



TRILEPIDEA

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PLANT OF THE MONTH, p. 12



Caltha obtusa.
Photo: John Barkla.

Vale John Sawyer B.Sc. (Hons) (Southampton)

1 November 1968 – 6 November 2015)

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It was with considerable disbelief that I received the news that John Sawyer had passed away unexpectedly, whilst staying at the family home on the Island of Mull. John was always larger than life and, at least from my perspective, exceptionally fit and healthy. When he was in New Zealand, he liked his daily swim, loved his tramping and was always out and about. So I put down the phone in stunned silence. How we deal with death is ultimately a personal affair, in John's case, though, I confess I felt nothing, meaning that for me the whole world suddenly stopped, I felt empty and all was silent. I have never felt that way before.

I first met John in 1993. At the time, I had just transferred from the Science & Research Division, Head Office, Department of Conservation (DOC), Wellington, to the Auckland Conservancy, where Science & Research had a small satellite 'outpost' as my then upper tier manager Dr Richard Sadlier called it. At the time, DOC officer Raewyn Empson was responsible for the Wellington Conservancy Flora, and she was in the throes of writing the flora section of that conservancy's first ever Conservation Management Strategy. Raewyn was horrified I was going, as she really was an animal person; plants, while of interest to her, were not her specialty, and so she had understandably hoped I would help her with the task. She needn't have worried, because a week or so after I left, John Sawyer waltzed into the Wellington Conservancy Office asking if he could volunteer for DOC in a botanical role. The rest is history, I guess, for within a year John had gone from volunteer and contract worker to that conservancy's botanist. An excellent arrangement it was too, for Raewyn could do what she did best, John got a job and DOC got another much needed botanical position filled.

My first dealings with John were initially by email and phone. At the time I was struck by his hesitant, overly polite manner with me. John was then a very shy and nervous person—something he soon lost as he was thrown into the deep end of doing plant work for DOC. When we first met, this hesitancy was soon explained. John had studied my publications and from them deduced I was some 'old, academic fogey'. I guess that was fair enough, after all solely on the basis of his surname I in turn had conjured up the image of a youthful, mischievous lad—somewhat akin to Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer. In fact, there were only two years between us, John being the younger.



Our first field outing, in early 1994, involved a quick ‘nip’ into the Wairarapa to check on a reported, and, as it turned out, erroneous record of *Pittosporum obcordatum*. We went to check out this site with the late Tim Harrington of the then Wairarapa Field Centre. At the time, I had been in meetings all week in Wellington and as this visit was an ‘add on’ I had no suitable field gear. Having resolved so quickly the *Pittosporum* issue, Tim suggested on our way back to the Field Centre that we check out a new find of what is now known as *Olearia gardneri*. This plant was out near Admiral Road, in the headwaters of the Wainuioru River. We agreed, though, when we got there, the farmer explained we’d have to traverse some 500 m of what he called recent ‘slippage’ to get to the *Olearia*. This ‘slippage’ was actually the mangled base of a massive (still very active) rotational slump, typical of the kind you find in the papa mudstone country of eastern Wairarapa. The base of this one was a morass of blue-grey mud that had the consistency of overdone porridge. On viewing it, I decided there was no way I was going to cross that in what I was wearing. I’d never get it clean, besides which I seriously doubted that if I did cross over the mud, Air New Zealand would let me on the plane, so I stripped off. Tim did the same and John, the quiet, shy lad from Yorkshire, when faced with two naked Kiwi men, reluctantly did the same. We then set off, soon resembling a trio of grey-mud clad tar babies. The jaunt was memorable for John—he often reflected on it. First, he noted he got to see a very rare plant, secondly we all got stung something wicked by *Urtica ferox*, thirdly he reckoned he got to see way too much of his colleagues than was good for him and, lastly, the landowner—who witnessed it all—never let John forget what we did.

I think this initial meeting summed up our eventual working style. John got used to nudity for the sake of botany and I found a work colleague who was ‘up for anything’ (though perhaps with a lot less male nudity involved).

What John bought to DOC that was perhaps unusual for its time was his background in biogeography. His *modus operandi* was always the same, careful, meticulous data gathering (or ‘inventory’), followed by mapping that data and then drawing from it management options. John was also always very keen on publications. He confessed he felt he had to prove himself—as he explained his goal in New Zealand was to use his time here to gain work experience so that he could get a better job back in the U.K. in a conservation agency. However, as I got to know John, I also realised that, like many people, he had other issues, one of which was his desire to prove himself academically. John wanted very much to emulate his father, Emeritus Professor Peter Sawyer, a famous, well published Viking expert, so to him publications in any form were a means to an end.

During his early DOC years, John developed a skill I very much admired. He was always exceptional at obtaining funds; no matter what the issue he seemed to find the money for it. Once the funds were obtained, his next skill was to assemble a team to get the work done in record time. Indeed, his first achievement using DOC funds was to get Wildlands Consultants to do a detailed botanical survey (done between 1994 and 1995 by Andrew Townsend—who now works for DOC) of the threatened plants of the Wellington Conservancy (Townsend et al., 1998). In that publication, each plant was meticulously mapped, imaged, and notes provided about how to identify it, what threatened it, and what the management options within the conservancy were. This was quite revolutionary stuff for the DOC conservancies of the time and I think it no exaggeration to say that the former Wellington Conservancy, spearheaded by John, excelled in these publications.



John Sawyer (27 years old), Gary Foster and Andrew Townsend standing beneath a solitary *Pittosporum obcordatum* we had just discovered on a terrace above the Ruamahanga River in October 1996. Photo: Peter J. de Lange.

John also liked a laugh and we had quite a few. Of these, for me at least, there are two stand outs. The first involves an altercation with a farmer in eastern Wairarapa, the other a field trip to Makaro (Ward Island). They are worth telling.

In October 1995, whilst on holiday with Dr Rhys Gardner in Wellington we decided to help out John with some botanical matters. On this particular occasion, Andrew Townsend had just discovered in the headwaters of the Admiral Farm Station a fairly large population of what was then an unnamed *Coprosma* known by the Tony Druce tag name of *C. "violacea"* (now known as *C. pedicellata* (Molloy et al., 1999)). I was helping Drs Brian Molloy and Bruce Clarkson describe this species so I was keen to see it. John, Tony Silbery, Rhys Gardner, DOC officer Mark Townsend and I went over to see this population. Before our visit, John was regaling us with his view that all the 'farmers of the Wairarapa loved him and he could do on their land what he liked'. I suggested that this might be an exaggeration, and what would he do one day if he encountered a less accommodating landowner? "That will never happen!" said John. So, of course, it did that very day. Now, to be fair, before that particular day all our other visits to Admiral Farm Station had gone smoothly, the landowner always welcoming us with hot cuppas and batches of fresh baked scones; this day was no different. Tea and scones over and with our bellies full we bid adieu and headed off up a steep 4WD track to the back of farm. On our return, however, things were decidedly different as we crested the ridge and started the descent toward the farm house we noted a stout chap in a red/black chequered swanndri, hands on hips, who seemed to be radiating pure anger up the valley. We'd never seen him before. We also noted that our affable 'landowner' was sheepishly painting a fence nearby, periodically casting furtive glances in our direction. "What", we wondered, "was going on here?" Once we were within ear shot we soon discovered that this angry man was the actual landowner on one of his infrequent visits to see his farm manager (i.e., the chap painting the fence and looking rather guilty). The real landowner Jock Bentley wanted to know what we were doing on his land! John, however, sat in the DOC truck, completely at loss for words. I got out to calm Jock down and it's a fact that he eventually became one of John's biggest conservation allies. The fun of this story is, that whilst Jock was in full swing about us being on his land, Rhys Gardner sat in the back of the truck happily writing a haiku (at the time this was his 'thing') which, as we left the farm in stunned silence, Rhys suddenly recited:

*"Jock Bentley,
Has Coprosma "violacea",
But
He doesn't want it"*

John kept that haiku above his desk for years as a reminder of the dangers of being too cocky.

