



TRILEPIDEA

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

Please send news items or events to events@nzpcn.org.nz

Postal address: P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington, New Zealand

E-NEWSLETTER: NO 49. DECEMBER 2007

Deadline for next issue: Monday 14 January 2008

Message from the President

I am sure that everyone will join me in congratulating Amanda Baird as the 2007 recipient of the Loder Cup. She joins a small group of people who have been acknowledged for their very special and dedicated work on New Zealand's flora and the conservation of our natural heritage. This is a very prestigious award and a very timely one that recognises Amanda's very important work on the Chatham Islands.

Congratulations must also go to one of the Network Patrons, Peri Drysdale. Peri is the CEO of the fashion label Untouched World. Her company is the first in the World to be granted permission by UNESCO to carry the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Education (UN DESD) logo on its labelling. This recognises Untouched World as a World leader in sustainable practices. By the way, Peri's grandmother (E.C. Richards) was a very notable botanist and author. Some of you may have (as I do) the book 'Our New Zealand Trees and Flowers', first published in 1947 with a third edition in 1956.

Finally, and unashamedly, I do believe that the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network as a whole has to be congratulated. That means you. It is you who has contributed so much to the Network's mission, that is "to educate people about New Zealand's native plant life and to promote indigenous plant conservation in New Zealand and throughout Oceania..." The Mission Statement goes on to mention other important matters. A lot has indeed been done and much progress has been made by the Network Council as we rapidly approach 2010 (the year set for the 16 targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation). If you are not sure what has been achieved, I suggest that over the holiday period you have a good read of all the 2007 issues of the Network newsletter?

No matter where you may be, I wish you all a very enjoyable and peaceful Christmas.

Ian Spellerberg, Lincoln University

Plant of the Month



Willowherb (*Epilobium microphyllum*).
Photo: Naomi Lorimer.

Plant of the Month for December is the endemic willowherb (*Epilobium microphyllum*), the 2007 winner of the poll to find New Zealand's favourite native plant. This tufted, creeping herb is found in gravelly or shingly riverbeds, flats and outwash plains from sea level to 1,200 m. It occurs southwards from about Kawhia and East Cape and is locally abundant around Cook Strait, then mainly easterly in the South Island. It flowers from December to February. One of the most striking features of this plant is the seed capsule, which has conspicuous bands of strigillose hairs along the lines of dehiscence and thus appears striped light and dark. The Network fact sheet for willowherb may be found at: www.nzpcn.org.nz/vascular_plants/detail.asp?PlantID=1902

Department of Conservation botanist wins 2007 Loder Cup

Peter J. de Lange, Department of Conservation (Pdelange@doc.govt.nz)



Amanda Baird receives the Loder Cup from Director-General of Conservation, Al Morrison. Photo: Ken Hunt.

Amanda Baird has had a distinguished career since she left the University of Canterbury in the early 1980s where she took a B.Sc. in botany. Initially working for the New Zealand Forest Service, she took up a position in the Canterbury Conservancy when the Department of Conservation was formed in 1987. In Canterbury, Amanda worked with threatened plants and soon developed a deep interest in the Chatham Islands flora, especially the protection of that island group's terrestrial ecosystems, and preventing the extinction of any of its c.47 endemic vascular plants. Initially, Amanda worked closely with the late David Given, and undertook frequent visits

to the islands with him. However, in early 1996 she took up a permanent position on the islands, working at first in the Field Centre, and then, following the 1997 restructuring of the Department, she was transferred across to the Wellington Conservancy as part of the new Chatham Islands Area Office.

Amanda is renowned for her meticulous attention to detail. Since she took up her position on the islands, she has worked her way through hundreds of complicated landownership issues in relation to covenants, planned for and got funded 100s of kilometres of fence line, tutored numerous Chatham Islands staff to become better field botanists, and helped bring back from the brink of extinction no fewer than 8 of the 30 odd Chatham Islands endemics currently regarded as threatened. It is because of Amanda's initial efforts that such Chatham Islands specialties as the kopakopa or Chatham Island forget-me-not (*Myosotidium hortensia*) and sow thistle (*Embergeria grandifolia*) now exist in numerous accessible sites, with the latter actively, and naturally, expanding its range. Amanda has also played a significant role in the revegetation of Mangere Island Nature Reserve—once a large mass of rough pasture and now largely converted to scrub and regenerating forest.



