



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

Over the last few weeks I have been visiting many plant nurseries, particularly those that have an interest in New Zealand native plants. I found it interesting that on one hand many people were saying that they are unable to keep up with the demand for native plant material and on the other hand there were stories about native plant nurseries being sold or closed down. The demand for native plant material appears to be coming from a general increase in interest in natives but also from large scale restoration projects. So why are some nurseries closing down? It appears that one of the contributing factors is the way large retail outlets work. Some large retail outlets will sell only a limited number of species and expect to stock large numbers of plants. Some small plant nurseries have been unable to cope with this kind of demand. I wonder where this trend will go.

Talking about trends, it is good to see that there has been another BioBlitz. There seems to be a growing interest in having these 24 hour detailed searches for biota in many parts of the country. As is always the case, there are some pleasant surprises when it comes to the results. Typically, because of the intensive sampling effort there are new records or rediscovered records. Exciting stuff.

Equally exciting are the reports coming in about Important Plant Areas (IPAs). We do need as many people as possible to contribute information. Even if you are unsure, do please let us know as soon you can. This is just one of the ways that you can help the Network to meet Target Five of the Global Plant Strategy. Do try to set aside some time to look at the information on the Network website (www.nzpcn.org.nz).

Many thanks to all those who have passed on information about Upcoming Events. There is a particularly large range of events coming up. It is good to know that so many events are taking place.

Ian Spellerberg
Lincoln University

Plant of the Month

Plant of the Month for May is the endemic *Earina autumnalis* (Easter orchid, raupeka). In New Zealand it is known from North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands in coastal to montane environments. It is epiphytic, rupestral or terrestrial mostly being found on the trunks and branches of forest trees but also on rocks, cliff faces, banks and fallen, moss covered logs. It is easily distinguished from *Earina aestivalis* and *E. mucronata* by the virtually unspotted, more or less cylindrical leaf-sheath; usually dark green leaves, stiffly erect inflorescences, and strongly pleasantly perfumed, consistently white flowers with broad yellow-based labella, which can be seen from January to June. The Network fact sheet for this species may be found at: http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/vascular_plants/detail.asp?PlantID=1872.



Earina autumnalis.
Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

Biodiversity scores in the Otari BioBlitz

BioBlitz is a 24 hour event where teams of scientists try to find and identify every living thing in an area, in this case the Otari-Wilton's Bush reserve. At the close of the Otari BioBlitz on Saturday 24 March, Wellington's first BioBlitz had listed 1345 species of animals, plants, fungi, protists, and bacteria. A lot of the species recorded have not been found in the reserve before, like the koaro, a native fish that Dr Mike Joy's team found in the Kaiwharawhara Stream.



The unnamed *Amanita* discovered during the Otari-Wilton's Bush BioBlitz. Photo: Phil Parnell.

Among the big surprises, mycologist Dr Geoff Ridley found an unnamed species of *Amanita*. The big cream mushroom was growing very close to the information centre. Entomologist Lorraine Cook found a new weta, which might even belong to a new genus.

BioBlitz science director Professor Phil Garnock-Jones of the School of Biological Sciences at Victoria University observed that the dry summer had reduced the numbers of species on show, particularly fungi and soil animals. But a shortage of experts to identify the taxa has also kept the total lower than expected.

However, the science teams collected hundreds more species that haven't yet been identified and work will continue on these to get an accurate database of species. Many of New Zealand's taxonomic experts live out of the Wellington region, and for many groups of species there are no experts in New Zealand. That means it takes us longer to sort and identify the vast numbers collected.



Diatoms found in Kaiwharawhara Stream during BioBlitz. Photos: Margaret Harper.

In the stream, the group of microscopic algae with most species were diatoms. An analysis of these has been completed by Dr Margaret A. Harper, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington (Margaret.Harper@vuw.ac.nz). Using various standard references, 82 taxa were identified. Of these, 22 taxa were recorded for the first time in the Wellington region. The new records for New Zealand are of varieties, or small diatoms, which could easily have been previously overlooked. The high proportion of cosmopolitan species is usual for diatoms. More interesting is the occurrence of quantities of *Synedra* sp.1 of Harvey (1996) and Cochran (2002), which is distinctly different from the cosmopolitan *Synedra fasciculata* that it appears most like. It appears to be an undescribed endemic or possibly Australasian form (several of our restricted taxa are shared with Tasmania).

The commonest diatom taxa were *Synedra* sp. 1, *Cocconeis placentula* and its varieties, *Achnanthes lanceolata* and its varieties, *Cymbella ventricosa*, *Reimeria sinuata*, *Achnanthes oblongella*, and *Navicula cryptocephala*. All except the last taxon live attached to surfaces, mainly rocks; few taxa came from muddy habitats. Analysis of the diatoms collected for BioBlitz indicates that Kaiwharawhara stream in Otari-Wilton's Bush is nutrient enriched (eutrophic) and is well oxygenated.

