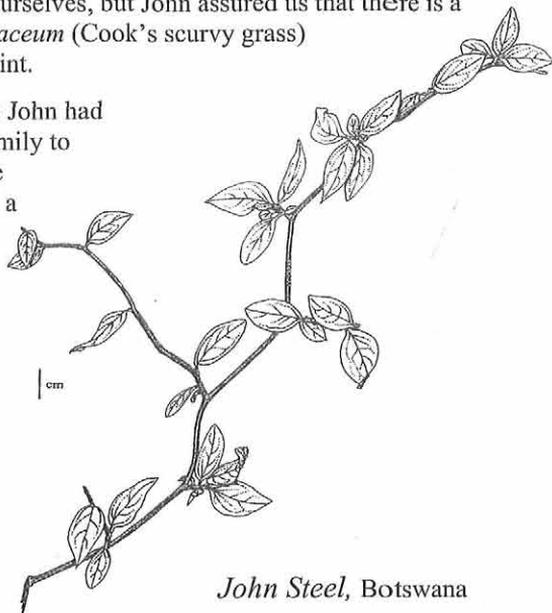


We didn't climb down to check it out ourselves, but John assured us that there is a considerable quantity of *Lepidium oleraceum* (Cook's scurvy grass) growing on the rocks below Nugget Point.

For several it was extended field trip as John had kindly invited us to join him and his family to stay overnight in the former light house keeper's house. Accommodation with a view par excellence and I understand the aroma of ripe peaches was even more luscious the next morning! Thanks John for an excellent botanical trip.

Olearia fragrantissima
Conservation Requirements of New Zealand's Nationally Threatened Vascular Plants. DoC 1999



John Steel, Botswana

Book review

The moss genus *Fissidens* in New Zealand, an illustrated key.

Beever, J.E.; Malcolm, W.M.; Malcolm, N. 2002. 91 pp. Spiral bound with CD ROM. Micro-Optics Press, Box 320, Nelson. \$NZ50 including p & p (\$60 air-mailed outside NZ)

Identifying mosses is often a bit daunting for the beginner (even the not-so beginner) but species from the genus, *Fissidens*, are a bit of gift – at least to genus level. Not only that, but they are also fairly significant in the moss flora of New Zealand with thirty-two species and varieties, sixteen of them in Otago and one of which, *Fissidens taylorii* var. *epiphytus*, is found only here (and Australia). The leaves (or phyllids) of *Fissidens* are in one plane and they are unusual in that each leaf has a prominent extra blade to it and this is easily spotted with a good hand lens.

Jessica Beever is the New Zealand expert on *Fissidens* (among other things) and she has combined with the Malcolms to produce what has to be one of the best, if not the best, monograph of a moss genus. It begins with an explanation of the leaf structure which is followed by an excellent vegetative key thereby avoiding the problems that arise when finding plants without sporophytes. Each couplet has the previous couplet indicated and also the page number where the identified species, can be found, making the whole more user friendly.

Next follows each species over two facing pages. The first has those wonderful colour photographs, several to a page, so typical of the Malcolms' work, and highlighting those features significant for identification. A line drawing of the entire leaf, shewing from where each photograph was taken, and the scale, finishes off the page. The facing page gives a description of the species with the important features highlighted, the distribution of the species and any important notes. Completing this

page is a map of New Zealand and islands with the distribution noted. Below the map are two tables indicating the substrate and the altitudes where the species has been found.

After this section, species that could possibly be confused, are shown side by side with the areas of difference highlighted by more photographs. A brief glossary follows with a useful note on microscope techniques and money saving ideas! If this isn't enough, the book comes complete with an interactive CD ROM.

If you've ever tried identifying mosses and given up in despair, you'll have no excuse this time. This is an excellent little book which will be a welcome addition to any botanist's library. As far as I'm aware, it is only available directly from Micro-Optics Press. Maybe, just maybe, if this work is well supported, they'll tackle *Bryum* in a similar vein!

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Cladonia cervicornis ssp. *verticillata*→

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