Amanda Baird inspects Chatham Island forget-me-not. Photo: John Sawyer.

Botanists visiting the island have long known and appreciated Amanda's intimate knowledge of the islands' flora and its people. She is widely seen as the first port of call for help and directions. On the islands, she is deeply respected for her commitment to restoring the islands' flora as functional ecosystems. Amanda's contribution to science is evident in the plethora of papers and publications dealing with the Chatham Islands flora and acknowledging her contributions that have come out in the last decade. Since 2003, Amanda has headed a team of dedicated botanists and islanders who have been steadily working to save the threatened Chatham Islands plants from extinction. It's ironic then that in a time where media attention seems focused on the biodiversity crisis and what we are losing, there has been little recognition—until this award—that Amanda's team has been quietly getting on with it, and saving the Chatham Islands flora and its unique specialties from extinction. Congratulations Amanda!

New Zealand has a new favourite plant!

The small, white-flowered willowherb (*Epilobium microphyllum*), found in riverbeds and gravelly coastal areas, snatched victory in the final day of an annual poll organised by the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, which has been tallying votes for the past eight weeks. With a day to run, it appeared that the poll would be won by the Chatham Island forget-me-not (*Myosotidium hortensia*) or New Zealand's bamboo rush (*Sporadanthus ferrugineus*). The number 1 spot changed six times in the last few days of voting. Last year the poll was topped by the Chatham Island Christmas tree.

Organised by the Network, the web-based poll covers plants of every kind, from the smallest ferns and grasses, to lowland trees and the mighty forest podocarps. Network President Professor Ian Spellerberg says the whole top-ten has changed, with previous winners such as pohutukawa and Cook's scurvy grass nowhere to be seen. This year's 10 most favourite plants include tawari, nikau palm, northern rata, kakabeak, coral broom, Poor Knights lily and the water brome. Over 100 species were voted for out of a flora of 2360 species.

The Network is not surprised that New Zealand's iconic species failed to make the top ten. The poll illustrates that New Zealand's love of native plants is far deeper than some of its national emblems. Voters have also taken the opportunity to comment about the plant of their choice and, in many cases, this reveals a deeper connection between the physical environment and national identity.

"There are many people who have a real love of our native flora, and this is a chance for them to express what is important to them," says Professor Spellerberg.

The Top 10 for 2007 are:

The full results and comments may be found on the Network web site – www.nzpcn.org.nz



1. *Epilobium microphyllum*, willowherb.
Photo: Naomi Lorimer.



2. *Myosotidium hortensia*, Chatham Island forget-me-not, kopakopa, kopukapuka.
Photo: John Sawyer.



3. *Sporadanthus ferrugineus*, bamboo rush, giant wire rush.
Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



4. *Ixerba brexioides*, tawari, whakou (flowers).
Photo: John Smith-Dodsworth.



5. *Rhopalostylis sapida*, nikau palm.
Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



6. *Metrosideros robusta*, northern rata.
Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



7. *Clianthus maximus*, kakabeak, kowhai ngutu-kaka.

Photo: Peter de Lange.



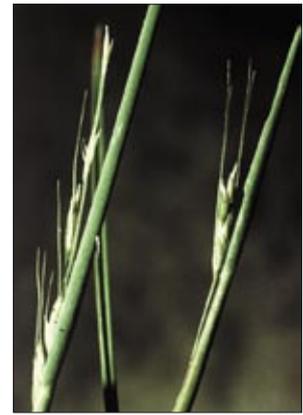
8. *Carmichaelia crassicaulis* subsp. *crassicaulis*, coral broom.

Photo: John Barkla.



9. *Xeronema callistemon* f. *callistemon*, Poor Knights lily, raupo-taranga.