References

- Cochran, U. A. 2002. Detection of large Holocene earthquakes in the sedimentary record of Wellington, New Zealand, using diatom analysis. 303 p. Unpublished PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.
- Harvey, M. C. 1991. A paleolimnological study of Lake Ellesmere. 235 p. 21 pls. Unpublished MSc thesis, Canterbury University.

Plant found

A plant thought to have died out more than a century ago has been rediscovered in China. The Royal Horticultural Society has reported that Chinese seed collectors working for the Millennium Seed Bank project of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, came across the small, yellow-flowered *Paraisometrum mileense* while plant hunting in the Yunnan Province of south-west China. The species belongs to the family Gesneriaceae to which African violets also belong. The species was last recorded by a French missionary in 1906. It is being propagated for introduction into a Chinese botanic garden. Seeds will be conserved for research and to help ensure the survival of the taxon.

The Press, Christchurch 28 April, 2007

Identification of your Most Important Plant Areas

The Network is now calling for nominations of Important Plant Areas using the on-line nomination form on the Network website (www.nzpcn.org.nz) – see NZ Native Flora>NZ Important Plant Areas.

Important Plant Areas (**IPAs**) are the best sites for wild plants and fungi. The purpose of an **IPA** programme is to identify a network of sites within each biogeographic zone that are critical for the long-term viability of naturally occurring wild plant populations. The identification of IPAs in New Zealand and throughout Oceania is valuable so that conservation efforts for wild plant species and their habitats may be appropriately targeted to these sites. Target 5 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation is that “protection of 50% of the world’s most important areas for plant diversity assured by 2010”. So that New Zealand may achieve this target, the Network is working to identify IPAs and criteria for identification of these areas have now been developed. The Network is now calling for nomination of sites using the form provided. These sites will be examined by an expert panel every few months and if supported will become part of the Network’s IPA database. Gradually, the Network will build up a database of the most important areas in New Zealand for plants, which will aid our conservation programme.

Editor’s Note: Last month we had an article about a person’s candidate Most Important Plant Area. More such articles are very welcome. How about writing a description of a area you feel is a most important plant area for a future issue of Trilepidea?

Vacancy 50/779

Senior Technical Support Officer, (Plant & Animal Pests)

This position is available in the Terrestrial Conservation Unit, Research, Development and Improvement Division, Head Office, Wellington. The focus of the role is to contribute to the development, promulgation, monitoring and improvement of terrestrial conservation systems, procedures and standards. Primarily this will involve progressing tasks associated with the Department’s relationship with Biosecurity New Zealand’s (BNZ) Pest Management Group. This includes the Terrestrial Conservation Unit’s role in the Department’s involvement in the management of new pests, leadership of programmes identified by agencies in BNZ’s Strategic Priorities for Pest Management, and the Department’s involvement in pest management programmes either nationally led or regionally coordinated by BNZ. For further information about the position contact Carol West phone: 04 471 3258. Applications close at **noon** on **Monday 21 May 2007**. You can email your application to swallace@doc.govt.nz or post it to Sue Wallace, Terrestrial Conservation Unit, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10420, Wellington.

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

Meeting: Wednesday evening, 6 June, in the Unitec School of Natural Sciences, a talk by Josh Salter entitled 'Matai and miro'.

Field Trip: Saturday 19 May, Whakatiwai Regional Park. **Leaders:** Bec Stanley & Jonathan Boow. Contact Maureen (email: youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz) for more details.

Field trip: Saturday 16 June, to Mt Auckland/Atuanui. Leader, Ross Beever. Contact Maureen (email: youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz) for more details.

Waikato Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 26 May, Kakepuku Mountain Reserve. Since 1995 a community voluntary group has maintained annual pest management. We will follow a pest management line to view flowering *Dysoxylum spectabile* (kohekohe). After lunch at the summit (450 metres), descend via another valley which has *Urtica ferox*, the native tree nettle. **Meet:** Carpool from Landcare Research, Gate 10 Silverdale Rd, Hillcrest, at 9.30 a.m. or 10.15 a.m. at the Kakepuku mountain carpark on Kakepuku Road (formerly Mountain Rd). **Contact:** Jan Hoverd, ph 07 871 8071, email: jlhoverd@xtra.co.nz

Rotorua Botanical Society

Meeting: Monday 21 May 7.30 pm, Rotorua Women's Club on Hinemaru St., near Princes Gate Hotel. Rotorua Botanical Society/Forest and Bird lecture by Greg Jenks entitled Dune Restoration in the Bay of Plenty. Greg Jenks from Environment Bay of Plenty's "Coast Care" programme will present to us the very interesting seminar he gave to the NZ Plant Conservation Network on the functional and aesthetic superiority of native NZ dune plants in stabilising, beautifying and caring for BOP's dunes.

