



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

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Message from the President

Talk about value for money! The Network (as an NGO) provides the most valuable and extensive resources for plant conservation in New Zealand. Did you know that the Network Website receives over 650,000 hits every month? That is about 24,000 visitors every month! No doubt about it, the Network website is well used and I know that for a fact by the comments that I have received.

There are clear benefits for supporting the Network and that is why I would like to make a personal request. Please promote the membership advantages. We now have some very attractive membership brochures and I would like as many people as possible to seek new individual or group members. What about everyone agreeing to find at least one new member by the end of the year? Surely that is a small thing to do in terms of what the Network provides.

I am looking for sponsors for the Network. So far I have been unsuccessful in attracting a sponsor and so I would now like to appeal to you all for help! I would like to hear from lots of people about ideas for sponsors. Who do you think I should contact and why? Please contact me or any members of the Network Council and suggest who could possibly be contacted to be a sponsor. A name on the Website could be a very attractive and cost-effective way of promoting a business or company. Please let me have some suggestions so that I can follow them up.

As well as some very interesting news items, this issue of the Newsletter has some disturbing news about the changing conservation status of some plant species. The news comes in a global form as well as in a local form. Thankfully there is also some good news in this month's Newsletter about a few species here in New Zealand. That leads me to a particularly important point and one that is central to the role of the Network. You will read that the Network is playing a very important and central role in maintaining a policy of updating (on a provisional basis) threatened plant conservation assessments. This is just one very important role and one that we will continue to value and to use as a basis for conservation action. Finally, there is another reminder about the Annual Conference. It is time to plan your activities around the Conference and to send off your registration. I must do that myself this week.

Ian Spellerberg

Professor Ian Spellerberg, Lincoln University

Plant of the Month

Plant of the month for April is the National Vulnerable coastal cress—*Lepidium flexicaule*. This is a coastal herb usually found in coastal turfs, but also on rock stacks, outcrops, headlands, cliff faces and amongst boulders. There are historic records of the plant from around Auckland, Coromandel, the firth of Thames, and Wellington. In 2003 it was discovered at one site on the South Taranaki Coast.



Lepidium flexicaule on the Taranaki coast.
Photo: Bec Stanley.

In the South Island, it is known from Cape Farewell to Greymouth. The species was gathered on the Chatham Islands in the 1860s and was rediscovered there in 2004. It is threatened as a result of habitat loss through weed encroachment and development, browsing; susceptible to many of the pests and diseases of introduced brassicas, e.g., cabbage white butterfly, aphids, snails, white rust and diamondback moth. The Network fact sheet may be found at:

www.nzpcn.org.nz/vascular_plants/detail.asp?PlantID=113

Is your local council, your regional council, your local plant nursery and your university a Network member?

The Network wants to encourage people to join up with the Network. The Network has just published a new membership brochure. Please contact the Network if you would like copies of this to give to friends and family. Please also encourage your local council, your regional council, your local plant nursery and your university to become a corporate Network member if they are not already. For more information about membership and sponsorship options see the website at

www.nzpcn.org.nz

Pilot of marae-based plant training course a success

By John Sawyer

The Network delivered its first marae-based plant training course in Northland in February and March this year. Hosted by Ngati Hine, the two day course piloted a national programme being implemented by the Network to enhance knowledge among iwi of New Zealand's extraordinary and unique native plant life. This fits with the Network's implementation of Target 15 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Developed by the Network with funding from the Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund, the course is the first of its kind. The training module, "*An introduction to native plants*", was developed for the Network by Northland Polytechnic which has considerable experience in delivering training programmes in the region. This was largely done by Iain Reid and John Finlayson. This work was done in conjunction with the Network with final editing and publication being organised by Jeremy Rolfe.

Over 25 students from all over Northland attended the course, held at a bush camp on the property of Kevin Prime near Motatau. The course was led by tutors from Northland Polytechnic including Iain Reid, Jamie Hancox and Olly Ball.

Five Network tutors also assisted the students. They were: Barbara Mitcalfe (Wellington Botanical Society), Janeen Collings (Department of Conservation), Lisa Forester (Northland Regional Council), Philippa Crisp (Greater Wellington) and John Sawyer (Department of Conservation). Tutors taught students how to describe leaves, flowers, bark



Students and tutors at the bush camp at Motatau, Northland.



