



TRILEPIDEA

Newsletter of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network

No. 257

November 2025

Deadline for next issue:
Wednesday 17 December
2025

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:
73 Stratford Drive
Cable Bay 0420
NEW ZEALAND

NZPCN 2026 Conference

Megan Ireland - Chairperson, NZPCN 2026 Conference Organising Committee
(megan.ireland@wcc.govt.nz)

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network is excited to announce that its next conference will be held in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington, from 12–15 October 2026.

The theme for the 2026 conference is *Māhia ngā here* – Collaboration for better conservation, reflecting the importance of working together to protect and restore Aotearoa's unique flora. This year's event will also, in part, celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Ōtari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve, with a commemorative event on 12 October alongside field trips and workshops.

Hosted at the Wharewaka Function Centre on Wellington's waterfront, the programme includes workshops, speaker sessions, an awards dinner and auction, and field trips to local conservation sites.

The conference programme runs Monday to Thursday, kicking off with workshops and a welcome event, followed by two full days of symposia, and wrapping up with field trips on Thursday. Mark your calendars — registrations open in the first week of January 2026, so keep an eye on our website and in *Trilepidea* for updates.

Planning is well underway, and we are lining up some great field trip options, including Baring Head in East Harbour Regional Park and a 4×4 adventure up Mount Climie, where you'll experience changing vegetation, big skies, and proper Remutaka winds.

We're also teaming up with Te Papa, DOC, Te Tira Whakamātaki, and Wikipedia NZ to offer a fun and diverse selection of workshops—more details coming soon!

If you or your business would like to support the conference, we are seeking conference sponsors, as well as donations to our auction, which raises funds for the David Given Threatened Plant Scholarship and the John Sawyer Threatened Plant Endowment Fund.

Please direct all queries and offers of support to the conference organising committee lead, Megan Ireland, at 2026nzpcnconference@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you all in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington, next October.

NZPCN 2026 Conference Charity Auctions – Items wanted

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

Hello folks, it's that time again. We are happy to announce another great conference is in the making in our wonderful capital, with the theme *Māhia ngā here* – *Collaboration for better conservation*. The conference will coincide with Ōtari Native Botanical Garden & Wilton's Bush Reserve 100-year Anniversary. It's looking like it will be fantastic, as long as you all turn up and make it special.

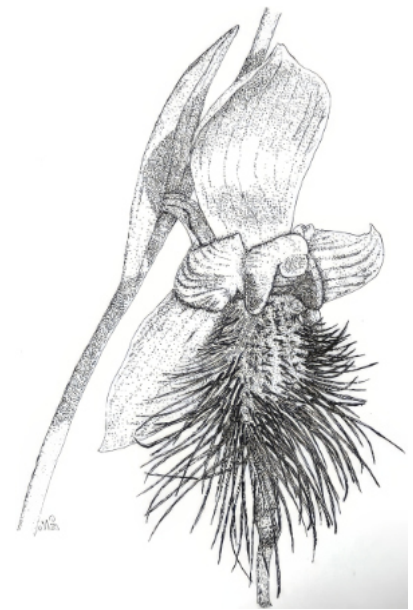
I have been tasked with running the charity auction to continue to raise funds for our

two Trusts, the 'David Given Scholarship' and the 'John Sawyer Threatened Plant Endowment Fund'. Any funds made from the auctions will be split between the two Trusts.

Yes, that's right, there will be two auctions this conference, a silent auction run during the presentation programme and a second brief live auction during the conference dinner, which will include a selection of 10 items we think will inspire considerable interest.

To make these auctions happen we need your help, in the form of item donations. We are happy to receive anything you wish to donate, particularly if it themes toward our core, Aotearoa Flora. In the past we have had creations of all types from woven items to oil paintings, hand-crafted celebration cards to second-hand books of interesting provenance, live plants, pressed plants, printed plants, carvings, cups, drink bottles, vouchers, experiences, garments, perfumes and jewellery. You name it, we will auction it, as it's all for a good cause, our native plants.

If you would like to donate an item or two towards next year's auctions please contact me at the above email address and I can give you a Wellington address to send to, or we can discuss it coming with you to the conference, whatever works for you. I am planning to do a couple of pieces of art to donate, so I best get my thinking hat on...



