



TRILEPIDEA

Newsletter of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network

No. 213

November 2021

Deadline for next issue:
Monday 13 December 2021

SUBMIT AN ARTICLE TO THE NEWSLETTER

Contributions are welcome to the newsletter at any time. The closing date for articles for each issue is approximately the 15th of each month.

Articles may be edited and used in the newsletter and/or on the website news page.

The Network will publish almost any article about plants and plant conservation with a particular focus on the plant life of New Zealand and Oceania.

Please send news items or event information to info@nzpcn.org.nz

Postal address:

PO Box 147
Mangonui 0442
NEW ZEALAND

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Australina pusilla subsp. *pusilla*. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

NZPCN 2022 conference updates

Alex Fergus, Jesse Bythell, and Jo Smith

Early bird registration ends 31 December

Tēnā koutou katoa. We're delighted to see that many of you have already registered to attend the conference, and that some of our workshops have proven to be so popular that they are already booked out. This is a timely opportunity to highlight that early bird registration for the conference closes at the end of December, so if you're looking to secure the discounted rate then please register soon.

2022 NZPCN awards ceremony at the conference

We're very pleased to announce that the NZPCN awards ceremony will take place during the 2022 NZPCN conference. Everyone is invited to attend our biennial awards event where we will announce the winners for the following categories: individual, school, council, community, plant nursery and young plant conservationist. This glamorous lightly catered event, hosted by Sarah Beadel and Jo Smith, commences at 5:00 pm after the day's talks on Tuesday 22 March and will be held in the adjacent Clancy Room at QT Rydges. Dress code: Black tie optional.

There will be no cost to attend the awards ceremony, and for those of you who have already registered for the conference, we will automatically register you (if you indicated an interest in attending the welcoming event) for this event also.

Conference charity auction: Items required! Can you help?

We are pleased to confirm that our traditional chaotic grab-bag of botanical treasure (our charity auction), will be running at the 2022 conference. The charity auction is a fundraiser first established at our conference in 2013. The funds raised from the auction are split equally between our two funds, the David Given Threatened Plant Scholarship, and the John Sawyer Plant Conservation Fund (<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nzpcn/awards/>).

The auction will take place during the conference welcoming event on Sunday 20 March. Depending on the number of contributions, the auction may be silent, or we might embrace a tawdry bidding war, the latter better suiting our customary auction master of ceremonies vocal capacity. More auction details will be established closer to the date.

To make the auction a success, we rely on worthy donations from individuals, businesses, institutions, and agencies. This is where you can help. If you can donate an item, or have a suggestion for a donation, please let us know. Items which garner substantial interest include artwork, experience vouchers, books, outdoor gear, etc.

Please contact Alex (fergusa@landcareresearch.co.nz) or Taylor Davies-Colley (taylor Davies-Colley@gmail.com) with any queries or to make your donation.

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PLANT OF THE MONTH – *AUSTRALINA PUSILLA* SUBSP. *PUSILLA*

Rowan Hindmarsh-Walls (rowan.hindwalls@gmail.com)

The plant of the month for November is *Australina pusilla*, the only representative of the genus in the New Zealand region. The species is widely distributed from Northland to Rakiura/ Stewart Island and is also found on the Chatham Islands, but is local north of Auckland. It is mostly a lowland species and is found as a groundcover in riparian forest and shrubland, generally in fertile soils. The species is often overlooked as it can look like other more common forest herbs such as *Hydrocotyle* at a distance. It tolerates fairly deep shade and is common in lowland podocarp and beech forests. The plant is a prostrate creeping herb with hairy stems. The bright green leaves are small, covered in sparse hair and have scalloped edges. The tiny white tubular flowers are borne in small clusters amongst the leaves.



Australina pusilla subsp. *pusilla* Onamalutu Reserve, Wairau Valley 22 November 2021. Photos: Rowan Hindmarsh-Walls.

The species is fairly distinctive due to its obviously hairy stems, creeping habit and distinctive tubular flowers, if present. There are no other similar species in the family but at a distance the plant can superficially look similar to some species of *Hydrocotyle*, *Viola* and *Gunnera*, but can be distinguished by its distinctive flowers and seeding heads.

The species is native to New Zealand, but is also found in Victoria and Tasmania in Australia. It has a current threat status of 'Not Threatened', as it has a widespread distribution, and is abundant in some places. Much of the species' original range has been affected by lowland and coastal land clearance and development, and it was probably much more abundant in former times.

The genus *Australina* has at least two species, the other being found in eastern tropical Africa. It is in the family *Urticaceae* along with well-known genera such as *Urtica*, the stinging nettles, but unlike *Urtica*, *Australina* does not have stinging spines.

The genus name *Australina*, is from the Latin 'Australinus' meaning 'Southern', as the first species was likely discovered in the southern part of the world. The species epithet 'pusilla' is a Latin word meaning insignificant or very small, and refers to the plants size.