My last story from that early time relates to John and I finally getting out to Makaro/Ward Island in Wellington Harbour. When I lived in Wellington, I was keen to explore these islands. I also wanted to search them for *Lepidium obtusatum* (alas almost certainly extinct (de Lange et al., 2013a)). John was also keen for a visit but getting out to Makaro had been proving difficult. In October 1996, John told me he'd found a way. We'd spend the night on Matiu/Somes Island and get the resident ranger Richard (Dick) Anderson to take us out there the next morning.



During October 1995 and 1996 I used to take a botanical holiday with Rhys Gardner and we'd work with John Sawyer in the Wellington Area. One of our field visits in October 1995 was to the gravel bars south of Ngawi with Tony Silbery (then of the Hutt City Council) and DOC officer Joe Hansen. There we were looking for *Leptinella pusilla* and *Myosotis brevis*. Joe Hansen (left) expressed some surprise when John (right) and I showed him a small patch of *Leptinella pusilla* at Kawakawa Rocks. In this image John (age 26) can be seen as was his wont taking down meticulous notes. Photo: Tony Silbery.

The only catch was Dick. For a start, he'd just given up smoking (smoking was not allowed on the island) electing to go 'cold turkey' so we'd been warned he was 'grouchy', also he disagreed strongly with John's stance on an island restoration plan that John had helped to coordinate. Dick saw John, and quite possibly me (I was a co-author), as ecological impediments to his vision. "No worries" said John, "I will cook him a good meal and bring along a few bottles of wine that will sort him out". We reached Matiu at about 5.00 pm to be greeted by a bellicose Dick shouting to us from the wharf "Have you bought any fags?" We hadn't of course. Not a good start. That evening, John guardedly set forth to cook whilst Dick tried awfully hard to bait



John Sawyer (27 years old) on summit ridge of Makaro/Ward Island—the image may not show it but John was beginning to sport an "A" Grade Hangover and was not best pleased to be doing 'point' duty for me. Photo: Peter J. de Lange.

John and I over aspects of the Maitu/Somes Island restoration plan. John was so flustered that the meal preparation took a lot longer than intended. Nevertheless, at some point sufficient wine had been consumed that we had all now reached the pleasant benevolent mood stage of inebriation. At about this time (12.00 midnight, I think), to resounding shouts of brotherly love and affection, we all headed our separate ways for a 'good night's' rest. Our rest, such as it was, was rudely terminated at 5.00 am when Dick entered our room telling us to get a move on, we needed to go now or we'd never get there as the weather was due to change. So our projected leisurely approach to packing for the day trip went out the window, so too did most of our water supplies (there is no water on Makaro), first aid kit and food. We sprinted to the wharf to see that Dick was already impatiently pattering out to sea with the boat. Jumping into the boat, we were handed a radio, told to use it to summon Dick for a pick up and then we were off. At Makaro, we had an easy landing as the sun began to rise on what transpired to be a perfect day. weather wise. No clouds besmirched the azure blue sky, it was all 'sweetness and light' with the promise of being a real cracker. Dick, however, kept reminding us that he was "Doing us a favour as it's my day off you know", yelled one final "Radio when you are done!" and was gone. It was then that we realised we had one tiny water bottle, no food to speak of and no first aid kit—meaning **NO** analgesics! By then, John and I also had noted the first warning signs of a burgeoning hangover. Unperturbed we set off confident in the knowledge that when we'd finished we'd radio Dick and he would pick us up. At 2.00 pm we had well and truly finished our survey; we also had the dry horrors but wisely decided to ration our water. After all we'd been trying to get Dick on the radio since 11.30 am to no avail. Makaro is an awfully small island when you are stuck on it and being stuck on it nursing a wicked hangover made it seem smaller. It was also a stinking hot day, so we sat for shade under some bushes near the summit taking it in turns to plead our case on the radio and scan the water for any sign of Dick and his boat. Dick eventually appeared at 7.00 pm. "Sorry," he said, "I was tired after last night so went to bed and slept until 6.30 pm. I forgot to turn on the radio". Plausible enough except that when he said that, both John and I had caught the faintest hint of a mischievous smirk. To this day, I suspect Dick was getting us back for the Matiu/Somes Restoration Plan and, at the time, John thought so too. Needless to say, I have never been back to Makaro.

In 1997, the former Wellington Conservancy took over the management of public conservation land on the Chatham Islands—here is where John particularly made his mark. The Chatham Islands are a 'hot spot' of indigenous biodiversity with a high level of endemism (botanically there are 42 formally described endemic plants and one endemic genus, *Myosotidium*, known from the islands (de Lange et al., 2011; de Lange et al., 2013a; de Lange et al., 2013b). When the Wellington Conservancy took over from Canterbury, plant conservation work on the islands had reached its nadir. There was then only the one newly appointed botanist resident on the island, Amanda Baird, who had the unenviable task of pulling together that entire island group's threatened plant issues into a single cohesive management

plan. John's initial steps to support Amanda's work were to help compile a checklist of the islands' indigenous flora (de Lange et al., 1999), collate a bibliography of the islands' flora and terrestrial ecology (Sawyer, 2000) and oversee the publication of a field guide to the Chatham Islands endemic vascular plants (Crisp et al., 2000).

One oddity was that between 1997 and 2002 John never visited the islands. This I eventually found out was because he had a phobia about flying. This phobia was sufficiently severe that one has to marvel how John managed to make his way to New Zealand in 1993. In any case, when it became necessary for him to visit the Chatham Islands in July 2002, he finally dealt with the matter by undergoing weeks of hypnotherapy, thereby opening the world up to John for plenty of travel.



John Sawyer above Otoi Creek, Rekohu (Chatham Island). John loved using ATV's which were de rigueur for DOC staff travel on the islands until mid 2015. Photo: Peter J. de Lange (January 2006).



John Sawyer (age 38) at Kaiangaroa Point, Rekohu (Chatham Island) crouching beside a heavily flowering plant of the Chatham Islands endemic *Lepidium rekohuense* on the day we collected the type material for this species. Photo: Peter J. de Lange (11 January 2006).