Janeen Collings (Department of Conservation) working with the students.

and fruit and how to recognise and identify native plants. This was done through hands on teaching and bush walks to meet Northlands plants face-to-face. Students were introduced to a range of local native plants such as taraire, totara, makamaka and towai. They were also given the opportunity to stand up and talk about these native plants and teach each other what they had found out about their chosen plants.

A work book on basic botany and plant identification was developed for the student to accompany the course. A follow up course in March re-enforced what was learnt at the first course and students received their certificates. More modules are planned for development and delivery over the coming months. They include:

1. How to manage a Nga Whenua Rahui covenant;
2. How to protect and restore your stream side; and
3. An introduction to growing native plants and managing a plant nursery.

For more information about the Network's programme to implement Target 15 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation – see www.nzpcn.org.nz

Release of the 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species reveals ongoing decline of the status of plants and animals

Geneva, Switzerland, 2 May 2006 (IUCN) – The total number of species declared officially *Extinct* is 784 and a further 65 are only found in captivity or cultivation. Of the 40,177 species assessed using the IUCN Red List criteria, 16,119 are now listed as threatened with extinction. This includes one in three amphibians and a quarter of the world's coniferous trees, on top of the one in eight birds and one in four mammals known to be in jeopardy.

The 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species brings into sharp focus the ongoing decline of the earth's biodiversity and the impact mankind is having upon life on earth. Widely recognized as the most authoritative assessment of the global status of plants and animals, it provides an accurate measure of progress, or lack of it, in achieving the globally agreed target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

“The 2006 IUCN Red List shows a clear trend: biodiversity loss is increasing, not slowing down,” said Achim Steiner, Director General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). “The implications of this trend for the productivity and resilience of ecosystems and the lives and livelihoods of billions of people who depend on them are far-reaching. Reversing this trend is possible, as numerous conservation success stories have proven. To succeed on a global scale, we need new alliances across all sectors of society. Biodiversity cannot be saved by environmentalists alone – it must become the responsibility of everyone with the power and resources to act,” he added.

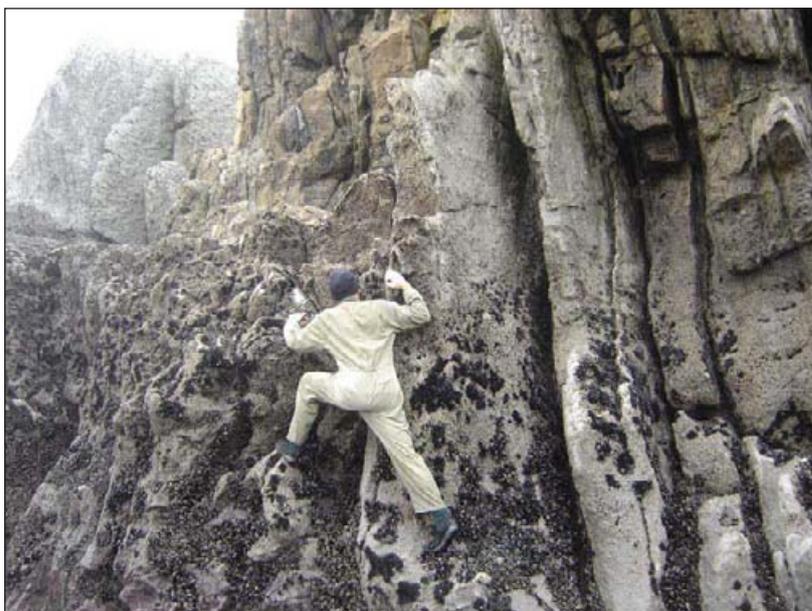
***Lepidium flexicaule* discovered on West Coast**

After a hundred year hiatus the threatened coastal cress *Lepidium flexicaule* has been found once again along the coastline north of Mokihiui. DOC staff Julie Geritzlehner and Don Neale found 58 plants on Old Man Rock off Kongahu point where early Botanist William Townsend had last reported the plant in the early 1900s. William Townsend, also a local chemist, explored Buller extensively and collected many new plant records from around this area. This species of coastal cress once grew along the western coastline from Auckland south to Greymouth however numerous threats have severely reduced its numbers. These threats include competition from invasive weeds; the introduction of pests and diseases such as white butterfly and



Lepidium flexicaule on Old Man Rock, West Coast.

white rust which are associated with cultivated brassicas,; and the loss of seabirds which acted as seed dispersers and provided nutrient rich guano to create an ideal habitat for the plants. DOC botanist Phil Knightbridge said “the Kongahu population is a significant find. There are only around 2000 plants of this species left in New Zealand and just 8 other known sites where they grow on the West Coast”. *L. flexicuale* is closely related to Cook’s scurvy grass (*L. oleraceum*) which was voted New Zealand’s most popular plant in an annual poll conducted by the



Don Neale on the rock stack searching for the plant.

