

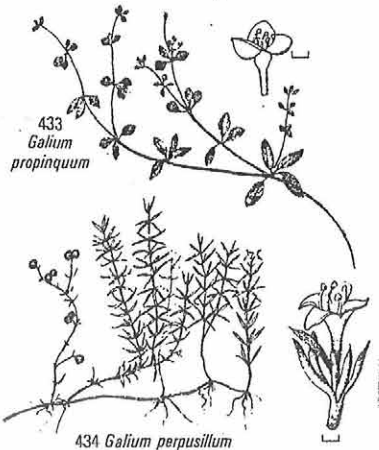
Wetland Plants in New Zealand

by Peter Johnson and Pat Brooke, \$39.95 to members.

Reviewed by Warren McG. King.

Originally conceived as a study of lake-edge vegetation, this book has expanded in scope enormously. It covers everything from tree-bogs to mangrove swamps to alpine flushes and contains descriptions of more than five hundred species.

The introduction is excellent, negotiating "sticky" subjects such as taxonomy and succession in a concise and clearly understood fashion. While maintaining the humour which makes "Wildflowers of Central Otago" such a delightful read, the slightly more serious nature of this book has required a little more depth. The enormous variation of wetland plant communities is discussed in some detail, and illustrated with many black-and-white photographs. Underlying edaphic and hydrological conditions are outlined and typical species identified. These 20-odd pages, and especially the section on the importance of wetlands, should be pre-requisite reading for anyone interested in "gumboot country".



Of course, the main body of the book is occupied with descriptions and drawings of wetland plants: some algae, ferns, conifers, monocots and dicots. Mosses, lichens and fungi are not examined. The sections are split into families, and genera with many species, such as Carex and Epilobium, are usefully divided in a key-type arrangement. A description and its accompanying drawing are usually on facing pages, as with Hugh Wilson's excellent field guides, making this book very friendly. The drawings (pencil) are marvellous and, though not quite as explicitly detailed as Hugh

Wilson's, they may arguably be more life-like. Characteristic features, such as flowers, fruits, and ligules are often detailed. Given also a list of references, a comprehensive illustrated glossary and an index of families, scientific and common names, this book worthily demands a place in every field-naturalist's ruck-sack.

N.Z. Ferns and Allied Plants

by Patrick J. Brownsey and John C. Smith-Dodsworth.
Publ: David Bateman Ltd, Auckland, \$89.95.

Reviewed by Peter Bannister.

The New Zealand flora is particularly rich in ferns and allied plants, and this book describes all the species, whether native or introduced, found in New Zealand. This is an achievement in itself, but when the descriptions are accompanied by numerous relevant drawings, illustrations and photographs it becomes something of a triumph!

The book introduces the basic life cycle of ferns and club mosses and then describes ferns in greater detail, with respect to both vegetative and reproductive structures. Sections on the classification, identification, collection and cultivation of ferns, fern societies and botanical societies (yes, this one is mentioned! [but they got its name wrong. Editor]) complete this introductory part and give the lay person a clear insight into the subject and suggestions for further reading.

The main section of the book has keys to genera, which worked well when I tried them, and keys to the species of larger genera. Species descriptions are concise and informative, and almost every species is illustrated, by drawings or photographs. A scale is given for drawings but not for photographs, and I found the use of non-standard "cms" and "mms" where the scale is subdivided mildly irritating (numbers at the top and