On that first of John's Chatham Islands visits I accompanied him. While over there, we soon realised that for plant conservation on the islands to be effective we needed to work as a team, in partnership with Chatham Islanders. On our return to New Zealand, John set about making this happen, finding the necessary funds and with these forming a Chatham Islands Threatened Plant Advisory Panel. That panel functioned from 2003 up to 2011 and, at its height, included a wide representation of DOC experts, field staff, Chatham Islanders and scientists from Crown Research Institutes. As a result, of its activities several key threatened Chatham Island endemic plants were rescued from extinction, e.g., *Austroderia turbaria*,

Lepidium rekohuense, *Sonchus grandifolius*, and successful management methodologies prepared (and acted on) for the majority of the endemics. In addition, a new comprehensive vascular plant checklist was published (de Lange et al., 2011) and efforts were made to expand the conservation management into the less well studied Chatham Islands bryophytes and mycobiota (see de Lange et al., 2008). John was also keen to merge the threatened plant and bird groups to form a Chatham Island ecosystems management group. It was on the Chatham Islands that John hit on a formula of using what we came to call 'passive conservation' as a means to achieve good conservation outcomes. Simply put, rather than butt heads with people, provide them with the necessary facts (ideally in the form of a well-illustrated publication) and let them get back to you. To achieve these, we prepared a series of pocket field guides to threatened plants, endemic plants, biosecurity issues and Chatham Island birds.

In hindsight, I now regard the Chatham Islands work John and I did together as the zenith of our collaborations; this was a time where we had an excellent partnership with the both of us playing to our respective skills in an open and honest working relationship.

The Chatham Islands are, without doubt, a very special place as anyone who has worked there knows. During my work there with John, we had many highlights of which our exploration in January 2006 of Western Reef was a particular favourite. Western Reef is a mostly wave washed, low lying series of Chatham schist outcrops that lies 5.4 km west of Point Somes, Rekohu (Chatham Island). It is home to 6000+ New Zealand fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*). At the time of our visit, the flora had never been formally published. We had gone there as part of my research on the Chatham Islands *Lepidium oleraceum* complex (see de Lange et al., 2013). John and I, along with DOC Chatham Island

officer Jo Hiscock, landed there from the *Teao*, a fishing launch run by Darcy Clark from out of Port Hutt. We landed in good conditions and spent three or so hours making a thorough exploration of that noisome place, accompanied all the while by some mighty big rather enraged bull seals. Aside from the obvious risk of being attacked by a seal, we had the smell of the place to contend with—anyone who has worked with seals will fully comprehend that this can be pretty awful. On Western Reef, it was so bad that we seriously struggled not to vomit. This desire became so bad that we ended up involuntarily punctuating our shouted out *Lepidium* counts (we were doing a census of the Western Reef population of *Lepidium*, now known as *L. oligodontum*—see de Lange et al., 2013) with dry and at times not-so-dry retches. So imagine if you will John bellowing above the seal cacophony “Add another 3...groop!”, “Got 12 more...groop!”, very funny (afterwards). On our return to Port Hutt, Darcy Clark presented us with two very large hapuka (*Polyprion oxygenios*). I have never been that keen on fish, so I gave mine to John who took them back to New Zealand the following day as hand luggage in his back pack causing quite a stir in Wellington Airport as he wandered through the terminal with a set of massive fish tails poking out of his pack.

Our work on the Chatham Islands aside, from about 2002 John started in a new direction. Inspired by the IUCN Global Plant Strategy, John, apparently dissatisfied with his perception of a lack of government interest in the strategy, decided to form what is now the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (www.nzpcn.org.nz). As should be by now evident, once John got on to an idea it became all consuming. I recollect that, whilst accompanying Peter Heenan, Tony Silbery and I up Mt Holdsworth to investigate what is now *Myrsine umbricola* (Heenan & de Lange 2004), he devoted the entire drive from Wellington to the Holdsworth car park, then the walk up and down the peak and subsequent evening’s discussion in a motel at Featherston in an attempt to recruit us to the cause. Neither Peter Heenan nor I were that convinced so with genuine evangelistic zeal John saw it as his task to turn us around. On that occasion, he failed but succeeded the following year with me at least using his favoured ruse of getting me to be a keynote speaker at the inaugural meeting. Again with hindsight, I realise that John was awfully good at reading people and I am ashamed to say that he’d long since learned that to motivate me into his line of thinking was as simple as getting me to speak on or write about the issue.

John’s drive with the NZPCN was truly infectious and it is really to his credit that the society ever formed and is as successful as it is now. He saw a need and, as always, he found a way to find the funds and pull together a society that now leads many New Zealand plant conservation issues.



John Sawyer nervously walks along the crest of Western Reef. To protect us from seal attacks we had been equipped by the DOC Chatham’s pinniped expert Anthony Knievel with softball bats. Mercifully we never had to use them but nevertheless we were tailed for the duration of our visit by several very large, stropy bull seals, who without any doubt, had we lacked bats would have had a go at us. Photo: Peter J. de Lange (January 2006).



John Sawyer showing off his new gumboots outside the Waitangi Cafe, Waitangi, Rekohu (Chatham Island). New Zealand DOC staff visiting Waitangi usually visit the cafe at least once per island visit for a blue cod and chips meal. John loved his fish and on this visit insisted we partake and picnic on the cliffs above Petre Bay. Even I, avowed seafood loather was convinced by John it was worth doing—and much to my surprise it was ‘worth doing’. The cafe is also a good source of newspaper for your plant press should you run out. Photo: Peter J. de Lange (January 2006).

Sadly, from about 2006 onwards, John and I did less field work together. In 2006, he proposed the last major project on which he and I worked closely, what is now *'Threatened Plants of New Zealand'* (de Lange et al., 2010). This first started as a book to be written by David Norton, Eric McKenzie, John Sawyer and I (as lead author). Here again, John had exercised his considerable skills at finding money and had received a grant to cover the book's publication from MWH Global (www.mwhglobal.com). A draft was soon prepared, perhaps too hastily, and just before a new indigenous vascular plant threat assessment was due; I was concerned that the book would be out of date even before it hit the shelves but John saw it differently. The issue was temporarily settled when the then Canterbury University Press (CUP) Editor, Richard King, died unexpectedly in March 2008; the book was left in limbo until early 2009. Meanwhile, John and I, with Jeremy Rolfe and Ian St George produced a book about the orchids of the Lower North Island (de Lange et al., 2007). The way in which this orchid book was written ended up having a strong influence on how *'Threatened Plants of New Zealand'* would end up being completed.



The second crack at *'Threatened Plants of New Zealand'* started in 2009, when John handed the reins to me, citing his 'increasing work pressures', leaving me to revive the project with the new CUP editor, Rachel Scott. This was done by bringing to the book the additional skills of Peter Heenan and Jeremy Rolfe, and cutting out the mycobiota section contributed by Eric McKenzie. Then, under exceptionally tight deadlines, we completely revised and saw the book through to publication over a period of eight months solid writing.

