

CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr. R.E. Silvester has sent in the following article originating from the 'Botanical Society of the British Isles'. Although we do not have as many plants in danger of extinction as there are in Britain, we would do well to heed the excellent advice given in this code. The pressures on our flora are bound to increase, and we must remember the sad fact that in Britain much of the destruction of the native flora in the past has been perpetrated by botanists themselves, collecting for private herbariums, gardens etc.

"In the interest of the conservation of wild plants of this country, the Botanical Society of the British Isles has produced the following code of conduct.

Visiting:

1. For conservation of our wild plants the first essential is to preserve the habitat - the sort of places and conditions they can grow in. People can easily and unwittingly cause damage by, for example, compacting the soil and so preventing seedling establishment, treading on young shoots unawares, or damaging cliff surfaces.

2. When going to see a rare plant, avoid doing anything which would expose it to unwelcome attention, such as making an obvious path to it or trampling on the vegetation around it.

3. "Gardening" before taking photographs may also have this effect. Bear in mind too how readily nearby plants can be crushed by the toes of kneeling photographers.

4. Avoid telling people about the site of a plant you believe to be rare. Your local nature conservation trust should, however, be informed and will help safeguard it.

5. Respect requests from conservation bodies or land owners not to visit particular sites at certain times.

Collecting:

6. The uprooting of wild plants is to be strongly discouraged except for, with discrimination, weeds. Most local authorities have bye-laws against this, so it may well be illegal.

7. If living plants are needed for cultivation, take seed or cuttings sparingly, and not from those that are rare.

8. Pick only flowers known to be common or plentiful in the locality, but whenever you can, leave them for others to enjoy. If you wish to identify a plant, take the smallest adequate piece; often a photograph may serve the purpose.

9. No specimens should be taken from any nature reserve, nature trail, National Trust property, or a designated Site of Special

Scientific interest.

10. In particular teachers, organisers of wild flower competitions and leaders of visits and field meetings should bear these points in mind.

Introductions:

11. Plants should not be introduced into the countryside without the knowledge and agreement of your local nature conservation or natural history society."

GAULTHERIA ANTIPODA (SYN. EPIPHYTA) !

A. J. DAKIN.

In the Transactions of the N.Z. Institute, 22, 1890, the Rev. W. Colenso described and named a plant as Gaultheria epiphyta, this being based on a single specimen epiphytic on a species of Dicksonia in a "wood south of Dannevirke." The name was later placed as a synonym of G. antipoda by Burt and Hill (J. Linn. Soc. Bot. 49, 1935). Even though the original name did not stand, it must be admitted that the 'station' is most unusual for this species.

On a recent excursion along Milnes Creek, Mangatawhiri Valley, two plants of G. antipoda were sighted growing on the caudex of Dicksonia squarrosa. The plants were about 50 - 70 cm high, erect, with leaves elliptic oblong 10 - 15 mm. long by 7 - 9 mm. wide, petiole 1 - 1.5mm. The location is at grid reference N 48-688297 on a ridge just above the stream in tawa forest. As far as could be ascertained no plants grew on the ground in the immediate vicinity.

The usual station for G. antipoda in the Hunua is on roadside banks and in 'heath' associations. Even in these habitats it is by no means plentiful or widespread and generally assumes a low growing, straggling habit.

The epiphytic plants are in a relatively undisturbed forest area (that is save from animals) and are some distance from roads or heath association, indeed the location is far removed from the foregoing habitats and has a S.E. aspect in shady conditions beneath primary forest canopy, with usually high moisture, and low light levels.

On examination, only slight differences could be detected between the epiphytic plants and those from the 'usual' stations, however a full comparison can only be made when flowering material is gathered.

Members have perhaps noted G. antipoda growing in this way. It would be of interest to hear of any other locations where this occurs.