

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 16 No. 45

Dec. 1959

Hon Editor : Marguerite Crookes
"Brockis Holt"
Mountain Road,
Henderson

Hon Secretary: Mrs. A. Coyle,
Goodall St.,
Auckland, S.E. 5. Tel. 556-963

Our editorial in the September number on plant preservation has called forth much sympathetic comment and also one or two grisly stories of plant destruction. Members will then be interested in this communication from the Secretary of the Centennial Memorial Park Board.

PROTECTION OF FLORA IN THE AUCKLAND
CENTENNIAL MEMORIAL PARK

Mr. A. D. Mead, Secretary of the Auckland Centennial Memorial Park Board advises:

The cutting or removal of trees, shrubs or plants, or plucking of parts of them, is prohibited by the by-laws of the Board. While it is recognised that many persons might safely be permitted to use their discretion in removing seedlings or ferns for home transplantation, there are others who will take plants injudicially, such as rare specimens, or plants growing alongside and contributing to the beauty of the tracks, or who will lift them out of season or who have no skill in growing natives.

Rangers cannot be expected to discriminate between individuals in this matter, just as they cannot permit some people to light picnic fires in unauthorised places and refuse others. As regards picking of flowers, many of us have seen with anguish the disappearance of clematis in handy positions by wrenching of vines; and whole patches of king fern have vanished, a plant or two at a time. On a visit of the Botanical Society or allied body, no objection would be taken to a leader of sound discretion plucking small sprigs of foliage or flowers for subsequent demonstration round the lunch circle, and for bona fide scientific or educational purposes, reasonable taking of seedlings or parts, provided that in each case rarities are respected.

In connection with tree preservation, we should note an important point made by Doctor Newhook in his lecture to the Society, "Some Root Diseases of Forest Trees" (Sept. 30th).

The lecturer pointed out that mature kauri which send "peg roots" straight down into the soil, are very frequently attacked by a fungus disease which assails these roots when they reach a certain depth. This throws the burden of supplying the tree's needs from the soil upon the great masses of fibrous roots which surround the base of the bole and penetrate the rich humus to be found there. In nature this precious humus is protected by a layer of vegetation. Unfortunately when a fine specimen of mature kauri becomes known to the public, enthusiasts trample about it, the protective layer of vegetation is destroyed, the humus is interfered with the the life of one more valuable tree becomes endangered. It does not lie within our power to build protective barriers round much visited Kauris but we can at least "keep our distance" from them, explain the situation to friends and acquaintances, and secure their co-operation.

Beeches to the Fore

We are grateful to Mr. Mead for the following observations on some local beeches.

BEECHES AT TITIRANGI

On the northern flank of the spur of the Waitakere Ranges which stretches out to Titirangi, in gullies running from the Scenic Drive towards Glen Eden, occur the only stands of beech (Nothofagus truncata) known in the ranges or their vicinity. One of these localities is the gully between Konini and Tawini Roads, where the beeches are in small groups of six to twenty trees each, surrounded by mixed second growth bush; two of the groups are in a subdivisinal reserve of 17 acres which has recently come under the control of the Auckland Centennial Memorial Park Board, the other groups are in private property. The other Locality is a gully half a mile west of the former, and the beeches here are more scattered and not in such well defined groups. The trees are also larger; the largest measures 8 ft. 4 ins. girth at five feet above ground, and there are several shapely trees of the order of three feet in girth. Several have died from a cause which is not evident. Seedlings in each locality are very rare.

The beeches here do not exhibit the extreme gregariousness