ELEOCHARIS GRACILIS

by John Thompson

Four plants of Eleocharis gracilis were found by the writer and his wife in damp ground near Chaneys on 28th April, 1976. The swamp contained many fine tussocks of the rush Juncus pallidus some growing up to 7 feet high. There was much Eleocharis acuta in varying heights from 5 to 15 inches and quantities of Potentilla anserinoides some still showing their gay yellow flowers.

Unfortunately there are many young Silver Poplars in the area where the Eleocharis gracilis was seen which may eventually take over the ground cover. The Eleocharis gracilis area is a very restricted one and the plants are not easy to find.

The plants we saw were diminutive ones with culms up to 3 inches long. It bears it spikes on the tip of the culms but the great majority of culms showed no signs of any spike development. Eleocharis gracilis can be distinguished from Eleocharis acuta by the oblique orifice of the top of the sheath, that of Eleocharis acuta is truncate with a dark thickened edge and with a distinct mucro at the back up to one third of an inch long.

Eleocharis gracilis is not a common plant in Canterbury. The University herbarium has three specimens taken from Cass around 1956 to 1958 and a later one found in 1971 at Lake Coleridge. Botany Division's herbarium has one specimen collected at Broken River in 1940 and a later one collected in 1970 at Lake Tekapo.

I can find no record of it having been collected in the Christchurch area since Armstrong collected it near the mouth of the Waimakariri River, specimen undated, except our own findings on Mt. Herbert in 1972 and 1975.

FLORISTIC NOTES

B.P.J. Molloy

These notes focus attention mainly on species encountered over the past twelve months during a survey of potential or existing reserves, parks, etc. The species are listed according to regions, and Grid References are given to help locate them. These references are taken from the N.Z.M.S. I Map Series (1 inch to 1 mile) and six figures are cited after a sheet number if the locality is known with reasonable precision; if not, a four figure reference is given to indicate the area within which the species can be found. Reserves are located by a central Grid Reference and other features such as roads, streams, etc.

Authorities are quoted for names which are not used in Allan's Flora (Allan, 1961), and specimens in the Botany Division Herbarium are indicated by their appropriate CHR numbers.

MARLBOROUGH

Beilschmiedia tawa: The southern-most stand of tawa was said to be at the head of the Irongate Stream (Seaward Valley Rd) in a remnant patch of mixed podocarp - hardwood forest known as the Blue Duck Scenic Reserve - Grid. Ref.S42/065114 (See Smith, 1935; P. Wardle, 1961; J. Wardle, 1971; Burrows, 1972; and CHR 115869, 117178). I have seen seedlings, saplings

and/or trees of tawa in similar forests along the Puhi Puhi Road, namely, in the Jordan Stream Scenic Reserve (Grid Ref. S42/008120; see also CHR 286102), and in the Puhi Puhi Scenic Reserve (Grid Ref. S49/018073; noted here also by J. Wardle, pers. comm.). The former site is about 5 km inland and almost due west of the Blue Duck Reserve, while the latter is 4 km further south. It would be worthwhile to look for tawa even further south in the forests flanking Mt. Fyffe.

Nestegis cunninghamii (Hook.f.) L. Johnson: Black maire is another hardwood tree species with southern limits along the Kaikoura Coast; isolated trees reaching at least as far south as the Oaro River (J. Wardle, pers. comm.). A full range of size classes occurs in about 40 ha of mixed podocarp and coastal hardwood forests on "Woodbank", Clarence Bridge (Grid Ref. S42/175222; see also CHR 286101). This is an excellent stand of black maire with several trees approaching 1 m in diameter at breast height.

Blechnum capense "The Green Bay Species": This fern is briefly described and illustrated by Crookes (1963, p.286-287). It is very tall and erect to arching, more or less tufted, and the fronds have long naked stalks. The blade is narrowly triangular, and the lowest pair of leaflets is not much shorter than the ones above. Fertile fronds are noticeably shorter than sterile ones, and the scales are very dark brown to black, with narrow, pale brown margins. This fern seems to prefer wooded gullies in coastal forests, and is known as far south as Motunau (CHR 113865). Members will recall a few plants in the limestone gullies of the Napenape Scenic Reserve (Grid Ref. S62/555264; see also CHR 286107). The forests on "Woodbank", Clarence Bridge, contain the best populations of "The Green Bay Species" I have seen (CHR 286103, 286108). This fern is cultivated at Botany Division, Lincoln.

NORTH CANTERBURY

Senecio monroi: Some members will have seen Canterbury representatives of this attractive "Marlborough" plant on past visits to Lowry Peaks (see Reid, 1974), and the Napenape Scenic Reserve (see above). Dobson (1975) has recorded Senecio monroi from the Waipara Gorge, and suggests that this area could be its southern limit of distribution. Earlier herbarium records lend support to his suggestion, e.g. a specimen collected by A.P. Druce in 1967, also from the Waipara Gorge (CHR 179341), and one collected by P. Wardle in 1969 from the limestone ridge above the Omihi State Forest (CHR 195117), all about the same latitude.

