two bush remnants on farms at Tauhoa, 16 June 2012

John Millett

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A brilliantly fine day made for a good turn-out of 28 people, which included a couple of interested locals. We explored two farm bush blocks at Tauhoa (near the Kaipara Harbour some 10 km SW of Wellsford), fenced and kept free of predators by two unusually conscientious live-stock farmers, David Whistler and John Lambert. We could drive our cars close to both places, but before we left our meeting spot, Maureen made a plea for the importance of small blocks of bush preserved on farms. They can still contain a good representation of what grew on the land before it was cleared, and provide linking corridors for bird movement and seed spread to maintain the integrity of the bush. Both blocks provided a splendid example of this, and all at their owners' expense.

At David Whistler's farm (NZMS 260 Q09/401339) we were greeted with a magnificent overview of a patch of bush, cared for by David for nearly 20 years (Fig. 1). Many of the species peculiar to Northland became readily apparent, the broad leaves gleaming in the early morning sun. There was a great diversity of shapes and colours, all growing where they like it best. What a contrast to Man's planted "bring back the bush" native revegetation statements! Deeply buttressed pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) grew typically along the swampy edge with attendant kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*). Behind this the eye picked up the obvious broad leaves of karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*), kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*), taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*) and puriri (*Vitex lucens*), contrasting with pea-green kowhai (*Sophora chathamica*), titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*), tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), and the odd tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) and white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*). There was a tiny patch of kauri (*Agathis australis*) rickers right at the top-most dry corner. David was proud enough of these to have measured them 19 years ago, and as I had my tape with me, together we found that his best one had put on 30 cm of girth at breast height (Fig. 2).

Close inspection within the forest yielded *Parsonsia heterophylla*, *Gahnia lacera*, nikau (*Rhopalostylis*



Fig. 1. ABS group at David Whistler's bush. Photo: J. Salter, 16 June 2012.



Fig. 2. John Millet and Gordon Perry measuring a large totara, David Whistler's bush. Photo: J. Salter 16 June 2012.

sapida), *Passiflora tetrandra*, mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), *Coprosma arborea*, one tree of pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*), three different rata vines (*Metrosideros diffusa*, *M. perforata*, *M. fulgens*), mapou (*Myrsine australis*), pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*) and lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolius*) (See Appendix). Luckiest finds were



Fig. 3. View of the Kaipara Harbour from start of the 'Lambert Walk'. Photo: J. Salter, 16 June 2012.



Fig. 4. Bot Soccers lunching among the mangroves, near John Lambert's bush. Photo: J. Salter, 16 June 2012.



Fig. 5. *Myrsine divaricata* in a gully near the Lambert property. Photo: A. Wesley, 16 June 2012.

juvenile kaikomako (*Pennantia corymbosa*) with duck-foot shaped leaves, and a large tree of mountain maire (*Nestegis montana*) with narrow leaves when compared with those of the more common white maire. A totara (*Podocarpus totara*) measured 68 cm dbh, a puriri, 95 cm dbh, and a kowhai, 43 cm dbh. The opportunity was taken to recognise the species of kowhai, named after an island so far away. It was noted that the juveniles hardly divaricated, and the leaflets on the adults were broader and more overlapping than those of *Sophora microphylla*. A further chance to study these features, and also the presence of tiny hairs covering the leaflets, was taken in the afternoon in John's harbour edge bush.

John Lambert is a well-known and respected farmer whose family has lived at Tauhoa since 1938. Three years ago it cost John \$27,000 to fence his strip of bush (NZMS 260 Q09/393343) which reaches down to the edge of the Kaipara Harbour. Within the fenced area is a sandstone-lined creek which is the farm water supply. Where the creek enters the harbour it also once probably provided the handiest water for hunter/gatherer Maori – we saw evidence of a shellfish midden.

The "Lambert walk" took us straight down to the harbour's edge through the middle of the bush (Fig. 3). Seeing a pigeon's nest high in a matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) was a tribute to John's efforts at predator control. Surrounded by mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) was a grassy platform, which is a family picnic area and boat launching ramp, and there we ate lunch seated on bales of paspalum hay (Fig. 4). A saline lawn created the first buzz of the afternoon, containing as it did *Apium* "white denticles", *Selliera radicans*, *Samolus repens* and *Triglochin striata*.