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network in 2005. Cook’s scurvy grass was one of a number of coastal plants collected by Captain James Cook to prevent scurvy amongst his crew.

Mount Burnett update

By Dean Baigent-Mercer

Conservation Minister, Chris Carter decided the fate of Mount Burnett’s endemic forest and shrublands in January. Bad news first: the Minister extending the dolomite mining licence for 25 years, and granted continued access to get to the quarry over Department of Conservation land. However, the good news is that the mining permit area has been reduced from 128ha down to 8.868 ha, with the company relinquishing mining permits which it held over areas containing endemic plants.

The company will contribute \$15,000 compensation package each year to weed and pest control in the wider Mount Burnett area and put up a bond of \$100,000 against failure to rehabilitate the site. Both amounts will be inflation-adjusted every five years. “An important part of that rehabilitation will be weed control”, said Neil Clifton, Nelson/Marlborough Conservator for the Department of Conservation. “The company is required to commission and complete a comprehensive weed control strategy for the wider Mount Burnett area by 1 July 2006. This new access arrangement will require the company to control all weeds identified by the weed plan in the access arrangement area and along a 5 metre buffer of the access road.”

“The department will be responsible for weed control outside of the mining boundary. The compensation payable by the company will be used for this purpose. The department will also monitor the company’s weed control to ensure it is carried out satisfactorily”, said Mr Clifton. There is debate amongst botanists over how many endemics exist on Mount Burnett, with the upper estimate at six species of endemic tree, shrub and herb unique to Mount Burnett’s forest and shrublands, along with giant *Powelliphanta* snail species found nowhere else.

Additional facts from the Department of Conservation

- A very rare and highly unusual forest has evolved on Mount Burnett due to its distinctive geology combined with topography, altitude and climate. It contains six species of shrub and sedge that are found nowhere else in the world, some of which have nationally critical conservation ranking. These endemic Mount Burnett plants include *Myrsine argentea*, *Melicytus* aff. *obovatus*, *Gingidia* aff. *montana*, *Carex dolomitica*, *Hebe albicans* var. “Burnett”, and *Senecio* aff. *glaucophyllus*. All these species are being excluded from the land over which access is granted.

- The land on which the quarry operates is part of North West Nelson Park that was not included in Kahurangi National Park when it was created in 1996 due to it being subject to mining licenses.
- Dolomite is a form of limestone infused with magnesium which is used by farmers both for pasture growth and to improve animal health. The small-scale mine on Mount Burnett is the only commercial dolomite mine in New Zealand, although it can be sourced from overseas.

Threatened vascular plants of New Zealand – Where are we at?

Peter de Lange, Network Vice President

NZPCN maintains a policy of updating (on a provisional basis) threatened plant conservation assessments. Partly to fulfil our IUCN responsibilities but also because many new taxa, most of which are threatened are being recognised, and these are not catered for by the March 2004 publication. Hopefully a formal re-listing will happen soon.

Currently the NZPCN fact sheets for Acutely Threatened list 127 taxa (57 Nationally Critical, 51 Nationally Endangered and 19 Nationally Vulnerable). In 2004 122 taxa were listed (47 as Nationally Critical, 54 as Nationally Endangered, 21 as Nationally Vulnerable). The overall numbers suggest a gain of 5 taxa, however, within the subcategories there have been 10 gains in Nationally Critical, three losses in Nationally Endangered and two in Nationally Vulnerable). What has happened?

Firstly, since 2004 there has been an impressive increase in taxonomic literature dealing with new indigenous species, since 2004, 11 taxa have been described, all of which provisionally qualify as Acutely Threatened, indeed seven as Nationally Critical. Examples include *Myrsine umbricola*, *Prasophyllum hectorii* and *Pseudowintera insperata*. Thus these increases are not due to poor conservation management but in fact reflect an impressive improvement on the country's vascular plant biosystematic knowledge.

