

Weinmannia spp. distribution (2) ✓

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Those of us who were unable to join in the Pureora Excursion are greatly indebted to Mrs. Hynes for her succinct and most informative account of the weekend. We hope that the colour cameras were in evidence so that we shall have a still further share in the trip!

PUREORA

29th January to 1st February.

This year's summer trip was to Pureora State Forest and to us who are so familiar with the vegetation of the Kauri forests and also, through our previous trips to the mountains, of the alpine plants, it was not surprising that this visit to the Podocarp forests was a very pleasant change.

Pureora State Forest, of about 19,000 acres, lies between Te Kuiti and the Mangakino highway. Felling has been carried out since 1945, and a programme of re-establishment has been inaugurated on some of the cutovers by group plantings of exotics, mainly Douglas Fir and Japanese and European Larch. Experimental planting is being carried out with Thuja plicata, Cryptomeria japonica, Eucalyptus gigantea and Sitka Spruce. A nursery has been established to produce stock sufficiently hardy for the Pureora conditions.

The greater part of the existing forests represents regrowth on thick pumice deposits after volcanic destruction of the previous vegetation some 1800 years ago, and it is on the large ignimbrite sheet which surrounds Pureora that extensive areas of mixed podocarps occur, i.e. matai, totara, rimu, kaihikatea, miro etc. These often stand over a tier of hardwoods such as maire, kamahi (Weinmannia racemosa), tawa and pokaka.

Our chartered bus, travelling via Te Kuiti, left Auckland on Friday for a long 'Anniversary Week-end'. A dozen members were accommodated at the Bennydale Hotel, the remaining 20 continued on for a few miles to the Forestry Headquarters where we were given the use of an empty house quite suitable for our needs. We had barely settled in when some enthusiasts rushed off to explore a nearby Reserve containing trees of a spectacular height with an undercover of interesting shrubs.

Next day Pureora Mountain, 3,793 ft., was our objective, and its gentle slope made it an easy morning's jaunt. A short walk through the cutover brought us to the forest margin where fuchsia, horopito (Pseudowintera colorata), wineberry (Aristotelia racemosa) large trees of Pittosporum edgerleyi, coprosma spp. etc. gave way to tall matai, rimu and totara. The Westland Quintinia (Q. acutifolia) is also present. With a gain in altitude the podocarps were left behind, the eerie goblin forest, its trees festooned with moss, was reached and we finally passed through a dense belt of hardwoods, Hall's totara, Nothopanax sinclairii, Senecio elaeagnifolius, Griselinia littoralis, Mountain toa toa (Phyllocladus alpinus and the bog pine, Dacrydium bidwillii.

A small mountain bog in a dip below the summit was a good hunting ground. The last 200 ft., is almost covered in low wind-swept scrub, gradually reduced in height to about 3 ft. on the summit. Griselinia littoralis, a mere 2 ft. or so shares this exposed knoll with Cassinia vauvilliersii, Olearia ilicifolia and O. arborescens, mountain toatoa, five finger, and Gaultheria antipoda and a few other hardy species. In some open spaces we saw Ourisia sp. Celmisia gracilentia, Pentachondra pumila, orchids including Aporostylis bifolia, the Holy grass (Hierochloa redolens) and Oreobolus sp. A cold wind and swirling mist did not encourage us to linger after lunch was over.

Ferns were plentiful right up to the montane scrub. The beautiful Prince of Wales Feather (Leptopteris superba) was abundant. Can we attribute this to access being under strict control? Meringium bivalve was found after a long search.

On Sunday we visited several places not far from Headquarters, our guide being Mr. M. Wilcox. One striking thing was the dense regeneration of the lancewood (Pseudopanax crassifolium) all of uniform height, and low hills where the bog pine, (D. bidwillii) is the dominant tree, and here again, is regenerating prolifically. Unlike D. biforme, which does not occur there, the seedlings produce adult foliage when but 8 or 10 inches high. The picture that will long remain in memory is of all the party assiduously searching for Dactyloctenium aegyptium, the so called Wooden Rose, and of the subsequent digging up of their finds with totally inadequate tools. The parasite here was growing on the roots of a pure stand of Phyllocladus alpinus c. 12 to 15 ft. high.

The nursery and other experimental parts were visited but our time was too short to see everything. However, we did see Pittosporum turnerii, Olearia virgata, that odd-looking tree, Hymenanthera dentata var. angustifolia, Nothopanax parvum, Gaultheria paniculata, Gentiana grisebachii, Nothopanax anomalum with other divaricating shrubs, Gastrodia cunninghamii, Hypolepis millefolium, Blechnum vulcanicum and Botrychium australe var. millefolium, and a host of other interesting plants.

Monday we turned eastwards for our homeward journey, calling at Barryville and from there an escort took us to the Pouakani Block to see the largest known totara tree in New Zealand. It is 43 ft. 6 ins. at scarfing point, a truly remarkable sight. Further on we lunched by the Rangiaui Block which is estimated to contain 85,000 board feet to the acre. The long straight boles of these magnificent trees, over 100 ft. tall left us spellbound.

Another stop was made at Whakamaru Dam before turning northwards for Auckland.

Our grateful thanks are due to the Officers of the Forestry Department for their kindness and to Mr. Farnell, not only for his leadership but for all the preliminary work which made this 1960 trip possible. Our appreciation of Pureora forests was expressed in a general desire for another visit.

Once again Katie Wood returns from her holidays with something to share with members. We welcome her delightful account of pleasant botanising a little off the main track.

RAMBLES IN COLLINGWOOD

While making our way to Collingwood in the Golden Bay area of Nelson Province, we passed over Takaka hill with its fascinating outcrops of limestone. Stopping on the summit, 2595 ft., we had a short scramble among these rocks and we were rewarded by finding some interesting native plants. Tucked away in nooks and crannies were the lime-loving ferns Asplenium trichomanes and A. anomodum. Some Daphne, Pimelia longifolia was found in flower and other plants that grew there were Hebe pinguifolia, Coprosma propinqua and hybrids, Hymenanthera obovata, Pittosporum colensoi, Olearia Spp., and the large-leafed shrub daisy, Senecio hectori.

In the vicinity of Collingwood are large flats of Pakihi land, rather like our own Auckland gumlands in appearance, with similar