COPROSMA IN THE GARDEN

By: Ross Elder

The Note by Dr. P. Wardle 'Effectiveness of Distant Pollen Sources in Coprosma' N.Z.J.B. 9 : 223, prompted a closer look at the flowering habits of Coprosma species growing in our garden. Two Coprosma australis were raised from seed three to four years ago. The male plant now 2.1 m. tall flowered profusely in November 1970 and again this year from April to mid-July. The female plant 1.2 m. tall, with a better branching system than the male, and about 20 m. away, also flowered last November but set no fruit. It had started flowering again in April and still had flowers with protruding styles in the first week of August. However, no fruit had set by mid-June and pollen from the male was dusted over the flowers. From this pollination, apparently, four drupes have developed, one to a peduncle, not three as is usual for this species.

There is no evidence for anemophily but this may be because the plant has not yet settled down to producing receptive ova. A further point is that the possibility of an australis X robusta hybridisation is negated by the fact that two male C. robusta plants nearby, though covered in flower buds, are not in the first week of August producing pollen.

URTICA LINEARIFOLIA

By: Ruth Mason
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Urtica linearifolia is not a plant that has aroused any special interest. It is true that it has stinging hairs and stinging hairs are not common in the New Zealand flora, but it is a nettle and the sting of the nettle is a familiar idea. Besides, among the native nettles there are two that are commoner and much more widespread, one being the fierce and even dangerous tree nettle, Urtica ferox.

Allan's Flora describes U. linearifolia as growing at Waikaremoana and locally southward from 40°S, on the east of the divide only in the South Island, and Dr. Burrows in the last number of the Bulletin, when

referring to its presence near the Selwyn Huts, called it a rare plant. While it is certainly not the commonest of plants, it is not so uncommon in Canterbury as one might think from these statements; certainly it is commoner here than I had imagined and it may well have been even more so before the great lowland swamps were drained.

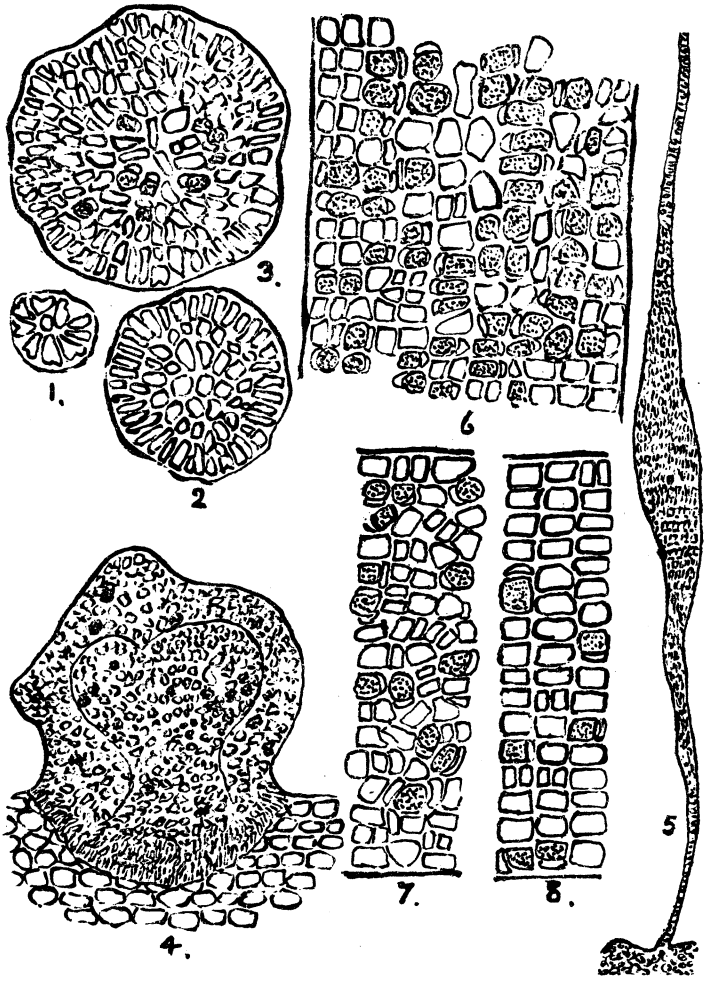
Besides the station near the Selwyn Huts it has been found in the swamps south of the Waipara River at Amberley Beach, by the Woodend Lagoon, seaward of the Kaiapohia Monument, a mile south of Lincoln, by the bridge over the L II at English Road, in the swamp to the south of the road at Coopers Lagoon, at Waimate, alongside the old railway at Waihao Downs, and it is reported to be in the swamp north of Lake Wainono.

In four of the stations I have found it growing abundantly and completely clothing the trunks of niggerheads (Carex secta), thus forming as it were a skirt beneath the drooping top of sedge leaves. When there are but a few straggling stems in swamp vegetation Urtica linearifolia is easily overlooked, but even at its most luxuriant it is not a striking plant. The linear to narrow-lanceolate, toothed, opposite leaves on a multitude of weak, more or less scrambling, close-growing stems make a soft, light green and inconspicuous pattern, but nevertheless a pleasing one.

The flowers, as in all nettles, are green, minute, and unisexual. The males and females flowers occur separately in short spikes, the female spikes usually being the shorter. Sometime both sexes occur together in the one leaf axil, sometimes only the one sex.

And stinging hairs? They make a fine sight on young shoots - long and white and abundant - but they are mostly lacking on the leaves and there are few on older and slower growing stems. There is no doubt about their stinging.

ERYTHROTRICHIA HUNTERAE. GARDNER.



A rough tracing of the illustration in the Journal "A New Red Alga from New Zealand" by Nathaniel Lyon Gardner. Reprinted from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Vol.22, No.6. pp.341-346 June 1936.