NZPCN has also chosen to list *Botrychium lunaria*, *Calochilus herbaceus* and *Hibiscus trionum* – taxa for which there is still some doubt as to the correct application of these names to some or all New Zealand examples. However, as these taxa are so severely at risk of extinction to continue to await formal revision seems a risky conservation venture (especially for globally distributed species such as *Botrychium lunaria* and *Hibiscus trionum*), therefore NZPCN had elected to list these species under currently accepted and available names. The caveat is that for these three species the NZPCN fact sheet clearly notes the taxonomic issue.

Less pleasant has been the gain to “Acutely Threatened” of eight taxa some of which had been regarded as “Chronically Threatened” or even as “At Risk”. The serious plight of kakabeak (*Clianthus maximus*) has been described in a previous *Trilepidea* issue. The other seven taxa to move up in category are: *Hebe barkeri*, *Juncus holoschoenus* var. *holoschoenus*, *Senecio kermadecensis*, *S. lautus* var. *esperensis*, *Aciphylla dieffenbachii*, *Epilobium hirtigerum*, and *Utricularia australis*. One of these, *Epilobium hirtigerum* has long been regarded as “Data Deficient”, its new provisional status reflects improved knowledge resulting at long last from numerous listings prompting field survey and interest.

On the flip side conservation management coupled with informed survey has brought good news for *Cortaderia turbaria* (was Nationally Critical now Nationally Endangered), *Wahlenbergia pygmaea* subsp. *tararua* (was Nationally Critical now Data Deficient), *Aciphylla traversii* (was Nationally Endangered now Chronically Threatened/Gradual Decline), *Astelia chathamica* (was Nationally Endangered now Chronically Threatened/Gradual Decline), *Bulbinella modesta* (was Nationally Endangered now At Risk/Sparse), *Carex inopinata* (was Nationally Endangered now Data Deficient), *Embergeria grandifolia* (Nationally Endangered now Chronically Threatened/Serious Decline), *Boehmeria australis* subsp. *dealbata* (Nationally Endangered now At Risk/Range Restricted), *Dracophyllum longifolium* var. *septentrionale* (Nationally Vulnerable now Data Deficient), and *Leptinella featherstonii* (Nationally Vulnerable now Chronically Threatened/Gradual Decline). It should be noted that the situation for *Cortaderia turbaria*, once New Zealand's most threatened native grass, is still far from stable.

Trampers beware – the nettle that paralyses

Dr Graeme Hammond-Tooke, FRACP. Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences, University of Otago, Dunedin. Email: graemeH@healthotago.co.nz

Apart from bad weather and getting lost, walking in the New Zealand bush can be rather innocuous, with no snakes, scorpions or ferocious animals, and only the occasional poisonous spider. The plants, however, can be a different matter. The tree nettle, *Urtica ferox* or “ongaonga”, indigenous to New Zealand, can be deadly. A member of the *Urticaceae* family, *Urtica ferox* is well known to trampers, bushmen, hunters and farmers for its very painful stings. But it can inject a neurotoxin, giving rise to paralysis and on rare occasion, death.



Urtica ferox. Photo: Peter de Lange.

Found throughout New Zealand as far south as Otago, the tree nettle is common on the fringes of bushland. Standing about two metres tall, it's coarsely toothed leaves have numerous white stinging hairs (trichomes), up to 6mm long, at the tip of each tooth as well as on young stalks and leaf veins. These are hollow cylinders with tapered points, which break after piercing the skin, injecting toxins into the tissues, giving rise to pain and rash.

There have been cases of dogs and horses developing neurological problems, with respiratory distress and convulsions within minutes of exposure, often dying within hours, although some do recover. There are also reports of human poisoning in botanical

references or the press. Connor, in his book, *The Poisonous Plants in New Zealand*, mentions a group of trampers who developed loss of coordination for three days after being stung. In another instance, a typist developed tingling numbness in the hand after grasping a nettle bush, preventing her from typing for five days. There are also reports of severe headaches, blurred vision and extreme fatigue. A fatal poisoning was described in 1961, when a young man died of paralysis and respiratory problems several hours after walking through a patch of tree nettles.

Recently, a trumper developed weakness in his arms and legs after walking through a patch of nettles on the Otago Peninsula, while his two friends had similar but milder symptoms. He became unsteady on his feet, and over the next few days, developed weakness and loss of feeling in his feet and hands. He recovered over a couple of weeks. Tests showed abnormal conduction of electrical impulses in his peripheral nerves, pointing to these as the site of damage.