Blechnum minus (R.Br.) Ettingshausen: This species, not to be confused with Blechnum minus (R.Br.) Allan (See Allan, 1961; Crookes, 1963), is a short, rather slender, tufted fern with a definite preference for wet ground. In the article on Riccarton Bush elsewhere in this journal I have referred to it as the "swamp kiokio". Although at present included under the Blechnum capense complex in New Zealand (see Colenso's var. gracilis, Allan, 1961, p.81), this fern is widely recognised as a distinct species in Australia (see for example, Beadle et al., 1972). Apart from its short stature and slender, tufted habit, other distinguishing features of this fern are its narrow, distant leaflets, tapering at both ends of the blade, and its very pale brown scales. Sterile leaflets are soft and finely serrated, and in one form the tips are rounded. Fertile leaflets have green, expanded, leafy tips. As with other Blechnums, young fronds are salmon pink in colour, later becoming green. There is a very large population of this fern under the willow-poplar fringe of the Woodend Lagoon (Grid Ref. S76/065808), a Wildlife Management Reserve gazetted in 1976 and quite an outstanding waterfowl habitat. This fern is also cultivated at Botany Division, Lincoln.

Urtica linearifolia: The above reserve also contains numerous plants of the slender nettle, trailing over the crowns of niggerheads (Carex secta), both in the open and under the willow-poplar fringe. This species also tends to be coastal in its distribution, at least in Canterbury, and is probably not as widely known, nor as dangerous, as its arborescent relative.

Baumea rubiginosa: The first record of this sedge for Canterbury can probably be attributed to Wall (1922). Although it is not listed among Wall's "rarer plants", the scarcity of this sedge in Canterbury has been stressed in past numbers of this journal. Mason (1975) lists four definite records, all of them recent, and Dobson (1975) records the species from the Waipara Gorge. Baumea rubiginosa is also present in the Awawai River Reserve (Grid Ref. S84/074590), a narrow strip of swampland bordering the Avon River between the Bower and the Pages Road bridges (Molloy, 1971; see also CHR 212102).

Hebe armstrongii: Records of natural populations of this popular cultivated hebe are scant and largely confined to specimens collected before 1900. Recently, a plant that seems to match Hebe armstrongii was discovered by P. Wardle in a small remnant of bog pine (Dacrydium bidwillii) on the terraces above the Thomas River, Castle Hill Basin (see CHR 228210). Three additional plants have since been found in the same area, all bearing pale lilac flowers. The open-pollinated progeny of one of these plants are cultivated at Botany Division, Lincoln.

BANKS PENINSULA

Dacrydium cupressinum: In October, 1975, a party comprising the writer, W.H. Haglund, J. Rogers and J. Thompson, visited Little River to check reported sightings of rimu. We found two live rimu trees, both along the Puaha Road (Grid Ref. S84/187307, S84/184304; see also CHR 212901, 212902), and several burnt logs which also proved to be rimu. As far as we know, this is the first authenticated record of this species on Banks Peninsula, and removes any doubt that may have prevailed. Both trees carry scars of early fires.

Podocarpus ferrugineus: Kelly (1972) records one tree of miro in the Hay Reserve, Pigeon Bay (Grid Ref. S84/233347; see also CHR 221811). Previously the only definite record of miro on Banks Peninsula was the specimen collected by B.H. Macmillan from the east side of Mt. Herbert (Grid Ref. S84/108368; see also CHR 185380). The writer and J. Thompson have since examined a stand of miro in Port Levy, along the Little River-Port Levy Road (Grid Ref. S84/128361; see also CHR 212903). This is the stand mentioned by Laing (1919) and it removes any doubt about the occurrence of miro on Banks Pensinula. A seedling of miro has also been seen by J. Thompson and party in the Morice Settlement Reserve (Grid Ref. S84/175326).

Korthalsella clavata (Kirk) Cheeseman: During a field visit by this Society in 1971, R. Mason collected a dwarf mistletoe from Melicope simplex at Stony Bay (Grid Ref. S85/36-37). This specimen (CHR 225279) proves to be Korthalsella clavata, and as far as I know is the first record of this species for Banks Peninsula.

Gnaphalium traversii: In 1970 I collected specimens of Gnaphalium from the grassy summit of Mt. Herbert (formerly Herbert Peak). Some of these were identified as G. traversii (Drury, 1972: see also CHR 201551), thus providing the first record of this species for Banks Peninsula.

Parahebe lyallii: Previously this species was known only from Mt. Herbert and Mt. Fitzgerald (P. Garnock-Jones, pers. comm.). However, there is an excellent population of Parahebe lyallii on the steep, wet rock faces above the Summit Road, between Hickory Bay and Le Bons Bay (Grid Ref. S94/339241; see also CHR 286104). As there are many similar habitats in the vicinity, the species could be more widely distributed.

Weeping kanuka (Leptospermum ericoides): Along Whites Road, Little River, (Grid Ref. S84/172312), there is a large kanuka tree with a distinct weeping habit. Surrounding trees are perfectly normal with upright branching. The leaves of the weeping tree are much larger than those of its neighbours (CHR 286105), although its flowers and capsules are about the same. Although some kanuka trees in the Lewis Pass area approach this habit, the Little River specimen is the first of its kind that I have seen.

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