You can view the NZPCN website factsheet for *Australina pusilla* at:

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/australina-pusilla-subsp-pusilla/>

Covid-19 information

When the conference registration was opened NZPCN stated:

In the event of a Covid-19 outbreak the conference would be postponed until all New Zealand is at Alert Level 1 (based on our understanding of Alert Level 1 on 23 Sept 2021). All conference venues will have QR codes, and Covid-19 registration forms (for those without smart phones and the New Zealand Covid tracer app) which all conference participants will be required to complete or scan into at all venues. Your registration details will be used for contact tracing in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak being identified at the conference. A complete Covid-19 protocol for the conference is being developed, we welcome your questions and suggestions.

More recently the government has announced they are moving away from alert levels and in response the NZPCN committee has agreed that all conference participants, including those only attending workshops or field trips, will need to be double-vaccinated against Covid-19 and have proof thereof.

When the committee made this decision, we altered the conference registration process so that all registrants had to confirm they have received (or will have done so by 20 March 2022) both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. We have contacted all of those who registered before this change to the registration process was made, in order to have confirmation from them also.

For international delegates, please note that traveling to New Zealand is currently not easy—please refer to the government information (<https://www.miq.govt.nz/>) for specific details.

Thank you to our principal sponsors!

We would like to thank our three principal sponsors for showing their commitment to plant conservation networking by supporting our conference. If you or your organisation is in a position to show your support please contact us for a sponsorship package today at fergusa@landcareresearch.co.nz.



Lucy Cranwell Student Grant For Botanical Research

Call for applications for 2022

Applications are invited for the Lucy Cranwell Grant of \$2,500 from the Auckland Botanical Society to assist a student studying for the degree of PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons) or B. Appl. Sci. in any tertiary institution in New Zealand whose thesis project deals with some aspect of New Zealand's flora and vegetation. Priority will be given to projects relevant to the northern half of the North Island. The research project to be supported will be chosen on the basis of appropriateness to the objects of the Society, namely to encourage the study of botany, and to stimulate public interest in the plant life of New Zealand and its preservation, conservation and cultivation. The grant will be administered by the student's supervisor as a contribution to expenses associated with the project. Closing date for applications: 5pm Friday 10 December 2021.

A copy of the Application Form and the Rules of the award may be downloaded from the Auckland Botanical Society website under: Lucy Cranwell Fund

<https://sites.google.com/site/aucklandbotanicalsociety/>

Contact for enquiries: ABS Secretary Email: aucklandbotanicalsociety@gmail.com

NZPCN Annual Plant Conservation 2022 Awards

Sarah Beadel (sarah.beadel@wildland.co.nz)

We are calling for nominations for the prestigious New Zealand Plant Conservation Network Awards 2022. The purpose of these awards is to acknowledge outstanding contributions to native plant conservation in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Award categories are:

- Individual
- School
- Council
- Community
- Plant Nursery
- Young Plant Conservationist of the Year (under 18 years at 30 June 2021)

The nomination form is available from the Network website here <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/publications/documents/2022-nzpcn-award-nomination-form/>

We look forward to receiving your nominations; and encourage you to make multiple nominations under different categories.

Anyone is eligible to make nominations, not just Network members.

Nominations close on Friday 24 February 2022. Please email your nominations to Sarah.Beadel@wildlands.co.nz.

These prestigious awards will be presented at an event as part of the 2022 NZPCN conference in Queenstown on Tuesday 22 March 2022.

Winners will be informed in advance and each will get a pair of complimentary tickets to the awards event.

The shapes of leaves in the *Corybas trilobus* complex

Ian St George (istge@yahoo.co.nz)

When JD Hooker described *Nematoceras triloba* in 1853 he wrote that the leaf was “ $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across, deeply cordato-reniform, trifid, rarely entire at the point; middle lobe acute” [1]. He was describing plants collected by William Colenso from the Wairarapa, flowering in October [2].

Corybas trilobus flowered, Dan Hatch wrote in 1946, from June to December [3] but that is just too long for a single species. Indeed, now *Corybas trilobus* is seen as an aggregate of taxa, those formally described being *Corybas hypogaeus*, *C. confusus*, *C. obscurus*, *C. sanctigeorgianus*, *C. sulcatus*, *C. trilobus* s.s., *C. vitreus* and *C. walliae*. Still undescribed taxa include those referred to as *Corybas* “Hump”, *C.* “pygmy”, *C.* “Rewanui”, *C.* “Remutaka”, *C.* “Trotters”, *C.* “Veil” and others [4].

Can they be distinguished by leaf shape? I find that difficult. Perceived differences seem inconsistent with perhaps the exceptions of *C. hypogaeus*, which almost always has leaves wider than long, and *C. confusus* with its rounder leaves.

