Simpson, led us a few metres off the track to view the highlight of the day, a gully full of magnificent king ferns. It was good to see that a number of young plants are getting established - this seems to indicate that pig numbers are low in these parts.

Some plants of interest along the track were the little creeping *Pratia angulata*, with pretty purplish-red fruits, *Helichrysum aggregatum*, *Corokia buddleioides*, *Phebalium nudum*, and *Gaultheria antipoda*.

A few metres down the Cowan Stream, the site of an old kauri dam proved to be a pleasant lunch spot. Some square holes in the rocks are all that remain to show that a dam once stood there. The descent down the stream was tricky in parts, as some wet seats testified. The rupestral plants were a feature of the streamside. The mosses were green and fresh, with a variety of capsule shapes in evidence (Jessica, where were you?), and among them were many plants of *Ctenopteris heterophylla*. Also growing on the rocks were *Hymenophyllum flexuosum*, *H. sanguinolentum*, *Earina mucronata*, and *E. autumnalis*. The *Corybas* orchids were in bud. *Corybas rivularis* (formerly *C. orbiculatis*) lived up to its re-instated name by growing exclusively on the stream banks, and *C. oblongus* and *C. macranthus* were also seen. The tawny tomentum on the backs of the leaves proved that the flowering *Pittosporum* was *P. ellipticum*, and a handsome tree of *Dracophyllum sinclairii* was growing by the Pararaha Stream.

Back at the car park, the *Clematis paniculata* was flowering nicely in the tea-tree scrub.

Uncommon Plants in the Waitakere Ranges

Sandra Jones

Pennantia corymbosa (kaikomako) in the Waitakeres

There has been yet another report of kaikomako on the main ridge of the Waitakere Range, this time in the vicinity of Arataki Information Centre, so I thought that this was a good opportunity to pull together the various reports scattered through the ABS News-sheets (November 1985, February / March 1986, April 1986, November / December 1989, May 1990 and Feb / March 1991).

In 1985, at the time of the first News-sheet report, there were three Herbarium specimens in the Auckland Institute and Museum:

(1) Cheeseman "Waitakerei River, Dec. 1871"
(2) E H Walker "Titirangi" 13.4.1949
(3) T C Chambers, J A Rattenbury & A Farnell 2.10.1954 "L.H. side of road below Titirangi Filter Station"

Reports since 1985, from north to south, are as follows:

- Goldie Bush reserve, inland from Muriwai - a well known colony of mature trees at the reserve entrance at the end of Horseman Road (Nov. 1989 News-sheet). There is another grove of trees on private land at the junction of Wairere, Jonkers and Horseman Roads (April 1986 News-sheet).
- Northern perimeter of Cascade Kauri Park, half a mile from Long Road Track - approx 15 mature trees, a few juveniles and lots of seedlings (Feb / March 1991 News-sheet). It was noted at the time that the trees were on private land (Wadham's farm) and were "mostly in an area being grazed by cattle." Recently (November 1993) the property was purchased by the Auckland Regional Council and has been named "Turua Kauri".
- Anderson Track (near Pukematekeo) - one mature tree (Nov. 1985 News-sheet).

- Scenic Drive roadside between Kauri Knoll and Waiatarua - one juvenile (May 1990 News-sheet).
- Slip Track / tramline, near the Arataki Information Centre - seedlings, juveniles and 7 adult trees (new report from Harry Beacham 30.10.93).
- Exhibition Drive, Titirangi - countless seedlings and approx. 20 adult trees (Nov. 1989; May 1990 News-sheets) (Also reported at Clark Bush, Titirangi, below the Exhibition Drive). There was a report in the June 1948 issue of the ABS Quarterly News Letter of an excursion to Titirangi during which they "saw some fine specimens (of kaikomako) near the filters and were able to study both the mature and juvenile forms".
- Piha Valley - Home Track: seedling (Nov. 1985 News-sheet). Further searching by Harry Beacham in the general area of Home Track uncovered more seedlings and mature trees; these findings were not recorded in the News-sheet. A juvenile found on the Piha Valley Track near the McKenzie Track turnoff in the late 1970s / early 1980s had not survived (February / March 1986 News-sheet).
- Karamatura Track / Loop Track junction, Huia - one mature tree (Nov. 1989 News-sheet) A seedling was also found (but not reported in the News-sheet) by Sandra Jones in 1990, on the rough track between the lower and upper falls on Karamatura Stream.

Upper Nihotupu Track (Waitakere Water Catchment)

Harry Beacham reports further interesting sightings from this track (see also item in Journal 48 No. 1, January 1993):

Libocedrus plumosa (kawaka) - a very large one, off the track, near the Cutty Grass Track end of the Upper Nihotupu Track.