Clearly the hairs of *Urtica ferox* contain a neurotoxin. They are known to contain other chemicals, including acetylcholine, histamine and 5-hydroxytryptamine (serotonin), and these are almost certainly responsible for the painful rash. But the identity of the neurotoxin remains an enigma.

Urtica ferox is unique to New Zealand. Overseas, other nettles can have serious consequences too. *Urtica dioica* is probably the most common in Europe and North America, and may cause paralysis in hunting dogs, while a veterinarian reported transient distress, unsteadiness and weakness in horses. In the United States, *Urtica chamaedryoides* is possibly the most toxic species and has poisoned dogs with symptoms which included nausea, vomiting, clawing at the face and nose, ataxia, weak hindlegs and nose bleeding. Some species in the East Indies, including *Urtica urentissima*, *Urtica crenulata* and *Urtica stimulans* are said to be extremely toxic.

On the other hand, nettles have been used as a herbal remedy since antiquity, and medical studies suggest their value in conditions such as arthritis, prostate disease and colitis. Some species can be eaten if properly cooked. But, in general, this is a plant to be avoided, and the message for those who encounter it in the bush is “Grasp the nettle at your peril”.

Greening the City: Bringing Biodiversity Back into the Urban Environment

Proceedings of a conference held by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture in Christchurch, 21–24 October 2003. These proceedings, edited by Murray Dawson and published December 2005, contain papers from a highly successful conference on urban biodiversity covering a broad range of topics including:

- The important role of cities as a repository for biodiversity
- Social aspects of biodiversity in the urban environment
- Restoration and revegetation projects throughout New Zealand
- Trees in the urban environment
- Using plants to create healthy environments.

These proceedings will be relevant to a wide audience, including conservation groups and trusts, academics, ecologists, social scientists, students, conservation educators, horticulturists, landscape architects, town and city planners, greenspace managers, tangata whenua, and conservationists. Thanks to a generous grant from the Canterbury Community Trust, we are able to offer this 310-page publication including colour plates at a heavily discounted rate. New Zealand: NZ\$42.20 including p&p. Overseas: Australia NZ\$47.80 including p&p; Europe and USA NZ\$58.80 including p&p. To order your copy of the proceedings, please forward contact details, number of copies required, and remittance to: The Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, PO Box 12, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Big population of water brome (*Amphibromus fluitans*) discovered at Arohaki Lagoon, Whirinaki

Several weeks ago members of the Rotorua Botanical Society were delighted to discover a very large population of water brome (*Amphibromus fluitans*) in the Arohaki Lagoon, Whirinaki Forest. The lagoon, a large ephemeral wetland complex located within dense Podocarp forest is at the end of a very popular bush walk. Water levels within the lagoon vary from season to season, reaching a maximum depth of almost 2 m in wet years and virtually nothing during dry spells. Consequently



Habitat of *Amphibromus fluitans* Arohaki Lagoon.
Photo: John Hobbs.

much of the “lagoon” is given over to a dense turf dominated by *Hypsela rivalis*, *Pratia angulata*, *P. perpusilla*, and swards of *Baumea arthrophylla*.

On the margins of the wetland, the wind grasses *Lachnagrostis filiformis*, *L. elata* and *L. striata* are common, and as it turns out so is water brome. However, the first plants of this cryptic, somewhat elusive species were found by Rotorua Botanical Society member and Department of Conservation, Bay of Plenty Conservancy botanist Mr. Paul Cashmore, near the centre of the lagoon partially submerged in

0.3 m of water. The plants were immediately recognized by their distinctive inflorescences bearing green, narrow, awned spikelets. These, as is typical of species occur partially obscured within the very long leaf-sheaths, until fully mature, when they rapidly elongate to drop their seed.

Last week a follow up survey by Department of Conservation staff and President of the Rotorua Botanical Society Mr John Hobbs, found an estimated 1000 plants encircling the lagoon and also in several smaller ephemeral systems adjacent to the main wetland system. Mr Hobbs was delighted with the find which surprised Botanical Society members as the wetland had been thought to have been very well explored by botanists in the past.

This find is the second for the Bay of Plenty Region, the first, made last year by Ms Sarah Beadel—founder, and director of Wildlands Ecological Consultancy, and a New Zealand Plant Conservation

Committee member—was on the margins of Lake Rerewhakaaitu, where at least 1000 plants grow along the edge of the lake within a popular camping ground.