What is interesting though, is that in many species flowering plants have a leaf shape different from non-flowering plants in the same colony. Perhaps that shouldn't surprise us: immature plants of other orchids (notably in New Zealand *Pterostylis alobula* and *P. trullifolia*) differ markedly from flowering plants.

In an erudite paper in 2019 Mark Moorhouse made this important observation while detailing the leaf shapes of different entities in the *Corybas trilobus* aggregate. He noted, “leaves on flowering plants differ in shape from those of non-flowering specimens and also, juvenile leaves often differ from mature sterile plants as well as those which are flowering. So approaching a colony one must expect

to find three basic shaped leaves to be present, that is, also in addition to natural variations of size and to a lesser degree proportions. Of course, there could also be one or two odd shapes too caused by physical restriction of litter. Recognising these and discarding them from the mix is important” [5].



Corybas hypogaeus leaves, Wairarapa. Photo: Pat Enright.

Moorhouse’s paper includes a chart showing the leaf shapes of different entities and what is striking is the consistent shovel shape of the leaves of flowering plants compared with the kidney shape of the leaves of non-flowering plants.

What is *even more interesting*, to an historian at least, is that Moorhouse’s observation had been made 120 years ago by the Westport pharmacist William Townson (and since then either ignored or forgotten). He wrote to TF Cheeseman on 13 August 1901, “No.426 I collected at Cape Foulwind last Thursday in the bush, and I cannot understand the difference in the form of the leaf in the seeded specimens and those which are in flower, but still they do not look like different species. The flower is green, and they were growing on the shady side of a little gully; some under the lea of rotten logs and some on the more open ground” [6].

He reported in his paper in the *Transactions*, that this was “*Corysanthes triloba*, Hook.f. On the sea-slopes near to Cape Foulwind, under shelter of tree-ferns and nikau palms” [7]. I wonder which entity in the aggregate this green flowered plant was.

These observations make the search for flowers much easier, as one must look for the shovel shaped leaves in the colony. They won’t all be bearing flowers but they are certainly your best bet.



Fig.2. A kidney shaped leaf on a nonflowering plant and a shovel shaped leaf on a fruiting plant. Photo: Ian St. George.

References

1. Hooker JD 1853. *Flora Novae-Zelandiae* 2. Page 250.
2. St George IM 2008. Kahurangi & *Nematoceras triloba* ss. *NZ Native Orchid Journal* 106: 8.
3. Hatch ED 1946. The New Zealand forms of *Corybas* Salisb. *Trans RSNZ* 76: 474–480.
4. NZ Native Orchid Group 2021. *A pocket guide to the NZ native orchids*. Pp 29–58.
5. Moorhouse M 2019. The *Corybas trilobus* aggregate. *NZ Native Orchid Journal* 152: 3–10.
6. W Townson to TF Cheeseman 13 August 1901. Auckland Museum.
7. Townson W 1906. On the vegetation of the Westport district. *Trans NZ Inst.* 39: 380–433.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Please note that the new traffic light system is likely to be in place from 3 December and this may impact on some of the advertised events. Please check with the appropriate Botanical Society beforehand.

Auckland Botanical Society

Meetings are being held via Zoom only at present.

Field Trip: Saturday 4 December to Point Wells, near Omaha.
Annual Christmas pot luck picnic at Point Wells Hall, with
botanising sites nearby.

More information: see the
December newsheet.

Waikato Botanical Society

Field Trip: Saturday 11 December, or Sunday 12 December if postponed, to western end of Lake Taupo Trail. (Combined with Rotorua Botanical Society).

See notice below: for more details.

Rotorua Botanical Society

Field Trip: Saturday 11 December, or Sunday 12 December if postponed, to western end of Lake Taupo Trail. (Combined with Waikato Botanical Society). **Meet:** Contact trip leader for carpooling from Rotorua at 8.00am or 9.00am at the carpark opposite the Waihaha Track. **Grade:** Medium–hard.

Leader: Chris Bycroft, email chris.bycroft@wildlands.co.nz, ph. 027 498 5513 (email preferred).

Canterbury Botanical Society

Meeting: Monday 6 December at 7.30pm. **Speaker:** Peter Heenan, Senior researcher – botanist, systematics at Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research. **Topic:** Recent publication in the NZ Journal of Botany on te reo Maori and botanical nomenclature.

Venue: Knox Hall, 28A Bealey Avenue. (Adjacent to Knox Church).

Field Trip: Saturday 11 December to Boundary Creek Conservation Area proposed Scenic Reserve. **Meet:** Peg Hotel, 899 Main North Road, Belfast, to carpool at 8.30am or at the Amberley toilets at 9.00am. **Grade:** Hard.

Leader: Alice Shanks, email alice@caverock.net.nz, ph. 027 366 1246 to confirm attendance and check for cancellation.