Dicksonia fibrosa (wheki-ponga) - two additional specimens in the vicinity of the one which is right on the track, although they cannot actually be seen from the track.

Pseudowintera colorata (mountain horopito) - on the side of the road which leads in to the dry reservoir. Three adult specimens growing closely together, in full flower 13.8.93. How did they come to be here? There are no other reports of *P. colorata* in the Waitakeres. It is generally accepted that its natural range is from the central North Island southwards, although there are reports of isolated pockets on the Coromandel and Bream Head (pers. comm. John Braggins) and in Northland (ABS Newsletter 40(2) 1985). Were they planted at Upper Nihotupu? If they were, by whom and why?

***Pseudowintera axillaris* (horopito) in the Waitakeres**

> "What happened to horopito? Somewhere very close to this road (Mountain Road) Mr Cheeseman, on 3 September 1872, found horopito or Maori painkiller (*Pseudowintera axillaris*) in abundance once he reached an elevation of about 240 metres above sea level. He wrote in his diary that it was then 'in bloom, but not far advanced.' He added that 'as in other parts of the Titirangi District .... the leaves were much eaten by insects, making it difficult to obtain good specimens.' The entries in Cheeseman's little notebooks .... are always brief (though the species lists may be long), ... He usually tells us nothing at all about habitat or range of the species. Where, for example, had he already seen horopito in other parts of the Waitakeres (the area known to him as Titirangi)? We know it now from two records only, of one plant each, one in the Piha Valley (where it seems to be insect-free) and the other under 60-year-old tea tree in the high country behind Huia, where it was found in a quadrat study by Esler and Astridge (*NZJB* 1974). Did the insects almost wipe out horopito in the Waitakeres?" (*The Botany of Auckland*, Lucy M. Cranwell, 1981, p. 103).

Harry Beacham has provided a list of sites that he knows personally. He comments that he hasn't found the horopito that Cheeseman records in the Mountain Road area.

1. Donald McLean Track, near Karamatura Track junction (the quadrat study site referred to in *The Botany of Auckland*) - one adult (over 10') and three juveniles.
2. Home Track, Piha Road end - two adult specimens (14' & 12').
3. Kelly Creek Track (near Waitakere Dam Walk) - one juvenile (4').
4. Lucy Cranwell Track - one adult specimen (8').
5. Huia Ridge Track - six juveniles.

Environmental vascular plant weeds and new records for Motutapu, Waitemata Harbour

E. K. Cameron

Introduction

The Auckland Botanical Society carried out a two day weed survey for the Department of Conservation (DoC) on Motutapu Island involving 21 members on 3 and 17 October 1993. We searched three quarters of the coastal band of vegetation (mainly cliffs) and the main central valley (bush and poplar plantation area). We only looked at terrestrial weeds (wetlands not looked at) from a native environment viewpoint. Pasture weeds were ignored. Most of the main weed habitats were searched, leaving only a small part of the coast, some bush remnants and the residents' gardens which were unseen by us.

Motutapu is a Recreation Reserve (1560 ha) with a rich Maori history and has been grazed since the 19th century. Over the last two years the feral wallabies and possums have virtually been eliminated. Most of the island is pasture. Forest is reduced to small remnants mostly on coastal cliffs. This highly modified state is reflected in the vascular plant flora of 368 species, of which 60% are adventive species (Table 1). DoC plans to ecologically restore much of the island.

Table 1 Vascular flora of Motutapu

Plant Group	Native	Adventive	Totals
Ferns and fern allies	27 (10)*	1 (1)	28
Gymnosperms	1 (0)	2 (1)	3
Dicots	72 (0)	156 (8)	228
Monocots	45 (0)	64 (4)	109
TOTALS	145 (10)	223 (14)	368

* the number of additions to Esler's (1980) article are in brackets

The island was fully botanically surveyed by Alan Esler (Esler 1980) in November 1977 (A.E. Esler pers. comm.). "New record" on the following list means an addition to Esler's published flora. If the species is not a "new record" it was present on the island in 1977. With the browsing pressure of possums and wallabies now gone, coupled with the recent upgrading of fences to prevent stock grazing the bush areas, the vegetation of Motutapu will change quickly. Plants, both native and exotic, which have been suppressed by browsing should now increase. Therefore it is a very important period to regularly monitor the vegetation for new weeds and for weeds which may increase rapidly.

New records that I personally did not see are cited pers. comm. or by their herbarium number.