Outside the Bay of Plenty, water brome still occurs in large populations near Lake Wairarapa and at Waihora Lagoon west of Lake Taupo. There are scattered records from elsewhere in the North Island. In the South Island it has been recorded twice, from Lake Tekapo in the 1940's and from Maher Swamp, North Westland in 1991. Internationally water brome occurs also in Australia, where it is believed to be at risk, and may even be already extinct in several of the states including Tasmania.

Can you help provide images of Dicot trees and shrubs?

We are still seeking images for a range of Dicot trees and shrubs to plug gaps in the Network website fact sheets. If you can help, please send them through to the Network (info@nzpcn.org.nz) or to John Sawyer (jsawyer@doc.govt.nz):

Alseuosmia banksii var. *linarifolia*

Brachyglottis bifistulosa

Coprosma dumosa

Coprosma pseudociliata

Dracophyllum longifolium var. *cockayneanum*

Dracophyllum longifolium var. *septentrionale*

Dracophyllum palustre

Dracophyllum pearsonii

Dracophyllum politum

Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium

Dracophyllum urvilleanum

Gaultheria rupestris

Hebe amplexicaulis f. *hirta*

Hebe angustissima

Hebe brachysiphon

Hebe brockiei

Hebe cockayneana

Hebe corriganii

Hebe crenulata

Hebe divaricata

Hebe flavida

Hebe haastii

Hebe laingii

Hebe leiophylla

Hebe macrantha var. *brachyphylla*

Hebe mooreae

Hebe murrellii

Hebe rakaiensis

Hebe recurva

Hebe rupicola

Hebe stenophylla var. *oliveri*

Hebe stricta var. *lata*

Hebe strictissima

Hebe truncatula

Helichrysum selago var. *acutum*

Heliohebe hulkeana subsp. *evestita*

Heliohebe pentasepala

Olearia colensoi var. *argentea*

Olearia coriacea

Olearia lyallii

Olearia oporina

Pimelea concinna

Pimelea crosby-smithiana

Pimelea poppelwellii

Pseudopanax colensoi var. *colensoi*

Solanum aviculare f. *aviculare*

Sprengelia incarnata

Register now for the Network Conference 2006

See the Network website (under Conservation info>Events>Conference) for more details and to download the registration form.

When: Monday 20 –Wednesday 22 November 2006 (including field trip)

Where: Conference Centre, University of Auckland

This year's Network conference will be the Cheeseman Symposium 2006—to celebrate the centenary of the publication of the first full flora treatment to be published by a resident New Zealand botanist, Thomas F. Cheeseman's *Manual of the New Zealand Flora* (1906). This will be held in conjunction with the New Zealand Botanical Society, Auckland Museum, Auckland Botanical Society, Landcare Research and the University of Auckland.

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: Mangemangeroa Reserve, Howick. 20 May.

Ballance Farm Environment Awards - Northland region - Field Day, Wednesday, 24 May from 10 a.m.

Congratulations and thanks from the organisers to all landowners, judges and sponsors who combined to make the 2006 inaugural farm environment awards a successful event.

At the Supreme Award farm of the Jack Family, Pakaraka, Bay of Islands. On Ludbrooks Rd, left off SH 1, 200m north of the junction with SH 10. Lunch provided. An RSVP would be appreciated for catering purposes. Four-wheel-drive vehicle would be helpful.

Come and see what the judges said is the Jack family's "high level of understanding of sustainable land management, on a farm which is a true Northland pastoral, forestry and environmental showplace".

Topics will include:

- Overview of the Supreme Award
- PPCS Livestock Award & the Techno system
- Rabobank Land & Life Award- Farm Succession – how the Jack family has achieved this
- Fencing of bush & streams- Funding sources, pest management
- Forestry- the benefits of tree lines

Gayle Farrell, Regional Coordinator, ph 09 433 1576, 0274 705 354

Botanical Society of Otago — A magnificent obsession: the botanical life and legacy of Tony Druce. Wednesday, 24 May 2006.

Start time: 5.20 p.m. A talk by Geoff Rogers. An account of the wit, wisdom, mentoring role, and scientific achievements of a great New Zealand botanist. At the 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 [John Barkla](#), phone: (03) 476 3686.

