

Notes and Quotes

Linnean nettles!

David Galloway

In his bicentenary history of the Linnean Society of London (Gage & Stearn 1988: 111), William Stearn makes an intriguing comment on nettles while discussing the fate of the Linnaean Library and the Linnaean Herbarium during the Second World War, and worth recounting here: "...Although the Linnean collections were away at Woburn, it by no means followed that they were safe even there from German bombing. The Council, largely at the instigation of Ramsbottom [John Ramsbottom, Keeper of Botany at the British Museum], sought ways of having a photographic record made for distribution to various centres of learning abroad. An appeal to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, supported by E.D. Merrill, received a typically generous American response: the Corporation made a grant of 2000 pounds sterling for the undertaking. Before the specimens of the Linnaean Herbarium were photographed by Messrs Wallace Heaton at Tring (to which they were transferred), Spencer Savage added numbers to the sheets for reference purposes. If the Herbarium had thereafter been destroyed, the microfilm would have been an invaluable record, even though it was inferior to the one made in 1959 for the International Documentation Centre with much better equipment. While handling the specimens, the photographer, Gladys Brown, was stung on the arm by a specimen of stinging-nettle (*Urtica*) which had been dried and mounted some 200 years earlier: the arm showed a definite blister, apparently similar to one produced by a fresh specimen..."

Reference:

Gage, A.T. & Stearn, W.T. 1988: A Bicentenary History of the Linnean Society of London. Academic Press: London.

Urtica urens, small annual nettle. WH Fitch, *Illustrations of the British Flora*, 1949

Nettles with watercress and horopito!

Chuck Landis

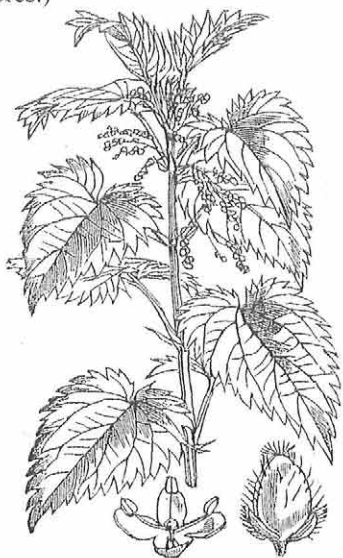
July: I really enjoyed Bill Sykes' article. Went right out and gathered some new growth (*Urtica urens*, I believe) and some watercress from the creek. Stir-fried and found it very flavourful as well as attractive in appearance. Carol agreed that it was yummy, though she could feel the back of her throat prickling as I cut up the green plants. Soup next?

August: Further to stir-fried nettles and watercress.....since both *Urtica urens* and *Nasturtium microphyllum* (= *Rorippa microphylla*) are Northern Hemisphere



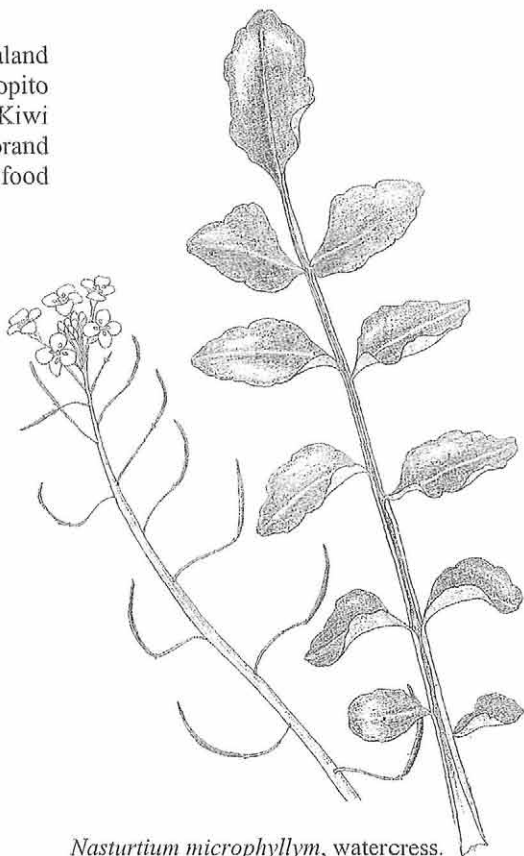
Urtica urens L.

natives, try serving with New Zealand avocado oil flavoured with horopito extract to add a distinctive and zany Kiwi flavour! (Sold under "The Grove" brand name and available at specialty food stores.)



Urtica dioica L.

Urtica dioica, common perennial nettle.
Naturalised in New Zealand.
WH Fitch et al., *Illustrations of
The British Flora*, Kent, 1949



Nasturtium microphyllum, watercress.
Naturalised in New Zealand.
Hugh D Wilson, *Field Guide: Stewart Island
Plants*, Christchurch, 1982

Nettles, prostates and penguins

Allison Knight

Two recent articles mentioning nettles in the Otago Daily Times caught my eye. Here are some excerpts I thought you might enjoy.

On **prostates**, Dr John Briffa in London writes in the Guardian "...After about the age of 50, the prostate gland can enlarge, usually as a result of benign prostatic hypertrophy, or BPH. While BPH is the most common cause of prostatic enlargement, prostate cancer is a possibility, too. For this reason, men with an enlarged prostate should always seek medical advice.

BPH often responds to entirely natural treatment. Certain healthy fats – essential fatty acids found in foods such as nuts and seeds – seem to contribute to prostate health. Zinc is also believed to help. Pumpkin seeds contain useful quantities of both essential fatty acids and zinc. Studies on the effect of pumpkin-seed extract therapy on BPH