In late 2011, John moved to Auckland to work for the new Auckland Council where he ended up working closely with my wife Gillian Crowcroft on the Unitary Plan but I rarely dealt with him during his time in Auckland. One notable occasion was my request to John for his help to secure from development an important South Auckland wetland (*'Matukureia Swamp'*) that had been accidentally overlooked by the council (de Lange et al., 2014). We last met and worked together at a meeting about the NZPCN website with Landcare Staff in August 2013. By then he was already planning a new life back in the U.K. I saw him once more, in November 2013, at the Wellington-based AGM of the NZPCN after which we ended up sharing a taxi drive back to my Mt Albert residence, had a cuppa and a slice of cake and for a brief moment we were back reliving the fun all those years ago – but it was fleeting really and all too soon he went off to work and I never saw him again. It's true that once in the U.K. we emailed a few times about the conservation management of rata moehau (*Metrosideros bartlettii*) and field work on the Chatham Islands. It was clear to me though, that John had truly moved on and was happy in his new role. At the time, I sincerely wished him the best never realising that that email would be the last one between us.

I have always been impressed with John's drive. He was without doubt an excellent motivator. Once he had locked teeth with an issue he never gave up. His use of humour and, when all else failed, unashamedly Machiavellian tactics to achieve end goals was truly outstanding. Indeed, it was John who even provided me with the means to achieve a number of my own quite unintended goals! For example, I believe that without John's ideas and drive that I could never have overseen and helped write a book of the calibre of *'Threatened Plants of New Zealand'*. Certainly, John had a particular style that saw him routinely push boundaries with his upper tier managers and external agencies—in the process often ruffling feathers. In one of his rare moments of 'down', he confessed to me that during the 2011 DOC restructuring he had been warned that there would be no job for him there. I know that he was honest when it really counted, and sometimes this honesty cost him dearly.

Like all humans, John was a pretty complex person. He had his failings but he also had many strengths. John was an exceptional motivator, always so full of ideas. Indeed, John always had really big ideas and he saw many of these to fruition making I think conservation a better place for people. However, as time wore on, he increasingly found it less easy to fill in the canvas of his creations in New Zealand.

What made John all the more remarkable was his ability to pick himself up from a rebuff and get back on the train to the future. When his marriage ended in 1996, I saw him as down as you can possibly get. What made him different from so many others I have seen in that place was that he got up from it and took himself on a journey that finally led him to his intellectual equal, Karlene Hill. He will be missed not only by Karlene and his as yet unborn child but also by what he called his 'whanau' in New Zealand. I was glad to have been one of them and I will miss him deeply.

John Sawyer left his mark in New Zealand mostly by his publications and his tireless work with the fledgling New Zealand Plant Conservation Network and New Zealand Ecological Society. Although he was never a keen plant collector, he contributed 124 mostly Chatham Islands specimens to the Auckland Museum Herbarium (AK) and helped collect two type specimens, *Lepidium oligodontum* de Lange et Heenan (*P.J. de Lange CH378 & J.W.D. Sawyer*, Western Reef, AK 294925) and *L. rekohuense* de Lange et Heenan (*P.J. de Lange CH405A,B,C, J.W.D. Sawyer & A. Baird*, Chatham (Rekohu) Island, Kaiangaroa Point, AK 295129, AK 295130, AK 295131). He was an excellent companion in the field, kept meticulous notes, enjoyed music, reading, fine wine and cooking. With John's passing, conservation has lost one of its great innovators.



John Sawyer displays a selection of the numerous plant conservation-related publications that he was instrumental in producing.

Vaarwel vriend! U hebt nu vertrokken naar een plek waar ik niet kan volgen. Hoewel je zijn gegaan je zal voortleven in mijn herinneringen en van degenen die u hebben achtergelaten. Ik wens u in uw volgende reis en bid dat op een dag zullen we elkaar weer ontmoeten.

Acknowledgements

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John Sawyer Publications

The following bibliography is not exhaustive but provides some indication of the research, publications and interests of John Sawyer and his collaborations. I have not included in this listing John's numerous conference presentations, nor his mostly anonymous entries in *Trilepidea*. I would like to thank Bec Stanley and Jeremy Rolfe for helping with preparing this list.

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John Sawyer—a tribute

Sarah Beadel, President NZPCN (sarah.beadel@wildlands.co.nz) 24 November 2015

John Sawyer was a huge figure in New Zealand plant conservation and ecological circles.

Many of you will either have worked with John or know of his work. He was a profound motivator and visionary, with powerful ideas, a very hard worker and always had conservation and the environment on his mind.

John put plant conservation on the map in New Zealand and did some incredible work, especially through motivating people and finding money to save our flora. John founded the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (www.nzpcn.org.nz) and was a staunch advocate for our native plants.

I first encountered John in the 1990s when he was working with DOC. My memory of John at this time was of an extremely passionate and highly motivated individual. I remember standing with him on a hillside in eastern Wairarapa whilst doing reconnaissance for the Protected Natural Areas Programme survey, and him asking whether there was a database of all the records of tawa in New Zealand (and also for all other species).

We then debated the vast scale of that task and the relative priority of the work, compared with identifying significant natural areas with the aim of seeking their protection. At this time, John was already collating all existing plant lists for natural areas in the Wellington Conservancy (DOC) prepared by Tony Druce, the Wellington Botanical Society, and other botanists. As well as creating pdfs of all these lists, he (or his “student workers”) inputted all species on these lists into an Excel spreadsheet, identifying in which natural area each species occurred.

John was passionate about plant conservation and, inspired by the 2002 IUCN global plant strategy, wanted a national body that would encourage and promote plant conservation and provide a forum for like-minded people to connect, network, and share information, news, and ideas. Once John developed an idea it became all-consuming and he looked for an existing New Zealand body to provide these roles, but when these avenues did not work out he established the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network in April 2003. John’s drive with NZPCN was truly infectious and it is to his credit that the Network was formed and is as successful as it is now. He saw a need and, as always, he found a way to get the funds and pull together a Network that now leads many New Zealand plant conservation issues. John put his heart and soul into the Network, and was always thinking of new ideas about how it could grow and expand to reach more people.

John was a tremendous motivator and I can still remember him approaching me at the first AGM of the Network in 2004 in Auckland, and telling me, flatteringly, that my skills would be a great asset to the Network committee, and that I should stand. He was extremely effective at motivating other people to do things they perhaps otherwise would not have done. Much to the horror of all the nominees, too many people were nominated and there was then an election to select the committee (the only one in the history of the Network). I have been on the committee ever since then and it was a privilege to work alongside John to grow and strengthen the Network.

The Network started small but, with a committed group of tremendously hard-working people and John always extolling expansion and growth, it has gone from strength to strength. Key services and roles that the Network currently provides are all activities that were individually or jointly inspired and nurtured by John.

The NZPCN website, with its thousands of photographs, accurate scientific names, and a wealth of information and links to information is used by many people every day to confirm plant identifications, scientific names and their spelling, and to locate other information about plants. Much of the funding obtained to develop and populate the website was a result of bids for funds that John dreamt up and put together. Many of the features on the website as we know it today were germs of ideas that John instigated, including the production of booklets on selected plant species.