Calochilus paludosus – bearded orchid. Matt Ward 2025.

Botanical news from the Wairarapa – mistletoes and rarities

Trevor Thompson – QEII Trust Wairarapa Regional Representative

This season the Wairarapa has again experienced dramatic climate swings from a very wet summer to drought in the colder months. To try and cope with the conditions, delaying planting projects has been general practice. Another unfortunate result of this season is seeing various plant species failing to produce fruit, often important food for native fructivores, not ideal.

Some of the plants that have failed to produce viable fruit include some of our regionally rare mistletoe species, one example being *Alepis flavida*/pirita, yellow mistletoe (At Risk – Declining), the fruit rotted before being fully mature. This species has now gone from the last known local natural population but, thankfully, can be found still in three small insurance populations I established some time ago.

Another species to suffer from the local climate is the largest known concentration of *Peraxilla colensoi*/korukoru, scarlet mistletoe (At Risk – Declining) in the Tararua Ranges. Discovered around 1999, it failed to produce any fruit this year. Another mistletoe *Peraxilla tetrapetala*/pikirangi, red mistletoe (At Risk – Declining), which is situated as another insurance population has failed to flower and fruit for 3 years running now, which is not the best. It has even been a terrible year for the locally common *Melcytus ramiflorus*/māhoe, which, while managing to flower this year, did not set fruit on more than a small handful of plants seen throughout the Wairarapa.

On a more positive note, earlier last year Otari-Wilsons Botanical Gardens staff and other Wellington City Council staff came to my property to attend a mistletoe propagation wananga (Fig. 1). It was great to host these folks, having them take away good quantities of the fruit from *Tupeia antarctica*/pirita, white mistletoe (At Risk – Declining). From reports received, they are successfully starting new populations. *Tupeia antarctica* is in serious decline in the Wairarapa, with big old specimens on large old *Notelaea cunninghamii*/black maire being progressively lost as these ancient old maire fall. A formerly good stronghold of *T. antarctica* in the eastern hill country was down to low numbers until I managed to gather fruit from plants and attach them onto much easier to manage new hosts. The new hosts used were not black maire, as from my experience they no longer seem to accept *Tupeia antarctica*. The new and different hosts that do accept the parasitism have shown good results, so this population has recovered to good numbers.



Figure 1. The WCC folk planting *Tupeia antarctica*.

Zealandia staff are booked to attend another mistletoe propagation wānanga in October which will have happened by the time this makes the newsletter. The hope this year is to receive *Ileostylus micranthus*/pirita, green mistletoe fruit, to add plants and genetic diversity to the small numbers of plants they presently have there.

In other news, more populations of *Olearia gardneri*/deciduous tree daisy (Threatened – Nationally Endangered) were set up in areas of suitable soil types. Some losses were noted, which were likely from excessive rainfall over the last two summers. This species, formerly called New Zealand's fifth rarest tree, may need some threat classification re-evaluation in the near future, given the sheer numbers now present in four insurance populations and the very abundant new population found back around 2012. Its future is looking much brighter. Recently I was even able to supply 100 locally raised *O. gardneri* to my colleague in the Hawke's Bay so that they could make a return to the species' former range. It was nice to be able to help.

Brachyglottis pentacopa (Threatened – Nationally Critical) is found on one coastal hill called Tarao-neone maunga, situated on the Wairarapa coast. This is another project I have taken on. The number of specimens has reduced to around 70 larger trees, which are naturally protected from goats by difficult contours. In 2021, with the help of the Masterton Intermediate School rugby team, we carried heavy fencing materials up to a site deemed suitable to build a deer proof enclosure (Fig. 2). This area was subsequently planted with *B. pentacopa* nursery grown plants but unfortunately all of those plantings died. Subsequent plantings showed a bit more promise, there being a 10 per cent increase in numbers within the enclosure.



Figure 2. Deer fence at *B. pentacopa* site with planting inside.

Plantings made using individual guards to protect them outside the enclosure are now being made as another trial. Seed collected has proved very viable and around 200+ specimens are with a local specialist, the Norfolk Road Nursery. These will be returned to the site in time. Norfolk Road Nursery are our great allies when it comes to growing rare species, and significant seed collected this year is germinating now. Any visits to this site are gruelling, but this season, with a helper, I climbed with materials to gather seed, then sow seed under a mesh protection onsite, (Fig. 3) as well as bring some seed back. The mesh protection for freshly sown seed is later repurposed to make cylindrical guards for the selected new plants as protection from goats (Fig. 4).