Field trip: Saturday 9 June to Kohi Point Scenic Reserve, Ohope. **Meet:** Rotorua District Council carpark (Fenton St) at 8.30 a.m. or 9.30 a.m. at the bottom of Mokoroa Gorge Road in Whakatane (corner with Valley Road). **Grade:** Easy. Diverse coastal shrubland communities and coastal forest. Interesting species include the *Pimelea prostrata*, dwarf mistletoe (*Korthalsella salicornioides*) and the threatened native daphne *Pimelea tomentosa*, also *Senecio lautus* and *Apium australe* on the coast. **Leader:** Sarah Beadel, ph 07 362 4315.

Meeting: Saturday 30 June at 10.30 am the Annual General Meeting at DOC BOP Conservancy Office, 99 Sala St, Rotorua. Enter by the Scion (Forest Research) north entrance and turn left before the locked gates. Bring food for a shared lunch. Hot soup will be provided. Following the AGM and lunch, there will be the field trip below.

Field trip: Saturday June 30 to Five Mile Gate Wetland, SH 5, south of Rotorua. Meet: 1:00 pm at DOC BOP Conservancy office as above. Grade: Medium. Visit a small and (until recently) unbotanised wetland where the only known population in the Rotorua Lakes Ecological District of swamp astelia (*Astelia grandis*) grows. Leader : John Hobbs 07 348 6620.

Wellington Botanical Society

Meeting: Monday evening, May 21, Victoria University of Wellington. Lecture Theatre 101, Murphy Building, Kelburn Parade is a "members evening" with slides / short presentations from members on their botanical activities over the summer.

Field trip: Saturday 2 June, Redwood Bush, Tawa. Botanise part of this 10 ha reserve bordering suburban Tawa. One of the few remaining stands of mature tawa/kohekohe lowland forest close to suburban areas within the Wellington City, along with regenerating and revegetated border edges. Easy walking via tracks constructed by Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves and Wellington City Council. Meet: 9 am at Achilles Close (off Oriel Avenue) entrance to Redwood Bush. Catch Paraparaumu line train to Redwood Station, departs 8.30 a.m. from Wellington or 08.05 a.m. from Paraparaumu. Phone leader for pick-up otherwise it's a 20 minute walk to site. Leader: Richard Herbert. ph: 232 6828 or 027 445 5942.

Canterbury Botanical Society

Meeting: Saturday 9 June 10.30 a.m., at St Ninian's church Puriri St, Riccarton, the Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by Professor Steve Wratten of Lincoln University.

Botanical Society of Otago

Field trip: Fungal Foray to Knights Bush, Tuapeka West, Saturday 19 May, 2007. Leader: David Orlovich, along with international mycologist and slime mould expert Prof. Steve Stephenson. Full day trip, (with opportunity to stay overnight in tent or smoky hut, contact Allison Knight, 03 487 8265 for this). Leave Botany Dept car park 8.30 a.m., return 6.30 p.m. (or after lunch the next day). If weather is unsuitable on Saturday, a day trip on Sunday may be possible. Contact: [David Orlovich](#), phone: 03 479 9060.

Field trip: To Chrystalls Beach near Milton, Sunday June 17, start: 9:00 am, finish: 4:00 pm. Most of the dune hollow is occupied by grassland communities except for an area of distinctive cushionfield, comprising mostly native species. Many of the plants are seldom found along the coast and some are considered nationally threatened. Leaves 9.00 a.m. from Botany carpark. Bring lunch and clothing suitable for an exposed coastal situation. Contact: [John Barkla](#), phone: (03) 476 3686.

Meeting: Wednesday 20 June, from 5.20 p.m. till 7.00 p.m., a talk titled 'Protection of native biodiversity and botanical values on privately owned land in Otago' by Aalbert Rebergen, Biodiversity Officer with the Otago Regional Council. 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 because we have to hold the door open. Contact [Kevin Gould](#), phone: (03) 479 9061.

Short Course on the Morphology of Fruits and Seeds

Date: Monday 28 May 2007 – Wednesday 30 May at Lincoln University. The course will be led by Dr Wolfgang Stuppy, Millennium Seed Bank Project, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. For content information, contact Professor John Hampton (hamptonj@lincoln.ac.nz), for registration, contact Jan Latham (lathamj@lincoln.ac.nz). Registration cost is \$250 and accommodation is available at \$76 per person per night. Numbers are limited so register now. Dr Stuppy's visit is supported by the ISAT Linkages fund.