Along with others, John developed three Network training workbooks: *Introduction to Plant Life in New Zealand*, *Covenant Management*, and *Plant Nursery Management and Propagation*. He also instigated the annual vote for your favourite plant, the prestigious Plant Conservation Network annual awards, and was always very active in our Network conferences, which are fantastic opportunities for dissemination of information and networking between New Zealand plant conservationists.

Also, from within the Network John was involved with starting the process of establishing the New Zealand seed bank in Palmerston North. NZPCN was the lead organisation in the original MOU which was developed and signed between Kew Gardens, Massey University, AgResearch, and Landcare Research. In 2006, John proposed the *Threatened Plants of New Zealand* book, and exercised his considerable skills at finding money and secured a grant for the Network to cover publication.

He organised the 2013 Auckland NZPCN conference, which was one of the best conferences I have attended, not just from the perspective of interesting and challenging information presented but also for the interaction and interchange of ideas and information between delegates between sessions.

Even though John moved back to UK last year and was the CEO of the UK National Biodiversity Network Trust, he was still very much interested and actively contributing to our Network in New Zealand, and to say that he will be greatly missed is an understatement. His faith in and encouragement of other people's capacity to implement his ideas was inspirational. Once he had locked teeth with an issue he never gave up. His use of humour and, when all else failed, unashamedly Machiavellian tactics to achieve end goals was outstanding.



Memento to take to Edinburgh. John receiving the "Special Award" at the 2013 Conference in Auckland.

I have only touched on a few of the things that John inspired and achieved, and whilst he may have left New Zealand, I can truly say that his early passing at a relatively young age has robbed plant conservation in this country of a true visionary and profound motivator.

In honour of John's memory, the Network has renamed the Plant Conservation Endowment Fund, which John initiated at the 2013 NZPCN conference, the 'John Sawyer Plant Conservation Fund'.

PLANT OF THE MONTH – *CALTHA OBTUSA*



Caltha obtusa. Photo: John Barkla.

Plant of the month for November is *Caltha obtusa*. This member of the ranunculaceae family is endemic to the South Island, from Canterbury southwards, but more common in central and western Otago and eastern Fiordland. It is usually seen in damp alpine flushes and seepages, around tarns and slow flowing streams where it forms a low mat with rhizomes that can creep to form turf-like carpets 500 mm or more across. *Caltha obtusa* can be readily distinguished from *C. novae-zelandiae* when flowering by the oblong-ovate white rather than linear-subulate yellow flowers. The flowers can be scented and

are one of the first to appear after snowmelt. You can see find out more about *C. obtusa* on the Network factsheet: http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=1204

President's Report to the NZPCN AGM 2015

Nga mihi ki a koutou katoa. Welcome to the 12th AGM of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. It has been another busy and fruitful year for the Network. It is great to see the excellent turnout at the conference, and thank you to those of you who have given up your lunch break to come to the AGM. I hope you are all enjoying the conference.

It has been a very busy year for the Council. A small team run by Jesse and Matt, with help from other Council members and other volunteers, put the conference together, which I am sure you all agree is a great effort and another memorable Network event.

Jesse has also been doing a great job as Webmaster. She is going to step back a little from this shortly as she has started a new job as a QEII rep; Rewi and Melissa are helping in the short term. The Network is looking for someone to share the Webmaster's role in the future—tasks will be shared depending on the incoming person's particular skills. Please get in touch with Jesse or me if you would like to help.

Nicky as Treasurer, and Rewi as Secretary and managing the photos, are invaluable. Melissa, along with Catherine Beard, has done another excellent job with awards and Catherine will take over this role next year. Matt and Astrid (a co-opted member of the Council) have been doing a great job with the Forum—Sarah Richardson (another co-opted member of Council) is going to step up into this role as well next year. Eric does a fantastic job as the general administrator and answering emails!! And so it goes on.

Jeremy Rolfe is contributing at Council meetings as a co-opted member representing DOC. Jeremy has been heavily involved with the Network since its inception, and it is excellent now also having his involvement at Council meetings.

The Network is in a very healthy state. Membership continues to grow, with a 5% increase over the last 11 months, a total of 38 new members. Visitation to the website is huge, with over 200,000 sessions over the last year. There are over 84,000 active users. The average session lasts about four minutes, with an average of between four and five pages viewed in each session. Most of our web visitors are from New Zealand (c.80%), with the remainder widely spread, although the US, Australia, and the United Kingdom contribute 2.4–4.5%.

There are c.7,600 species listed on the website, c.5000 indigenous species (including c.2,500 vascular taxa) and c.2,600 exotic species. Of the indigenous vascular species, there are currently photos loaded for c.2,340 species and, for c.1,700 species, the fact sheets are completed, there are brief descriptions for a further c.240 species. Hugh Wilson and Peter Johnson have agreed to the Network using their published plant descriptions on the fact sheets and we are exploring other efficient options for populating the remaining indigenous fact sheets for which there is neither a detailed nor a brief description.

We have continued with our regular annual activities, such as New Zealand's Favourite Native Plant, and also our prestigious Annual Awards, which will be presented at the dinner tonight.

Our major sponsor, Coastlands Plant Nursery Ltd, has continued to support the Network. Good sponsorship is key to the ongoing development and maintenance of the website. The sponsorship and fundraising position in the Network is vacant and we would like to fill it, so if there is anyone out there who is keen to take on this role, please get in touch with me. We are also seeking a large keystone sponsor such as a large corporate sponsor, a government department, or a District/Regional Council.

Rewi represented the Network at the 10th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference in Tasmania last November; this was a very worthwhile trip.

The New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seed Bank is continuing to progress well. The focus for the past 12 months has been on increasing the number of species collected through both collecting expeditions led by the seed bank coordinator and independent collecting by trained collectors. Training workshops were held in November 2014 and April 2015, and there are now 99 trained collectors in New Zealand. The seed bank coordinator has undertaken 12 collecting expeditions this year and collections have also been received from trained collectors in Northland, Auckland, Canterbury and Otago. In the 12 month period, 56 species were banked, including 12 threatened and at risk species. There are now 93 species seed-banked, a large increase from last year.

The Council also continues to provide representation on the Loder Cup Committee.

The Plant Conservation Endowment Fund this year stands at around \$13,807. The David Given Fund has reached \$30,000, including one donation of \$500 from the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. The Network will award a study grant from the David Given Fund at the dinner tonight. Shannel Courtney (a co-opted Council member) has managed this process.

The Council met a couple of weeks ago to discuss initiatives for the next year and we are all looking forward to another stimulating and productive year.

Sarah Beadel,

President

Images request

Jason Butt, Wai-ora Forest Landscapes Ltd (jason@waioralandscapes.co.nz)

We need more photos of *Carmichaelia australis* on the Network website from various regions (see www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=1596). The species is extremely variable across its range to the point where a plant from Northland scarcely resembles one from Canterbury. We recently had a situation where someone published a newsletter featuring *C. australis* as a plant to watch out for in Canterbury. Unfortunately, the illustration (sourced from NZPCN) was of no use in helping to identify this species in Canterbury because it was of an Auckland specimen. I will keep an eye out for an opportunity to get a Canterbury image or two, but if anyone has wider regional images of this species they would be useful in the Network's image library. Single images could be sent to info@nzpcn.org.nz; anyone with relevant multiple images should burn them to a CD and send the CD to New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, PO Box 16-102, Wellington.