Figure 3. Mesh covering direct seeding experiment.



Figure 4. Showing the uses of the mesh, either flat or rolled into a guard.

Earlier in February, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Wairarapa students came to help and carry more fencing materials up the maunga and to learn about one of Aotearoa's rarest plants (Fig. 5). It was a great effort from these students and their help was very much appreciated.



Figure 5. The Kura crew after carrying materials up Taraoneone.

This plant is very vulnerable on this site with the potential to be wiped out by a runaway fire, which is a very real risk. While trying to increase numbers at the site is critical, setting up another insurance population is also vitally needed, This has begun and may one day be the saving grace for this rare plant. The more I work with this plant the more I am beginning to understand its needs.

Other regionally rare species, *Coprosma wallii* (At Risk – Declining), *Coprosma obconica* (At Risk – Declining), *Tupeia antarctica* (At Risk – Declining), *Corokia contoneaster* (Regionally- Naturally Uncommon), to name some of them, are all being given new homes to lower the risk of local extinction. These are always being placed in legally protected QEII covenanted areas.

Feral deer, both red and fallow, are a major threat to the palatable species in Wairarapa forest remnants. Deer antler rubbing often ring bark species they don't eat and kills them just as surely. Recently, three more QEII Covenants have been deer fenced and another four QEII Covenants are to be deer fenced shortly. These areas add to the five other covenanted areas already deer fenced for some time. These areas, once restored, should give some indication of how things will appear if deer are absent once plant reintroductions are done.

A busy year ahead is planned, with more native plant and mistletoe propagation wananga for local iwi groups and transplanting of established mistletoe on *Coprosma propinqua* to a south Wairarapa marae keen to return these plants to their rohe. Many trips back up Taraoneone to plant and protect more *Brachyglottis pentacopa* are also on the cards.

Botany-Inspired Desk Calendars by a Young NZ Photographer



Choose from three Calendars

- NZ Native Orchids
- Insects in Macro
- Garden Flowers

\$40 each + shipping

Hi, I'm Indy Marshall a 16-year-old keen botanist and proud member of the New Zealand Native Orchid Society, NZPCN and Youth Search and Rescue. I've created three desk calendars—Macro Bugs, NZ Orchids, and Garden Flowers—featuring all my own photographs.

I'm selling these to help fund an expedition I'll be joining in April to Nepal with a local community group. I'll be using the opportunity to observe the local botany, experience a new culture and push my physical skills. This journey will go toward my Duke of Edinburgh Award - Environmental focus.

Purchasing a calendar supports my learning, my photography, and my passion for the natural world—thank you! To order a calendar or find out more, please contact me at indy@stacked.co.nz, follow my journey and photographs on Facebook at Indy's Nepal Adventure.

**EMAIL TO
PURCHASE**

indy@stacked.co.nz



Changes to NZPCN favourite plant vote reflects changing times and climate

Taylor Davies-Colley - NZPCN 2025 Favourite Plant Vote coordinator (taylordaviescolley@gmail.com)

From 17 November until 14 December New Zealanders will have a chance to vote for their favourite plant as part of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's annual favourite plant vote competition.

The vote which has been running since 2002 has celebrated a wide variety of the country's fantastic flora. From iconic trees like pōhutukawa which took the first crown to rarely seen and highly threatened plants like the tiny aquatic *Trithuria inconspicua* which claimed the title in 2024.

However, this year's vote could be seen as a bit of a change in the weather. Instead of nearly 6,000 native species being eligible, as in previous years (including lichens as well as plants), NZPCN has decided to restrict the 2025 vote to just 40 species. The criteria? Species that are already classified as threatened but whose survival is further compromised by our changing climate.

Some of these species, such as the Wakanui woollyhead *Craspedia diversicolor*, literally are at risk of being washed into the sea, while others, such as the swamp akeake *Olearia telmatica*, could have their wetland homes dry up. Then there are those like pingao *Ficinia spiralis* which, as much as they are at risk from climate change, may also be one of the keys in ensuring our coasts are resilient to change.

