



NEW ZEALAND PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

E-NEWSLETTER: NO 9. AUGUST 2004

Please send news items or events to events@nzpcn.org.nz
Postal address: P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington, New Zealand
Deadline for next issue: Monday 6 September 2004

Message from the President

Thank you to all members who attended and helped at our recent annual Network conference. The event was a great success. The Auckland Regional Botanic gardens proved to be a wonderful venue and our guest speakers (Ewen Cameron, Kevin Prime and Hugo Baynes) provided wonderful insights into native plant conservation from a variety of perspectives. The afternoon workshops were also well attended and covered topic such as the threatened plants of Auckland, indigenous fungi and translocation of threatened plants. Some people also toured the Botanic Garden and the new award winning threatened plant garden.

A new Council was elected at the AGM on Saturday 7 August. New members joining the Council are: Peter Buchanan from Auckland, Sarah Beadel from Rotorua and Kathryn Whaley from Wellington. Information about the new council will be on the website under 'Key People' in the near future.

Special thanks go to our conference sponsors that were the Department of Conservation (Auckland Conservancy), the Auckland Regional Council, the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens and Morton Estate Wines.

We are now looking for a suitable name for our monthly newsletter. All suggestions are welcome and there is a prize for the best entry.



Name the Newsletter competition

The Network's monthly electronic newsletter currently has no name. This month we'd like you to think of a suitable name for the newsletter and email it to the newly elected Council (info@nzpcn.org.nz). The Council will then choose either the most popular or the best suggestion. Suggestions should be emailed before 15 September. There will be a prize for the person whose suggestion is chosen.

20,000 visitors to Network website

The Network's website is proving to be increasingly popular with over 3000 people now visiting the site every month. The total number of visitors to the site now numbers more than 23,000. New additions to the site went live last week including an archive of all the past newsletters. We also now have a '*News and Events*' section so please tell us of events or news from your region and we will add them to the website as and when required.

Colin Ogle honoured with the Loder Cup

Plant network member and expert botanist Colin Ogle from Wanganui was honoured last week by being awarded the Loder Cup. This is New Zealand's premier plant conservation award and it is fitting that it should go to someone who has researched, observed and recorded native plants for so many years.



New threatened plant field guide for Northland

The Department of Conservation has recently published a field guide to the threatened plants of Northland. Written by Lisa Forester and Andrew Townsend the guide has photographs, descriptive and distributional information about 49 threatened plants of the region. Copies are available from Lisa Forester (lforester@doc.govt.nz), price is \$12-50.

Plant of the month



Sicyos australis (mawhai) is 'Plant of the Month' for August as it was one of the species that Network members saw during the conference field trip in Auckland. It is a rampant vine, producing stems up to 10 m long and is found in coastal forest or lowland forest, often in scrub or amongst bracken fern. It has been assigned a threat status of Nationally Critical and is threatened because of the small size of its populations and the impacts of

exotic pathogens (cucumber and zucchini mosaic virus). It is also threatened because it has a weedy habit which causes it to be confused with other introduced weedy species of cucurbitaceae. The Network's fact sheet for this species can be found at http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/detail.asp?PlantID=43

Advice sought on how to grow kidney fern (*Trichomanes reniforme*)

A member of the public has requested advice on how to grow kidney fern. Please email the Network if you know of a good technique and a suitable place to grow it in the garden (email: info@nzpcn.org.nz).

Native Grass Seed Conservation and the Margot Forde Gene bank

Recently the threatened and uncommon plant list has been updated for New Zealand (de Lange *et al.* 2004). Almost half the grass species indigenous and endemic to New Zealand are listed. Conservation of these unique species is important.

To date the major emphasis in regard to their conservation has been on documenting their status and developing plans to maximise their *in-situ* conservation. But *ex-situ* conservation in reserves, gardens and seed collections is required to complement this *in-situ* conservation. However seed collections of native grasses have not been well coordinated or incorporated within conservation plans. This is despite New Zealand having a world class gene bank for grasses incorporated as part of "The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy" (Dept of Conservation and MfE, Feb 2000, 144 pp). This is the "Margot Forde Gene bank" on the AgResearch campus at Palmerston North (as discussed on pages 69-75). Although this gene bank was established with agriculture in mind and largely consists of introduced species important to the economy, such as *Lolium perenne*, its role in the biodiversity strategy for New Zealand is much wider than this. In the absence of any other long term seed collection it has the potential to play a very valuable role in conservation of our threatened grass flora.

The facility not only stores the seed for up to 30 years but is also funded to regenerate seed of core collections so that they are available permanently. To date there are only 20 native species represented in this collection but few of these are the species on the threatened plant list. You could well ask why this hasn't been used very effectively to date. The answer lies in the emphasis conservation has on *in-situ* conservation and the lack of knowledge among the botanical and conservation community about this important facility. Not only does the storage of seed in a gene bank provide an important conservation resource but it will also provide a ready source of plant material for research on our grasses. Seed from this gene bank is available to *bona fide* researchers for study. At present it is almost impossible to study native grasses without first taking at least one summer tramping around hills collecting material, a task likely to deter all but the determined enthusiast. The gene bank would like to receive

seed samples of a range of populations of all native grass species but particular those of the threatened species. A detailed fact sheet concerning the gene bank is available at: www.agresearch.co.nz/agr/agrsci/plant/2%20PBG%20Germplasm%20Centre.pdf.