Photo: Gillian Crowcroft.



10. *Amphibromus fluitans*, water brome.

Photo: Colin Ogle.

Te Papa's herbarium connection goes live

The Network website now has links from its plant fact sheets to the on-line herbarium collection at Te Papa Tongarewa. This project has been done in partnership with Te Papa and is intended to provide unparalleled access to images of herbarium specimens stored at the museum including the Banks and Solander collection from Captain Cook's visits to New Zealand. Please follow the links on the bottom left hand side of the fact sheets to see the original specimens, some of them from as early as 1769.

Network conference to be held August 2008

The Network's next national conference will be held from 8 to 10 August 2008 at Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. Day 1 will be devoted to the "*Science of plant conservation*". It will also feature the Tane Ngahere Lecture by Brian Molloy entitled "*Reflections on 50 years of New Zealand botany and plant conservation*". Day 1 will also feature a concurrent EnviroSchools Forum at Te Papa. During lunchtime we plan for each EnviroSchool from the region to present posters about their plant conservation work to conference attendees. The conference dinner will be held that night. Day 2 will be devoted to "*Plant conservation in practice*" including workshops on where the Network should go during the next five years and the AGM. Several plant field trips will be offered on Sunday 10 August. More information about the conference will be sent out early in the New Year. If you would like to assist with organising this conference (whether you are based in Wellington or not) or have good ideas for the conference that you would like to share, such as the subjects for workshops, please contact the Network: email info@nzpcn.org.nz. Mark the dates in your diary now and get in early to obtain the cheaper air fares.

Australian Network for Plant Conservation

Our sister organisation is holding its annual conference in Mulgoa, near Penrith, west Sydney in April next year. The organisers would love to see a significant number of New Zealanders at the conference. Contributions by way of papers or posters are very welcome. Plan to be there; the earlier you make your flight bookings the cheaper they are likely to be. For more details, see the information in the Events section of *Trilepidea* no 46.

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):

Auckland Botanical Society

Field Trip: Friday 25 to Monday 28 January 2008, Anniversary Weekend Camp to Lake Okataina, Rotorua, jointly with the Rotorua Botanical Society (see below).

Leader: Mike Wilcox (email: mike.wilcox@xtra.co.nz)

Field Trip: Saturday 16 February to Tomarata Lakes, near Wellsford.

Leader: Maureen Young (email: youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz)

Waikato Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 26 January to Awaroa Scenic Reserve. The dominant vegetation is rimu-tawa forest with large kahikatea along the river flats. **Meet:** 10 am at the corner of SH 31 and 39 (the main Otorohonga to Kawhia highway). **Contact:** Thomas ph: 07 878-1055 (wk) or 07 878-3437 (hm).

University of Waikato

Summer course: 8–22 February 2008, Flora of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Department of Biological Sciences summer course: BIOL226BLK-08. Enquiries to: Dr Chrissen Gemmill (email: c.gemmill@waikato.ac.nz, ph: 07 838 4053), Dr Bruce Clarkson (email: b.clarkson@waikato.ac.nz ph: 07 838-4237) or contact the Department of Biological Sciences (ph: 07 838-4022), Waikato University, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton.

Rotorua Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 12 to Sunday 13 January, Poronui Ranch wetlands. **Meet:** The Rotorua District Council car park on Fenton St at 8 am or the entrance to Poronui Ranch (end of Taharua Rd) at 9:30 am. (Please bring a 4WD if you have one because of the access across Poronui Ranch). **Grade:** Medium, bring your gumboots. **Accommodation:** Poronui Hut (4 bunks) (free) in Kaimanawa Forest Park and limited tent space around hut. **Leader:** Nic Singers ph: 07 386-7755 (hm) or 07 386-9255 (wk); email: nsingers@doc.govt.nz

Field trip: Friday 25 to Monday 28 January, Anniversary Weekend Camp to Lake Okataina, Rotorua, jointly with the Auckland Botanical Society. **Accommodation:** Okataina Education and Recreation Trust Outdoor Education Centre (ph: 07 3627729), about 30 minutes drive from Rotorua. A comprehensive programme including native bush, lake margins, ignimbrite gorges, and thermal areas has been organised. **Leaders:** Mike Wilcox and John Hobbs (07 348 6620; jffhobbs@paradise.net.nz). **Booking:** Please book by 20 January 2008 with Mike Wilcox, ph: (09) 622-0323 or email: mike.wilcox@xtra.co.nz. Families, mokopuna, etc., welcome. The walks planned will not be too arduous or difficult. **Cost:** c. \$120 per person.