"It's a bit of fun with a serious message" says NZPCN president Jesse Bythell. "Climate change is a huge threat to all our native plants, but it is great to have the opportunity to highlight these that are most under pressure. All while getting some competitive spirit from plant lovers along the way."

Voting opened on Monday 17 November and runs until midnight on Sunday 14 December. To find the full list of candidates and for information on how to vote go to the NZPCN website www.nzpcn.org.nz.



Ficinia spiralis. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

Petals and Threads: Patterns in Nature and Needle — 2026 Calendar



Plant artist **Kate McAlpine** and the **Wellington Embroiderers' Guild (WEG)** have collaborated on a unique fundraising project celebrating plants, art, and embroidery.

The resulting **Petals and Threads 2026** calendar features twelve pairs of images — Kate's original **PlantArt** compositions alongside stunning embroidered interpretations created by **WEG** members.

Calendars are **\$25** each, with all proceeds donated equally to the **NZ Plant Conservation Network** and **WEG** to support plant conservation and community craft.



A4, wiro-bound, printed on satin paper



A lovely Christmas present!

Order calendar [here](#) or from Kate's website www.plantart.nz

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have events or news that you would like publicised via this newsletter please email the Network (info@nzpcn.org.nz), prior to the published copy deadline, with details of meetings, field trips or other events taking place during the following month or later. The deadline for copy for the following month's *Trilepidea* is at the top of the front page of each issue.

If you intend to participate in one of the advertised botanical society meetings or field trips please check with the relevant society beforehand to confirm that the published details still stand.

Iwitahi Working Bee & Native Orchid Weekend

Friday, December 5th - Sunday, December 7th
At the Iwitahi Reserve off SH5 (Napier - Taupo)



Starts Friday after 4pm
Ends Sunday Lunchtimeish



Includes Meals and 2 Nights' Accommodation at Sika Lodge
(bunk room style)

Light /Moderate Track Maintenance, Weeding etc.
Orchid Identification, Photography, And Discussions On Site

\$120+/-PP

[THE MORE THAT COME
THE CHEAPER IT GETS](#)

We would expect to see *Calochilus*, *Chiloglottis*, *Gastrodia*,
Thelymitra and *Pterostylis* species in flower or bud

If you are unable to attend for the full weekend but would like to join us at the reserve or prefer to organise your own accommodation, please let me know so we can keep an eye out for you

To register your interest, contact me by FB Messenger me or email - tobymarris@hotmail.com



NZPCN 2026 Conference

The NZPCN 2026 Conference will be held in Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington from 12–15 October 2026. Mark these dates in your diary now for an exciting few days of botanical knowledge sharing, networking and local exploration.

More information will be included in future issues of *Trilepidea*, as details are finalised.

Auckland Botanical Society

Field Trip: Saturday 6 December to Matuku Link Reserve for Christmas potluck outing.

Leader: Geoff Davidson.

Field Trip: Friday 23 January to Monday 26 January 2026 to Motukaikoura Island for Anniversary Weekend camp.
Leaders: Geoff Davidson and Maureen Young.

See website: <https://sites.google.com/site/aucklandbotanicalsociety/> for further details.

Wellington Botanical Society

Field Trips: Thursday 4 December and Saturday 6 December. Evening and morning rātā-viewing walks, Lower Hutt. The walks will begin and end at Woburn Station, so we encourage public transport use. **Meet:** Carpark on east side of Woburn Station. The walks will be held as an after-work event on Thursday 4 December at 6.00pm and a morning event on Saturday 6 December at 9.30am.

Leader: John Barnett, email johnbarnett@inspire.net.nz, phone 021 063 1590.

Field Trip: Friday 16 January to Friday 23 January 2026 to Pureora Forest, Waikato for Summer Camp. Pureora Forest is known for its outstanding remnants of ancient Podocarp forest and is home to the elusive Pua o Te Rēinga/*Dactylanthus taylorii* and Kōkako/*Callaeas wilsoni*.

Contact: botsocsummercamp@gmail.com.

Nelson Botanical Society

Field Trips/Meetings: Please refer to the website: <https://www.nelsonbotanicalsociety.org/trips-meetings>.

Canterbury Botanical Society

Field Trips/Meetings: Please refer to the website: <https://canterburybotanicalsociety.org.nz/canterbury-botanical-meetings-field-trips> for current details.
