

## ☞ Mt Sebastopol and Governor's Bush, 29 Dec - Beth Andrews

After a look in the information centre at Mt Cook Village, where we saw that the weather report was not very hopeful, we decided to botanise the 'one hour' track through Governor's Bush. It took us longer than the hour, as there was something for everyone.

We saw mosses, liverworts, ferns, *Lagenifera*, orchids, varieties of *Dracophyllum* and *Gaultheria*, cascading parahebe (*Parahebe catarractae*), and the ever-present *Pratia*. An ascending track led us to an open area with views and then a winding track down again. Distorted and over-large plants were seen at the edge of the track, where we surmised that DOC's weed spraying had produced these aberrations, such as a triple headed *Thelymitra*.

The weather cleared enough for a walk up Mt Sebastopol. A swing bridge over the river led to a steep track, with many deep steps that I found difficult, my hips complaining so much that I didn't go far. Others went to a saddle or a rewarding climb to see the top tarns. A Japanese student from Palmerston North, keen to learn a little of our botany, accompanied us.

I had always admired the huge mountain *Celmisias*, so here was my chance to get a good photo. *Brachyglottis haastii* (formerly *Senecio*), caught my eye, with its rosettes of white leaves, fur covered - but sometimes the fur had worn off the upper surface, showing a shining green surface.

An unusual lichen, *Omphalina alpina*, collected by Allison, was interesting because it is a basidiomycete, with a toad-stool-like fruiting body, unlike most other lichens that are ascomycetes.

## ☞ Kea Point and Tasman Glacier Moraine, 31 Dec - Audrey Eagle

Three kea calling overhead greeted the group of eight on the Kea Point Walk. On this undemanding walk there was plenty of time to study the vegetation and the following were a few observations:

At the altitude of The Hermitage *Podocarpus nivalis*, snow totara, was massed with red fruit, whereas a few days earlier, high up on the Mt Sebastopol Track, it was still in full flower. Spotted hiding in the undergrowth were the attractive bluish green, serrated leaves of *Gingidia montana*. Some of the plants seen in flower were *Parahebe decora*, (with leaves as small as 1.5-3 mm), *Geranium sessiliflorum*, *Wahlenbergia* sp. *Gaultheria crassa*, *Stellaria gracilentia* and *Leucopogon fraseri*.

In the afternoon the Tasman Glacier was visited. On the lateral moraine the *Aciphylla aurea*, spaniard or speargrass, were spectacular, they were in full flower and in every direction one looked were seen the raised, golden-stemmed spikes. Plants of note on the terminal moraine were the green compressed mats of *Raoulia australis* sprinkled with their tiny yellow daisy flowers. Even more curious were the numerous dead-looking twiggly branchlets of *Helichrysum depressum*; in this specialised stony habitat it was