Field trip: Tuesday 12 February, "Botany after Five" trip to Five Mile Gate North Wetland. **Meet:** Five Mile Gate, SH5, 5min south of Rotorua at 5:30 pm. **Grade:** Medium, bring your gumboots for a little bit of paddling. See the only known population of *Astelia grandis* in the Rotorua Ecological District. The trip will be followed by a BBQ tea (pot luck) at Blue Lake with a swim for those willing. **Leader:** John Hobbs ph: 07 348-6620 or email: jffhobbs@paradise.net.nz

Field trip: Sunday 17 February to Lake Whakamaru/Lake Atiamuri. **Meet:** The Rotorua District Council car park on Fenton St at 8:30 am or the corner of SH1 and Ongaroto Rd (where SH1 crosses Waikato River) near Atiamuri Village. **Grade:** Easy. **Note:** It is most important that the

leader is contacted about a week beforehand so that boats and other gear can be organised. Other boat owners should let the leader know if they can bring a boat.

Leader: Willie Shaw ph: 07 343-9017 (wk), 07 362-4315 (hm), or 021 757-522,
email: okere@wave.co.nz or willie@wildlands.co.nz

Wellington Botanical Society

Summer Camp: Thursday 30 January to Friday 8 February 2008—nine nights at Aotea / Great Barrier Island—Summer Camp. If you intend to come, we would appreciate knowing as soon as possible. See website (www.wellingtonbotsoc.wellington.net.nz) for further details.

Canterbury Botanical Society

Summer Camp: Friday 11– Thursday 17 January 2008, Mokihinui River mouth, north of Westport. Botanise the special vegetation of the coal plateaux of Denniston and Stockton (see Forest & Bird No. 284 pp. 27–33, 1997, by David Norton). Bookings to Margaret Geerkens (ph 03 352-7922, email: bert.marg@xtra.co.nz) and deposits to: Summer Camp, CBS, PO Box 8212, Riccarton 8440.

Meeting: Friday 1 February 7.30 p.m. Room A5 University of Canterbury a talk titled ‘When can plants act as a carbon sink’ by Larry Burrows, a scientist at Landcare Research.

Field trip: Saturday 2 February to Mt Hutt. **Meet:** at the old Toll Booths, where there is a wide parking area, at 9:30 am. The weather can be quite chilly even in February. Wear plenty of warm clothing and bring a warm windproof jacket. This is an all day trip, bring plenty of food and drink (both hot and cold). **Contact:** Margaret Geerkens (ph: 03 352-7922, email: bert.marg@xtra.co.nz) before mid January.

Winter Camp: Tuesday 26 August – Monday 2 September 2008, to Broadbeach, Gold Coast, Australia. For further information contact: Margaret Geerkens (ph: 03 352-7922, email: bert.marg@xtra.co.nz) or Russell Moffitt (ph: 03 384-1979).

Wai Wetlands Symposium

Symposium: will be held at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 14–16 February 2008. The 2008 Wai Wetlands Symposium is a joint venture between the National Wetland Trust, NIWA, University of Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, Ngai Tahu, Department of Conservation, Landcare Research, Waihora Ellesmere Trust, University of Waikato, Meridian Energy, Fish & Game Council and Banrock Station Wines and Wetlandcare New Zealand. This will be the third time that the event has been held (Wellington, 2004; Hamilton, 2006), but the first time in the South Island. Further information and registration can be obtained from the following links www.uco.canterbury.ac.nz/community-education/wetlands
www.wetlandtrust.org.nz/symposia.html