While a detailed list of the species in the collection is available at: www.agresearch.co.nz/seeds

Seed and details of the location of the collection should be supplied to:

Dr Warren Williams, The Curator -The Margot Forde Germplasm Centre, Grasslands Research Centre, Private Bag 11008, Palmerston North

Reference

de Lange, P. J., D. A. Norton, P. B. Heenan, S. Courtney, B. P. J. Molloy, C. C. Ogle, B. D. Rance, P. N. Johnson, R. A. Hitchmough 2004 Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76

Weedbusters Threatened Plant Competition

At last week's New Zealand Plant Conservation Network conference, New Zealand botanists were asked to name a plant they felt was most at threat by weeds. The intention was to get expert opinion on how weeds impact on New Zealand's threatened flora. As an added incentive, all entries went into the draw to win the book 'National Parks of New Zealand' by Kathy Ombler. According to Ewen Cameron, curator of Auckland Museum's herbarium, weeds are a serious threat. Ewen says, '*for low growing threatened plants, weeds like kikuyu grass are as lethal as concrete*'.

Botanist's entries in the Weedbusters *most-at-threat-by-weeds* draw saw a whole range of threatened plants named; from small trees like the Three Kings kaikomako (*Pennantia baylisiana*), to herbs such as Cook's scurvy grass (*Lepidium oleraceum*), to shrubs e.g., Cypress hebe (*Leonohebe cupressioides*), to mistletoes e.g., red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*). The message is clear—weeds are a serious threat for many of New Zealand's endangered plants, threatening over 60 species of virtually every growth form, from cushion plants to shrubs to mistletoes. Congratulations to the winner of the Weedbusters Threatened Plant draw Mike Oates of Wellington and President of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. Weedbusters is a weeds education and awareness programme, to find out more about it visit www.weedbusters.org.nz or email info@weedbusters.org.nz

Amber Bill, Weedbusters - National Co-ordinator, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10-420, Wellington, Ph. 04 471 3263

Contact us

If you have any questions about the Network you can contact Council members directly (contacts are listed in the 'Key People' section of the website - www.nzpcn.org.nz). Our postal address is P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington or email the Network at info@nzpcn.org.nz

New positions

Department of Conservation Technical Support Officer, Weeds and Biosecurity, Nelson, TS1 (CA 1/IA). Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy. We are looking for someone to fill a technical support role based at the Conservancy Office in Nelson. This is an important part of the Conservancy team in providing technical advice and support and strategic direction on weeds and weed control to field staff and management. A special emphasis on monitoring and auditing weed control programmes is desirable. The role will also incorporate an overview and coordination of biosecurity issues and procedures in the Conservancy.

If you are keen and motivated, have a good knowledge of weeds, preferably have recent experience within the Department, and can work and communicate well with staff at all levels, other agencies and the general public, then we would love to receive your application. For an application pack, contact mhawes@doc.govt.nz, or the Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy Office, telephone (03) 546 9335, quoting Vacancy 10/064. Applications close in the Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy Office at Noon on Monday, 23 August 2004.

Upcoming events

If you have important events or news that you would like publicised via this newsletter please email the Network (events@nzpcn.org.nz).

Rotorua Botanical Society - Okareka Mistletoe Restoration Project Weed Control

Work Day - Saturday 14 August: Leader: Paul Cashmore 07 348 4421 (hm), 349 7432 (wk), Meet: Ex Okareka store 8:45am. Grade: Medium-Hard - Activities suitable for all ages and abilities will be provided (see advert in this newsletter). This workday will focus mainly on site preparation for our mistletoe host planting day in September.

Botanical Society of Otago – Evening talk: Growing New Zealand Alpine Plants.

Wednesday 18th August, 2004. Start time: 5:20 PM. A talk by David Lyttle. The New Zealand alpine flora contains a diverse assemblage of species many of which are desirable and challenging horticultural subjects. Unfortunately New Zealand alpinists are often appreciated more overseas than in their own country. This talk will provide an introduction to the propagation of New Zealand alpine plants from seeds and cuttings and will discuss problems frequently encountered in their culture. At the NEW Zoology Benham Building, 346 Great King Street, behind the Zoology car park by the Captain Cook Hotel. Use the main entrance of the Benham Building to get in and go to the Benham Seminar Room, Rm. 215, 2nd floor. Please be prompt as we have to hold the door open. Contact [Ian Radford](mailto:Ian.Radford@otago.ac.nz), phone: (03) 479 9065.

