

marred by rain which had started just as we were breaking camp. Only a few hardy souls splashed through the wet for a quick inspection.

All stores with the exception of two deliveries of meat and bread were taken with us, and credit for the success of the trip must go to our driver and camp organiser, Mr. George Barr. We wish to record our appreciation of his splendid services. We also say 'thank-you' to the Officer-in-Charge, Mr. R. Collins, and his wife for their help, and to Mr. Cox, Assistant Officer, for the Forest Quiz Session around the camp-fire.

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PONUUI ISLAND

18th to 20th February.

Keyed up with expectations of pastures new the Ponui party left by the late afternoon bus for Kawakawa Bay. Skies had been threatening all day but fortunately a very heavy local downpour ceased in time for us to enjoy the novelty of being transported by barge to the launch which took us over to Mr. Fred Chamberlin's property on the south end of Ponui Island.

Once ashore, we were soon indulging in a light meal and the inevitable cup of tea at our headquarters - an outsized building, just a few yards from the beach. The number of Lilos in use was evidence that many members had prepared for extra comfort or for extreme discomfort.

The botanical rambles led by Dr. Rattenbury on both of the following days were very profitable. The Island is very hilly and there is a surprising amount of undamaged bush on the slopes and in the valleys. One large gully we explored on the northeast side was typical coastal vegetation with a good number of fern species, Pteris comans and Blechnum norfolkianum being particularly interesting. Kauri and its associates were plentiful on the ridges, groves of Tarairi were common lower down and some very fine specimens of Pukatea were seen. Particularly abundant was a hybrid Pseudopanax, probably P. crassifolium X P. lessonii, with an amazing variety of juvenile leaf forms. A feature of the vegetation of the outlying Islands is the much larger leaves and these were noted on Ponui Island, especially so on Olea cunninghamii. No serious attempt was made at listing plants although 47 species of ferns were counted. There is, however, ample scope for an ecological survey.

Other events of a non-botanical nature added to the pleasure of this enjoyable week-end, - although some may question if the portion of fried eel they sampled for breakfast should be included as pleasurable - and so we returned to the mainland full of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlin for their many kindnesses and unanimous that a return visit would be most welcome.

P. Hynes.

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Mrs. Wood, usually "gets round" during the summer and this year she and her husband took a trip to the far North - I am sure all members will enjoy the short account of her journey given below.

BOTANICAL NOTES FROM NORTHLAND.

Our Editress has once more asked me to submit an article on our trip at Christmas which this year, my husband and I spent in the far North.

I must apologise for these rather sketchy notes, for I must confess that my botanical eye was not as alert as on previous trips. However, a few interesting finds were made and specimens were collected of some more Native and introduced plants. I could not help but notice the prevalence of that rather attractive weed Thoroughwort, \*Eupatorium adenophorum which is a native of Mexico and grows in abundance in and around Whangarei. Its fluffy white flowers were seen everywhere on roadsides and cuttings and it seemed the commonest weed in that area. Various points of interest in Whangarei were visited. Wairua Falls were remembered for it was there I made my first find of the fern Doodia caudata, which was growing along with healthy plants of Adiantum aethiopicum and A. hispidulum. At the nearby power house, Coprosma propinqua was noted. I also remember the lower slopes of Mt. Manaia for the Paratrophis microphylla (Milk tree) found thereon.

My most exciting find was at Matapouri Bay, North of Whangarei, where in a grassy hollow beneath the semi-shade of Tawapou, Taraire, Karakas and other coastal trees, I discovered creeping masses of the Native Fuchsia procumbens. I have always been familiar with this rare Native as a garden subject, and this was the first time I had found it growing in its natural habitat. Later it was found in other parts of this lovely bay. A trip along the Russell road took us to Helena Bay and there on a cliff edge I found the Native grass, Danthonia bromoides which is described as rare and local.

On our stay at Keri Keri, botanical observations were confined to sampling delicious sweet oranges in "The Homestead" garden and gazing fascinated at a strange looking tree which "Mine Host" informed us was a Mexican Paw Paw. We were assured that it bore heavily and that the fruit was delicious, but as no ripe fruit samples were forthcoming, this could not be confirmed.

To avoid the main dusty road from Keri Keri to Kaeo, we took an alternative route which enabled us to see something of Puketi Kauri forest, which rivals Waipoua in beauty if not in size. Well kept tracks led us to some magnificent Kauris which were well labelled with information giving height, girth and super feet content. I was especially pleased with the well contrived viewpoints from which I could photograph whole trees. One such Kauri had a girth of 31'9" and in another lovely group of five trees with straight clear boles, the highest measured 52' to the first limb. Possibly there are many larger trees there, but I merely noted the size of those I photographed. Searching among the debris beneath the giants, I came across the comb fern Shizaea dichotoma and the small Iris, Libertia Michellia. The feathery foliage of Ackama rosaefolia was pleasant to see, for this tree is a true Northerner and does not grow in Auckland forest.

A week was spent at Mangonui, which as one of the earlier N.Z. settlements, boasts an abundance of garden escapes growing on the cliffs around the bay. Mudflats near Mangonui were clothed in Mangroves, and visitors to the far North cannot fail to be impressed by the greater size of these trees which little resemble the dwarf shrubs seen in Auckland tidal estuaries.

A very large and striking introduced plant which has become a weed not only on many of the Northern beaches, but inland as well, is the Cape Honey Flower, \*\*Melianthus major. It has large deeply serrated leaves and colourful seed capsules and is really most attractive.

Cooper's Beach, two miles from Mangonui, is noted for its carbonaceous beds containing fossil coconuts. After diligent searching some well-preserved specimens were found in the blue clay deposits which are exposed at low tide.

A trip to Cape Reinga lighthouse and back was made one day from Mangonui (a distance of 180 miles). The inland route from Waipapakauri to the Northernmost tip of N.Z. was taken as the Ninety Mile beach route is now closed. We were most impressed with the scenery on the last few miles through to Te Paki Station. There the rolling hills were covered with patches of very low wind-swept scrub and it almost reminded us of the tussock lands of National Park or parts of Central Otago. Large white sandhills in the distance helped to create the illusion of far off snow-capped mountains. The scrub consisted mainly of Manuka and Kanuka. The latter was in flower but unfortunately the former was past its flowering period, a disappointing fact, for this region is noted for the glorious deep pink blooms of its Manuka. Visitors to the last Cheeseman Show may remember a bowl of these flowers which have been sent down from that area. The parasite Cassytha paniculata scrambled in yellowish stringy masses all over the scrub and could be seen in great abundance. A strange large leafed form of Pomadereis phyllicaeifolia also grows in this area.

K. Wood.

\*Eupatorium is a genus of about 450 species mainly American, which belongs to the daisy family. Members who know the Old County will be familiar with the Hemp Agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum) whose rather dull pinkish-purple heads and red stems are to be seen flourishing in moist and marshy places. The Thoroughwort is well established up North and is a familiar sight at Islington Bay, Rangitoto, but the more common type around Auckland is the charming Mist Flower (Eupatorium riparium) a much more slender plant than the Thoroughwort.

\*\*The Cape Honey Flower (Melianthus major) belongs to the family Meliaceae. As the name suggests the flowers are particularly rich in honey (Gk. meli honey and anthos, a flower). The flowers are reddish-brown and the capsules papery. Mrs. Wood's careful drawings taken partly from Allan's Naturalised Flora should enable members readily to recognise the charming shrub. (Ed.)