The leaves of adjacent *Coprosma* shrubs were "kissed" for identification – drawing the edge of a leaf of *C. robusta* over one's lip shows that the edge is sand-papery, whereas that of *C. macrocarpa* is smooth. As we walked around the tidal edge we came across a swarm of hybrid *Coprosma* shrubs with many leaf forms. It was presumed that the parents were *C. propinqua* and *C. robusta*, but the presence of *C. macrocarpa* led us to suspect that this species was also involved. An intact salt marsh, with oioi (*Apodasmia similis*), salt rush (*Juncus kraussii*) and salt marsh ribbonwood (*Plagianthus divaricatus*) graded into the bush edge, where an ancient ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*) and several wharangi (*Melicope ternata*) grew. Some large exotic trees had been planted 30–40 years ago, and included *Eucalyptus saligna*, *Cupressus* sp. and *Cryptomeria japonica*. John's pride and joy were the many kohekohe trees, which have flowered and fruited prolifically since the destruction of possums – we saw both flowers and fruit and many seedlings, and also the presence of

weeping matipo (*Myrsine divaricata*), which is extremely scarce in the district.

After good-byes and thanks were said, a few stragglers followed John onto a neighbouring property where the harbour's edge and bush were not fenced, with predictable results. However, a gully here contained the biggest population of weeping matipo (Fig. 5), together with the related mapou, and

this gave us a chance to really compare the two. The heart-shaped leaves of the former are most distinctive, with the tiny maidenly cleavage between the "ventricles"!

David and John earned the gratitude of all by building bridges, board walks, steps and track markers, and thus made our visit much more comfortable than otherwise would have been the case.

Appendix: Indigenous vascular plants seen on the Tauhoa properties of David Whistler and John Lambert, 16 June 2012.

Key

W = Whistler property; **L** = Lambert property; √ = present

Ferns	W	L
<i>Adiantum cunninghamii</i>		√
<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i>	√	√
<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>	√	√
<i>Asplenium gracillimum</i>		√
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>		√
<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	√	√
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>		√
<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>	√	√
<i>Blechnum membranaceum</i>		√
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	√	√
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	√	√
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>		√
<i>Deparia petersenii</i>	√	√
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>		√
<i>Diplazium australe</i>	√	
<i>Doodia australis</i>	√	√
<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i>	√	√
<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i>	√	
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	√	√
<i>Microsorium scandens</i>	√	√
<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>		√
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	√	√
<i>Polystichum neozelandicum</i>		√
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	√	√
<i>Pteris macilentata</i>		√
<i>Pteris tremula</i>	√	√
<i>Pyrrhosia eleagnifolia</i>	√	√

Gymnosperms	W	L
<i>Agathis australis</i>	√	
<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>		√
<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>		√

<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides</i>	√	√
<i>Podocarpus totara</i>	√	√
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	√	
<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>		√

Dicotyledons	W	L
<i>Alectryon excelsus</i>	√	√
<i>Apium</i> "white denticles"		√
<i>Avicennia marina</i>		√
<i>Beilschmiedia tarairi</i>	√	√
<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	√	√
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>		√
<i>Calystegia sepium</i> ssp. <i>roseata</i>		√
<i>Carmichaelia australis</i>		√
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	√	√
<i>Centella uniflora</i>		√
<i>Clematis paniculata</i>		√
<i>Coprosma arborea</i>	√	√
<i>Coprosma areolata</i>	√	√
<i>Coprosma macrocarpa</i>		√
<i>Coprosma macrocarpa</i> × <i>C. propinqua</i>		√
<i>Coprosma propinqua</i>		√
<i>Coprosma rhamnoides</i>	√	√
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>	√	√
<i>Coprosma propinqua</i> × <i>C. robusta</i>		√
<i>Corynocarpus laevigatus</i>	√	√
<i>Dysoxylum spectabile</i>	√	√
<i>Euchiton japonicus</i>		√
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i>	√	√
<i>Haloragis erecta</i>	√	√
<i>Hebe macrocarpa</i>		√
<i>Hedycarya arborea</i>	√	√
<i>Hoheria populnea</i>		√