Botanical Society of Otago — Fungal Foray to Orokonui. Saturday, 27 May 2006.

Start time: 9.00 a.m. A fungal foray led by David Orlovich to Orokonui Reserve. Note this trip will run subject to DoC approval. Bring hand lens, a basket or bag for collecting fungi, greaseproof paper (for wrapping specimens in the field) and a camera if you have one. Leave 9.00 a.m. from the Botany Dept carpark or 9:15 a.m. at the Orokonui carpark. We will aim to collect in the morning, and then return to the Department of Botany to record and dry the collections we make for the herbarium. In case of really bad weather, we will go on Sunday 28 May instead. Contact [David Orlovich](#), phone: (03) 479 9060.

Wellington Botanical Society Field trip – Wi Parata Reserve and Nga Manu Sanctuary. Saturday, 3 June

Botanise the kohekohe-dominant terrace forest managed by KCDC at Wi Parata, and the wetland forest from boardwalks at Nga Manu. Transport: 7.30 a.m. train from Wellington to Paraparaumu. Ask leaders to meet you at station. Meet: 9.00 a.m. at Tawa Street, Waikanae, entrance to Wi Parata Reserve. Leaders: Barry Dent and Sue Freitag 476 6536.

Waikato Botanical Society Field trip: Sunday, 4 June. Hakarimata Kauri Grove and Northern lookout

A 1 1/2 hour loop track takes us through a kauri grove with several large remaining trees which survived logging in the area, *Alseuosmia quercifolia* is common here also. For those feeling energetic we will continue up towards the northern lookout to see some large kohekohe trees in full flower following recent possum control. Contact: Liz Grove ph. 07 846 0965 (hm) or eg3@waikato.ac.nz to carpool from Hamilton. Meet: 10 a.m., the walking track carpark at Parker Road end, Northern Hakarimata Range (follow the road on western side of the Waikato River up from Ngaruawahia).

Auckland Botanical Society Evening meeting: 7 June: Chris Ferkins "Gorse on roadsides" and Rhys Gardner "Botany of Nuie"

For more information: e-mail youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz. Phone: (09) 425 7162.

Botanical Society of Otago - Fungi: New Zealand's hidden diversity. Wednesday, 14 June

Start time: 5:20 p.m. A talk by Dr David Orlovich. Fungi are nature's recyclers. They form the connections between plants and soil, algae and rocks, toxic wastes and the atmosphere, even life and death! In New Zealand, fungi support the beech forests of Fiordland, the high country tussock grasslands and our agricultural pastures through symbiotic mycorrhizal associations. I will give an overview of research on fungi in New Zealand, illustrate the beauty of many species found in New Zealand, and emphasise the importance of societies like the BSO in furthering research on New Zealand fungi. At the 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 [David Orlovich](mailto:David.Orlovich@otago.ac.nz), phone: (03) 479 9060.

Auckland Botanical Society Field trip: 17 June. Centennial Park, Campbells Bay, North Shore

For more information: e-mail youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz. Phone: (09) 425 7162.

Wellington Botanical Society - Evening meeting – Plant chemical systematics and evolution: iridoids in *Plantago* and *Veronica*. Monday, 19 June

Speaker: Rilka Tashkova, Post-doctoral Fellow, School of Biological Sciences, VUW. A group of plant chemical constituents, called iridoids, has been attracting considerable scientific interest because of their biological activity and usefulness for chemotaxonomic purposes. They play an important role in protection of plants from herbivore grazing and are used in folk medicines as bitter tonics, sedatives, and remedies for wounds and skin disorders. Iridoid glycosides have been used as reliable systematic markers in more than 50 plant families at different taxonomic levels. Rilka will discuss their origin, biological activities and chemosystematic value and present examples from her investigations on *Plantago* and Northern and Southern representatives of the genus *Veronica*.

8th International Mycological Congress (IMC8)

Mycological Congresses are held in different parts of the world every 4 years, but never before in the Southern Hemisphere. Next year is our opportunity for several New Zealanders to participate in IMC8 at Cairns, Queensland, 20–25 August 2006. For details of the programme, registration, associated workshops, etc, please see their website <https://www.sapmea.asn.au/imc8>

New Zealand mycology symposium.

Following soon after IMC8 there will be a 2-day conference in Auckland to take stock of our knowledge of New Zealand fungi. This is still being planned and notification of its timing, programme, and location will be advised early 2006.