NZPCN Award winners 2015

As in previous years, this year's Plant Conservation Network awards span the full breadth of activity required to protect New Zealand's native plants. The 2015 award winners are:

- *Individual involved in plant conservation:* Valerie Fay
- *School Plant Conservation project:* Clyde Primary School
- *Plant Nursery involved in Plant Conservation:* Mainly Natives Nursery
- *Local Authority Protecting Native Plant Life:* Porirua City Council
- *Young Plant Conservationist of the Year:* Keagan Maynard
- *Special Award:* New Zealand Transport Authority

Individual



Valerie Fay has been an outstanding volunteer at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary near Dunedin since its inception in 2007. She has been a hard-working and dedicated leader of the volunteer crew that has planted thousands of native plants in the sanctuary and has taken a key role in sourcing and propagating many of Otago's rare and threatened plants that are showcased in the rare plants garden at the sanctuary. Valerie has also provided key assistance with the experimental translocation of two threatened plant species—*Carex inopinata* and *Simplicia laxa*—into kākūka forest at the sanctuary, including the twice-yearly monitoring of these new populations.

School



Over the last five years, pupils from Clyde Primary School have made a tremendous contribution towards Project Gold's native restoration plantings along the Millennium River Track, Clyde. The area has transformed from an overgrown, weedy riverbank into an amazing native walkway as a result of the effort and dedication by staff and pupils from the school and members of the local community.

Local Authority Protecting Native Plants



Over the last 10 years, Porirua City Council has done an outstanding job of transforming Bothamley Park in Porirua from a weed-infested area into a well-used and appreciated public space, with much improved ecological values. The council has undertaken a great amount of weed control in the park, and restored weedy areas by planting a wide variety of native species, including some rare and threatened species such as *Streblus banksii* (At Risk-Relict). The Council has also encouraged public involvement, with well-attended regular community planting days, and people are now starting to take ownership of the park and look after their 'patch', including removing rubbish.

Plant Nursery

Mainly Natives Plant Nursery, through its owner Georgina Pahl, has made an important contribution towards the restoration of native plant communities in the Nelson-Tasman region through its involvement in a wide range of planting projects, both public and private. Georgina is an enthusiastic

and committed nurserywoman who has gone the extra mile to ensure that planting projects are successfully planned and implemented. The nursery is actively involved in and promotes the propagation and planting of locally rare and threatened species (e.g., leafless pōhuehue, narrow-leaved maire, *Pittosporum obcordatum* and *Carmichaelia australis* var. *flagelliformis*), which will help to ensure that these species survive in the Nelson-Tasman area and raise their profile in the community.

Young Plant Conservationist of the Year



Keagan Maynard is a Year 9 student from Fiordland College, Te Anau. Over the last few years, he has been an enthusiastic and committed volunteer for several conservation projects in the Te Anau area. He has been involved in seed collecting and restoration planting in the Kids Restore the Kepler project and advocated for sensitive design to protect native plant species during construction of a bike track on the school grounds. Keagan has also shown himself to be a strong leader, helping to mentor and inspire other students to get involved in conservation.

Special Award



The New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) is committed to utilising native plant species in state highway corridors for both functional purposes, such as erosion control and slope stabilisation, and for ecological restoration. NZTA has made an important contribution to native plant conservation in Northland through its use of native plants in the Whangarei State Highway Gateway Project. In particular, the focus on threatened and uncommon Northland plants, such as *Coprosma neglecta*, *Metrosideros carminea*, *Pittosporum obcordatum*, *Planchonella costata* and *Tecomanthe speciose*, in these highly visible public transport corridors will help to raise the profile of these lesser-known species and encourage them to be more widely planted.

NZPCN 2015 Conference Charity Auction: How did we do?

Matt Ward, NZPCN Council Member (mattwardward@gmail.com)

This article is dedicated to John Sawyer—the driving force behind the NZPCN.

I first encountered John in the flesh in 2010 when I worked for the Kapiti Coast District Council at a presentation at the Department of Conservation Waikanae Field Office (now closed). Upon being introduced to John, I said “Wow, you are not what I expected!”. He replied, “What, taller than you expected?” My response was “No, much younger and English”. I could not believe that someone of his age, from another country had such an amazing grip on the New Zealand flora, and all of its issues. Most New Zealanders will never reach his level of comprehension of the issues we face in plant conservation. I remember saying to Rob Cross after the excellent presentation “I feel like I need to lift my game”. Rob concurred...

For those who did not attend the Dunedin conference or only the conference and not the Friday night dinner, I would like to update you on how the Charity Silent Auction went. First, a big hug and congratulations to Jesse Bythell for all of the amazing work in pulling this fantastic, successful conference together. Secondly, I would like to say that running this auction for the first time, and as a silent auction, was both challenging and hugely rewarding.

The auction was run to raise additional monies for the “David Given Fund” (see NZPCN May Newsletter). There were 64 items up for bids, ranging from an overnight trip for two in the Milford Sounds to amazing original pieces of art, author signed books galore, outdoors gear and even a unique piece of woodwork. A total of 66 bidders registered for the auction including two online, to do their bidding via the NZPCN Forum. Incidentally, this online idea was inspired by a comment that John

Sawyer had made to Jesse Bythell regarding him fancying the Marcia Dale oil painting.

All of the items sold including a couple of left overs which I managed to bid up at the conference dinner on the Friday evening. Most were sold during the auction period including two books which were won through the NZPCN website Forum. Despite having a couple more people to follow up, the very generous bidders raised a phenomenal total of \$5,524.00, an amazing amount. This will really keep both funds in good health for the future.

The auction's new format provided some very interesting outcomes. Having time to view, hold and consider the items appeared to help the bids increase markedly from the set reserve (50% of RRP). An auto extend, which was kindly refereed by Mike Thorsen, was applied on the biggest ticket item, Marcia's painting, and saw the total for the item double. The TradeMe mentality definitely kicked in on several items where bidders went well beyond the RRP just to silently achieve the win. All great stuff!

I would finally like to say a big thank you to the following generous donors who made the auction possible, beneficial and enjoyable: the team from the Environmental Defence Society; Marcia Dale; Catherine Kirby; Cactus Clothing; Amber Schwartzfeger from Swazi; Cathy Jones; Liz Grant; Rebecca Gilmore & Greg Slui; Richard Broadhead from Manuka Press; Liz Legge from Touchwood Books; Pauline Esposito from Potton & Burton; Rachel Scott from Otago University Press; Margaret Samuels from Auckland University Press; Val Smith; Ian Gamble; Craig Gamble from Victoria University Press; Katrina Rainey from Canterbury University Press; Sharna Ross from Real Journeys; Melanie Seafort; Barbara Smith from New Zealand Gardener; Rewi Elliott; Chalky Digits; John Barkla; Jason Hoskings; Danillo Hegg; Brian Patrick; and Simon Walls.