Botanical Society of Otago - Trip to Southland Community Nursery - Saturday 21st

August, 2004. Start time: 8:00am and Finish: 6:00pm. Trip to Southland Community Nursery, Otatara, Invercargill. Chris and Brian Rance have established what they have called a "Community Nursery". The aim of this nursery is to provide facilities and materials (potting mix, pots etc) to help people to grow local endemic plants and to restore vegetation of the local areas. Brian and Chris have lots of experience in growing native plants from seed and cuttings and are willing to share their knowledge. They have established a threatened plants garden to provide sanctuary to over 70 New Zealand native under threat of extinction in the wild on their property. Leave Botany car park at 8 a.m. and return mid to late afternoon. Pack lunch, water and protection from the sun, wind, rain and cold. The possibility of extra side trips and an overnight option is still being investigated. For more information about the trip contact Ian Radford on 03 472 7470 (h) or 03 479 9065 (w).

Wellington Botanical Society Evening meeting - Druce Memorial Lecture: Wit,

wisdom and witness in the Druce experience. Monday 23 August. Speaker: Dr. Geoff Rogers, scientist, Department of Conservation. A light-hearted look at Tony's landscape-reading ability and his witty and wise mentoring of our current crop of botanists. Witness the Geoff Roger's experience maintaining the Druce inheritance in central North Island and South Island high country.

Wellington Botanical Society Field Trip – Te Marua workbee - Saturday 4 September:

BotSoc has been committed since 1989 to do weed control work and revegetation work in this regionally significant matai / maire / totara remnant in Kaitoke Regional Park. With the aid of a grant from Greater Wellington Regional Council we have been able to hire a contractor to speed up the task of Tradescantia control, but our biennial workbees must continue so that we keep ahead of reinvasion of weeds, particularly around the plantings. Please help with this important work and also with planting. Bring gloves, kneeler, weed bag, and your favourite weeding tools, e.g. trowel, hand fork, loppers, pruning saw, pinch bar. Meet: Upper Hutt Railway Station carpark at 9 am, or 9.20 am. at Te Marua Bush – 250m north of Te Marua Store on SH2, then, at the sign "Te Marua Entrance, Kaitoke Regional Park", take the left fork for c.50m and park alongside the Bush. Catch 8.05 am. Upper Hutt train from Wellington, alighting at Upper Hutt. Maps R26 Paraparaumu and Upper Hutt street map. Co-Leaders: Glennis Sheperd 526 7450 and Sue Millar 526 7440.

Rotorua Botanical Society - Aongatete loop track, Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park - Sunday 5 September: Leader: Graeme Jane 07 570 3123. Meet: The carpark at 8:00am or end of Wright Rd off SH 2 (entrance to Aongatete Lodge) at 9:30am. Grade: Easy. We will probably take the long loop (three and a half hours walk) through lowland puriri kohekohe and tawa, to some grand tanekaha stands and opportunities to fossick along streamsides as well as ridges with a good selection of ferns and a good time for orchids.

Botanical Society of Otago - The current state of bird-plant mutualisms in New Zealand. Wednesday 8th September, 2004: Start time: 5:20pm and finish: 7:00pm. A talk by Dave Kelly, University of Canterbury. In an important paper, Clout & Hay (1989, New Zealand Journal of Ecology Supplement) argued that the bird-plant interaction most at risk in modern New Zealand was that of seed dispersal, especially for large-seeded trees dependent on the kereru. Progress on this subject in the 15 years since their paper was published is reviewed and pollination and dispersal are shown to be at some risk, but for different reasons. Despite extensive work on these topics, there are still some very important questions that we have only the beginnings of answers to. Some of these tentative answers are outlined, and predictions are made about the true state of mutualisms. At the NEW Zoology Benham Building, 346 Great King Street, behind the Zoology car park by the Captain Cook Hotel. Use the main entrance of the Benham Building to get in and go to the Benham Seminar Room, Rm. 215, 2nd floor. Please be prompt as we have to hold the door open. The 2004 Leonard Cockayne Memorial Lecture lecture, that Dave will be giving earlier that day in Dunedin is entitled "Plant reproductive biology in New Zealand: masting, mutualisms and mistletoes". This talk will be on at 12 noon the same day, in the Hutton Theatre, Otago Museum, 419 Great King St, Dunedin. Contact [Ian Radford](#), phone: (03) 479 9065.

Rotorua Botanical Society - Okareka Mistletoe Restoration Project Host Planting Day - Saturday 18 September: Leader: Paul Cashmore 07 348 4421 (hm), 349 7432 (wk). Meet: Ex Okareka store 8:45am. Grade: Medium-Hard - Activities on this day will focus mainly on planting mistletoe host trees on the prepared site (see advert in this newsletter).

Wellington Botanical Society - Evening meeting - Origin and biography of New Zealand *Craspedia* - Monday 20 September: Speaker: Kerry Ford, Landcare, Canterbury. Discussion on her recent research on *Craspedia* (Gnaphalieae: Asteraceae) a daisy genus of 23 species restricted to NZ and Australia. Researching the frequency of colonisation of NZ by this genus provides a basis for further research of morphological, ecological and geographical patterns at a finer scale in NZ, and also has relevance to the debate on the origins of the NZ flora and the inter-relationships of the NZ and Australian floras.