

Zealand. Around 1860 European songbirds were shipped to home-sick New Zealanders. This timing and distribution fit with the blood-sucking mosquitoes transmitting a European disease to native birds that had no resistance, just as European human diseases were devastating to native people around the world. A fascinating illustration of the need to preserve the pollinator as well as the plant to maintain biodiversity. Thanks to Lloyd Davis, for making the DVD available, and to Lyn Bentley, for tracking it down just in the nick of time.

29 April. **Nenthorn** trip – postponed till better weather. Watch the BSO website.

Korthalsella lindsayi on *Melicope simplex* - Peter Bannister



DVD review

Reviewed by *Rodney Lewington*

Interactive "*Key to Australasian Liverworts and Hornwort Genera* "

David Glenny and Bill Malcolm. Published by the ABRS.
Manaaki Whenua Press.

Available in New Zealand from

If you can read a CD on your computer and have an interest in liverworts and hornworts then this key is a must. It comes with the Lucid Player software, a glossary and is generously illustrated.

It is more than a key. The notes and illustrations make it the most complete liverwort and hornwort flora at the generic level available for New Zealand. The comprehensive references to literature and the lists of species for each genus provide a lead-in to the species level.

The tutorial is short and to the point and gets one started quickly. Once first principles have been grasped then the system is easy to use. Short cuts can be learnt as you go along.

Using the key starts with the 182 genera in the flora. Each choice of a “state” under a character removes genera that don’t have that condition. You take your specimen, choose a character and eliminate genera until there is just one. There are additional features which speed the identification. For example the software will prune irrelevant characters and suggest the best character to differentiate remaining taxa.

Bill Malcolm’s illustrations serve two purposes. They illustrate the characters used in the key and they provide illustrations of species within each genus. They give relevant, clear close-up and microscope pictures.

The essence of the Key is in the choice of characters. David Glenny has organised the 90+ characters into an order which will be familiar to bryologists. There are between 2 and 5 states for any character. Being interactive allows the most obvious character to be used first.

The supporting Notes are comprehensive with the diagnostic characters, description, habitat and distribution. Being only for genera does lead, inevitably, to rather generalised descriptions which are not as helpful as they might be when trying to identify a species.

Are there shortcomings? The software has not failed to do my bidding in the four months I have been using the key. Some relevant references are missing and of course more recent literature is not included. On the other hand there are references included which I was previously unaware of.

I have found a few errors in character states which can lead to wrong answers. This seldom happens as the Lucid software can be set to tolerate errors - be they in the system or made by the user.

Does it work? - Usually, certainly far better than dichotomous printed keys that often fail because a character is not apparent on a specimen. My initial wrong identifications are usually traced back to my own failing in observation or interpretation.

David Glenny and Bill Malcolm are to be congratulated on a useful tool and a worthwhile addition to the Australasian liverwort and hornwort literature.

Web Site

The Parasitic Plant Connection by Dan Nickrent

Jennifer Bannister

<http://www.parasiticplants.siu.edu/>

Covers all parasitic plants, which are found in 19 families containing 277 genera and 4178 species, including mistletoes and orchids. There are images of 6 species of *Korthalsella*, for instance. The photographs are good, and free to download. Have a look and find out more.