Our thoughts go out to Karlene during this very difficult time; I think John would have been stoked to learn how we went at the conference this year. Arohanui ... kia kaha.

Favourite Plant and Worst Weed vote is underway...

Matt Ward, Network Council Member (mattward@gmail.com)

This article is dedicated to John Sawyer—the driving force behind the NZPCN.

I wish I knew which plant was John's favourite, but I can only speculate. The picture that has circulated on the web via the National Biodiversity Network and Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland sites has him looking at an orchid. I knew his name well before meeting John for his co-authorship of the 2007 *Wild orchids of the Lower North Island: Field guide* a fantastic guide for beginner and experienced orchid botherers from anywhere in New Zealand.

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's annual favourite plant and worst weed election opened at the 2015 Dunedin Conference on the 29 October, and will run until the 30 November; the winners will be announced on the NZPCN website and in the December newsletter. Each year since 2002, the Network has asked New Zealanders to vote for their favourite plant. In 2012, the worst weed was added into the mix and it also proved popular. Last year's favourite plant was the extremely rare and



The *Dracophyllum menziesii* painting by Marcia Dale.



John Sawyer enjoying a wild orchid. Photo: NBN website www.nbn.org.uk, 2014.

endangered Bartlett's rata—*Metrosideros bartlettii*. The most despised weed in 2014's vote was the particularly troublesome pest, veldt grass, *Ehrharta erecta*.



Clear leader on 19 November. *Pleurophyllum speciosum* thriving on Campbell Island. Photo: Jane Gosden.

With voting having been underway for 20 days at the time of writing, there are some expected contenders, and a few not so expected candidates. In the first couple of days an early leader was the kakabeak, *Clianthus puniceus*. This “Nationally Critical” species makes the news regularly via the amazing efforts that are being undertaken for its conservation. At present, however, an unusual candidate leads the way, *Pleurophyllum speciosum*. This “At Risk – Naturally Uncommon” species is a beautiful megaherb, naturally found only on Auckland and Campbell Islands. Some comments about this current leader include:

“Stunning on its own, stupendous en masse.”

“Because I’ve been fortunate enough to have been to NZ’s remarkable Sub-Antarctic Islands and seen this plant in real life and it’s AMAAAAZING. Along with all its other sub-antarctic comrades - they need more coverage.”

“The most extraordinary of the megaherbs is the Pleurophyllum meadow, ... a naturally uncommon beauty that is unnaturally beautiful. Cast your votes dear plant-lovers of the ether, and secure for once, a truly magnificent herb atop botany’s most prized podium.”

Another contender currently sitting a number eight is the not so commonly known species parataniwha, New Zealand begonia, *Elatostema rugosum*. This species is a sight to behold when you find it. It is a very fussy specialist found in damp shady areas, usually in the vicinity of a stream or river. The amazing coloured leaves give it an attractive almost tropical appearance. Comments include:

“I love this plant. I see it hiding behind waterfalls, and beside bush covered streams, showings its beautiful pinkish foliage.”

“Parataniwha is one of our very few native perennials and looks so damn awesome, especially how the leaves will grow darker shades with more sunlight.”

“Always a delight to find when out in the bush and a good indicator you are about to get wet feet!”

Presently only one orchid features, and it is at number 10, the “At Risk – Naturally Uncommon”, hidden spider orchid, *Molloybas cryptanthus*. I have to admit I voted for this first to get an orchid on the list of contenders. This species is obviously extremely cryptic, as well as saprophytic, and is generally covered in leaf litter, making it a real treasure to have witnessed. I am yet to find and meet this orchid, but always keep an eye out for any potential signs when traversing kanuka or beech tree stands.



Clematis paniculata, in fifth place on 19 November. Photo: John Sawyer.

Like the favourites there has been some fluctuation in the lead of the race to become 2015's most despised weed. As you would expect, those garnering much attention are species most gardeners and conservationists are familiar with: *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis* was an early leader but has since dropped to third place, giving way to the table topping wandering Jew, *Tradescantia fluminensis*. A relevant comment by Peter de Lange about tradescantia is so very apt!

“Here’s one for John Sawyer (he hated it and made a point about it being accidentally show cased in the “LOTR Fellowship of the Rings” film).”

All the top 10 weeds would be worthy winners; however, they are all likely to be beaten by one of John's pet hates, tradescantia.

Leader Boards 19 November

Favourite Plant

1. *Pleurophyllum speciosum*
2. Kakabeak, *Clianthus puniceus*
3. Rimu, *Dacrydium cupressinum*
4. Puriri, *Vitex lucens*
5. White clematis, *Clematis paniculata*

Worst Weed

- Wandering Jew, *Tradescantia fluminensis*
- Climbing asparagus, *Asparagus scandens*
- Agapanthus, *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis*
- Gorse, *Ulex europaeus*
5. Moth plant/vine, *Araujia sericifera*

Regularly, New Zealanders' general knowledge of their native plants is that of iconic, bright flowered and common species, which most people are familiar with and can name. The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network website has over 27,000 images of native and weed species; any species featured on the site can be voted for including native and non-native orchids, ferns, trees, shrubs, vines, herbs, grasses, sedges, bryophytes, lichens and algae. The Network's focus is to promote and highlight the protection of threatened plants and their environs. The more knowledge about plants we as a Network can share can only advantage people and plants in the future.

With plenty of time still left to vote, we invite members as well as anyone else you know to vote for New Zealand's favourite plant and worst weed of 2015. Simply select the species you wish to vote for using the "Search Flora" window on the NZPCN [homepage](#), or alternatively, support a species already voted for by hitting the "Vote for New Zealand's Favourite Plant & Worst Weed" button also featured on the [homepage](#). Voting closes at midnight on 30 November. Take five minutes to have your say, vote today! Keeping in mind that this vote was also an idea of John Sawyer, John liked orchids...John liked orchids...

For more information contact: Matt Ward mattwardward@gmail.com, or mobile 021 189 1062

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):

Australian National Seed Science Forum

14–16 March 2016: The Forum will be held at the Australian PlantBank hosted by the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan, in collaboration with the Australian Network for Plant Conservation and the Australian Grains Genebank. The Forum will commence with an evening event on Monday 14 March; the main science programme will be presented on 15–16 March 2016. The Forum will be a rare opportunity to bring together leading botanical and agricultural institutions, seed scientists and conservation and restoration experts to share ideas that showcase the importance of seed science to the future of plant conservation and food security in Australia. An exciting programme of local and international experts is planned, speaking on seed conservation, storage, preservation and germination. More details on the National Seed Science Forum will be provided in the near future. Invited keynotes and a call for presentations will be announced soon.

Visit the Forum web pages at: www.seedpartnership.org.au.
Please email: info@seedpartnership.org.au to register for Forum announcements.

