

Thirteen Botsoc members joined Cliff on a spring afternoon wander through his sheltered Glenleith hillside garden. Cliff and Linda started the garden in the 1960s and it has a fine established look to it now.

First to attract our attention was the array of flowering trees, especially *Camellia*, *Magnolia*, *Rhododendron* and a large *Prunus* with petals falling like snowflakes. As stunning as these were Cliff was eager to lead us to his native treasure trove and what an extraordinary collection of plants it turned out to be! Pride of place was a weeping tree broom (*Carmichaelia stevensonii*), the large dimensions of which came as quite a surprise. Cliff recounted how cuttings of the species had been gathered from the small natural population in Marlborough for the Dunedin Botanic Garden. While his tree flourished, those at the Gardens eventually died out.

North Island trees feature strongly and many of these were unfamiliar to members. Although used to warmer climates, the trees were flourishing in the well chosen micro-climate of the various sectors of the garden. Even plants of the far north such as *Tecomanthe speciosa*, *Elingamita johnsonii*, *Meryta sinclairii*, *Cordyline kaspar* and *Ackama* (= *Caldcluvia*) *rosifolia* were present. At least six species of rata were on display including the uncommon Bartlett's rata (*Metrosideros bartlettii*) and *Metrosideros carminea*. Other northern South Island and North Island highlights included several species of maire (*Nestegis* spp.), false maire (*Mida salicifolia*), tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), taraire (*B. tarairi*), kauri (*Agathis australis*), tainui (*Pomaderris apetala*) and kawaka (*Libocedrus plumosa*).

Beeches were well represented with hard beech (*Nothofagus truncata*), black beech (*N. solandri*), mountain beech (*N. solandri* var. *cliffortioides*) and silver beech (*N. menziesii*). Damp and shady corners were clothed in ferns, many naturally occurring locals but others, like the stunning king fern (*Marattia salicina*) and *Doodia media*, from warmer climes.

The diversity within some genera was particularly well displayed. At least seven species of *Pittosporum* were seen ranging from the lofty *Pittosporum umbellatum* (still flowering) through to the rare divaricating *P. obcordatum* and the often epiphytic *P. kirkii*.

The garden is clearly a great source of enjoyment to Cliff and one that still throws up the odd surprise. On our visit he discovered for the first time bright crimson cones on his prized tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*). Thanks Cliff for a wonderful tour of your sunny oasis. (Cliff's species list of over 100 natives is filed for reference in the Otago Herbarium - ed.)

Carmichaelia stevensonii
(Giant weeping tree broom).
Details of flowers and pods.
Audrey Eagle
*Eagle's Trees and
Shrubs of NZ*, 1975