National Wetland Restoration Symposium 2016: Call for Presentations

10–12 February 2016 : The 7th National Wetland Restoration Symposium will be held at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology from. Ruud Kleinpaste, the highly engaging and entertaining “Bug Man” is confirmed as the Keynote Speaker. National Wetland Restoration symposia are run every two year to bring together community groups, landowners, iwi, scientists, wetland managers and students who are interested in sharing and learning about wetland restoration. Usually spread over three days, the symposia include field trips, practical training opportunities, soapbox sessions and presentations from a wide range of enthusiasts and professionals.

The 2016 Symposium theme, Wetlands for Life, highlights the vital role of wetlands in providing life-supporting ecosystem services, and opportunities to engage our young people in a life-time relationship with one of our most valuable, yet depleted ecosystem types.

Session themes may include: Maintaining essential ecosystem services, indigenous biodiversity of wetlands, engaging youth in wetland conservation and management, environmental education, citizen science projects and applications, communities restoring wetlands, advances in wetland science

The committee is now accepting abstracts from those wishing to give a presentation. Presentations will be 15 mins duration and are encouraged from wetland managers, students, iwi representatives, educators, NGOs, local and central government, and research agencies. Further details for speakers will be made available on the Symposium website.

Registration:

www.wetlandtrust.org.nz

11th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference

Melbourne: 15–18 November 2016 in collaboration with La Trobe University and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

More details: www.anpc.asn.au/conferences/2016

Auckland Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 5 December to Wenderholm Regional Park for the Christmas Picnic/Field trip.

Leader: Janeen Collings.
Contact: Maureen Young, email: youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz.

Waikato Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 5 – Sunday 6 December to Mt Urchin and Tree Trunk Gorge, Kaimanawa Forest Park (combined with Rotorua Botanical Society).

See below for details.

Rotorua Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 5 – Sunday 6 December to Mt Urchin and Tree Trunk Gorge, Kaimanawa Forest Park (combined with Waikato Botanical Society). **Meet:** Saturday at 10.00 a.m. at the DOC campground located about 5 kms up Kaimanawa Road; Kaimanawa Road is about 16 km south of Turangi. Some of us are going to be staying at the DOC campsite overnight. Sunday: same meeting point for those coming for the day. **Bring:** warm clothes, tents, sleeping bags, cooking gear, etc., if camping. **Grade:** easy.

Leader: Kerry Jones, ph: 07 855 9700 or 027 747 0733, email: km8j1s@gmail.com.

Wanganui Museum Botanical Group

Meeting: Wednesday 2 December at 7.30 p.m., for the Christmas social function.

Venue: Davis Lecture Theatre's staffroom by the kitchen; details later.

Wellington Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 28 to Sunday 29 November in the Featherston area. **Meet:** Saturday 9.30 a.m. at Dorset Square, Moore St, corner of SH2. **Accommodation:** Featherston Motels & Camping, 4 Fitzherbert St, Featherston, ph: 06 308 9852 (book via Google) \$12 pp/night for use of all facilities, otherwise \$8; or Race Track Ranch, SH2, Tauherenikau, \$16 pp/n (bring own sheets/pillow), ph: 06 308 9026 or 021 271 0364 (bookings must be made in advance) see www.travelbug.co.nz or email: wairarapa.racing@xtra.co.nz. Pot luck dinner Saturday night.

Leader: Chris Hopkins, ph: 04 528 5195, email hopkinschris@xtra.co.nz; **deputy leader:** Sunita Singh, ph: 04 387 9955, 027 405 2987, email sunita@actrix.co.nz.

Field trip: 17–24 January 2016 summer camp field trip to Western Waikato. **Accommodation:** Te Kauri Lodge, SH3, Kawhia Rd, Te Awamutu; space for camping is limited as the lodge is surrounded by bush. To break the journey, we propose to stay the night of 16 January at Andy Maloney's cottage, Horopito, near Ohakune. Here, we will assist by preparing a plant list for the property before driving to Kawhia on 17 January. **Bookings:** please tell Mick ASAP about your interest in coming. This will allow us to cater for individual needs on a satisfactory basis, and allow distribution of trip information. **Deadline for registrations and deposits:** 30 November 2015.

Leader: Mick Parsons, ph: 04 473 1142 or 027 249 9663.

Nelson Botanical Society

Field trip: Sunday 15 November to Takaka Hill walkway. **Meet:** at the Church steps at 8.00 a.m. PLEASE register with the leader by Friday 13 November for our PLB protocols and also in case of cancellation.

Leader: Don Pittham
ph: 03 545 1985.

Field trip: Friday 18 to Sunday 20 December for our camp in CobbValley. **Accommodation:** is in the Cobb Valley houses.

Leader: Shannel Courtney,
ph: 03 546 9922. **Organiser:** Susan Cook. ph: 03 544 6175.

Canterbury Botanical Society

Meeting: Monday 7 December for a talk by Dr Peter Heenan, Landcare Research. Venue: Upper Riccarton Library, 71 Main South Road.

Contact: Gillian Giller, email: ggillerma1@actrix.gen.nz.

Field trip: Saturday 12 December to Mt Torlesse alpine flora, accessed from Avoca Homestead, Torlesse, or Lees Valley.

Contact: for final destination decision, Gillian Giller, email: ggillerma1@actrix.gen.nz.

University of Canterbury – BIOL305-16SU1 Practical Field Botany

January 21–29: intensive, 8-day summer course designed to teach students and professionals basic skills in field botany field component with work before and after. Enrolment essential.

Course coordinator and lecturer: Dr Pieter Pelsler, ph: 03 364 2987 ext 45605; email: pieter.pelsler@canterbury.ac.nz.

Otago Botanical Society

Meeting: Thursday 10 December at 5.20 p.m. for the Allan Mere Award to Professor Alan Mark followed by a presentation titled, 'Images and Adventures', which will tell the stories and show the places where some of the photos selected for Alan's Book, Above the Treeline, were obtained. Venue: Benham Seminar Room, Room 215, second floor of the new wing on the Zoology Building, 346 Great King Street, beside the Captain Cook Hotel. Please be prompt, as the door will only be held open until 5.30 p.m. The award-giving will be followed by our end of year dinner, starting at 7.00 p.m., at Vogel St Kitchen, 76 Vogel St, in the warehouse precinct just north of the Cumberland Street overbridge and tucked in between the two one-way streets.

Please RSVP to Robyn Bridges if you wish to attend: ph 03 479 8372, email: robyn.bridges@otago.ac.nz

Field trip: Saturday 19 December Old Man Range (joint trip with Dunedin Branch of Forest and Bird). Meet: Botany Department car park at 8.00 a.m., returning late. Access: limited to 4WD vehicles; places on this trip may be limited. Bring: warm clothing and good parkas as well as your lunch.

Contact: David Lyttle, ph: 03 454 5470, email: djlyttle@ihug.co.nz.

South Coast Environment Society, supported by Venture Southland and AgResearch

Meeting: Monday 7 December at 3.00 p.m. for a talk by Dr Kioumars Ghamkhar, Director of Margot Forde Forage Germplasm Centre, titled 'Different regions need different measures: resilient species and new germplasm'. **Venue:** Working Men's Club, Invercargill.

Register: by email to Karyn@sces.org.nz by Thursday 3 December.
