ENDANGERED GORGE FLORAS?

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The recent trend in hydro-electric development has led planners to look at a wide range of potential sites including, for example, the upper Hurunui, lower Poulter and Rakaia gorges. If most of our gorges are inundated, so will be the interesting and often beautiful flora and vegetation, some of it well-nigh restricted to such sites. If members of the Society would like to be involved with a worthwhile conservation task, may I suggest that they begin to accumulate information about the flora and vegetation of Canterbury gorges. The Rakaia gorge is probably most at immediate risk and I aim to start botanizing it as thoroughly as possible within the next year. If anyone else is able to do some investigation here it will help to build up the conservation case. Members may remember John Thompson's work on the flora of Flock Hill. (Canterbury Botanical Society J. No. 5, 1972). This is now being put to work in the enlargement of the Cave Stream Scenic reserve, an example of the very useful nature of local studies of this kind.

THE DISAPPEARING ORCHID

By Yvonne Elder

On November 26th 1977 we had a pleasant and interesting walk from the cars in the Kaituna Valley, up through the reserve, where we had lunch, then on up to the Packhorse Hut. On our homeward trip, down the west side of the valley, right on a grassy ridge, I found three little brown stems 7-12 cm tall with buds on them. A little stranger to most of us. Some one suggested Gastrodia. The only sure way to tell was to dig one plant up and there were the unmistakable tubers. The specimen is preserved at Botany Division, DSIR.

About four or five weeks later Dr. Moore and Bruce Irwin went back to the spot, which had been clearly marked, in the hope of finding flowers but the cupboard was bare, not a plant to be found. Marauding stock must have had a tasty meal. Not even the Pterostylis mutica, of which we had seen plenty, were to be found.

Some people have fairies in their gardens, we have little tree frogs, Hyla ewingii. We also have, to our delight, seedling beech trees, Nothofagus fusca, which we hope are the offspring of the large tree planted some twenty years ago.

A CLOUD OF PINK

In December 1975 while Ross and I were travelling to Westport via the Lewis Pass, I noticed, on the left a flash of pink. This was about a mile before the Hope River bridge. On getting out of the car and climbing a small bank, I saw a large swamp about 0.5 ha, my guess, in size covered with Lychnis flos-cuculi, (Ragged Robin), a mass of waving pink. A change from our own native yellows and whites. How did it get there? Perhaps, in the early days somebody settled near by, bringing with them from England a little of their garden. A specimen is in Botany Division Herbarium. Two years later we had another look and although plenty of plants were still growing there was not so much colour. We have this plant flowering and seeding around our bird-bath.

FURTHER NOTES ON FLOWERING TIMES OF CULTIVATED NATIVE PLANTS

B.P.J. Molloy

Last year in this journal I described the onset and duration of flowering during the 1976-77 season of 78 native species, varieties and wild hybrids established in a rock garden in Riccarton (Molloy, 1977). The flowering times of a further 20 native species growing in this garden are recorded below using the same procedure as before (Table 1). The list includes some species which were too young to flower in 1976-77, and a few like Senecio monroi and Poa acicularifolia which seem to flower periodically, both in the wild and in cultivation. Needless to say there is a residue of species in this garden which is still too young to flower, or whose requirements for flowering are not being fulfilled.

In last year's article I also listed about 12 species that throw seedlings regularly among the many niches in the rock garden. To this list we can now add Wahlenbergia colensoi, Hebe allanii, H. amplexicaulis, H. decumbens, H. raoulii, H. pimeleoides, Pachystegia insignis and var. minor, Leucogenes grandiceps, Cassinia fulvida, Hydrocotyle novae-zelandiae, H. moschata, Celmisia coriacea, C. x pseudo-lyallii, Raoulia tenuicaulis and Ranunculus lappaceus.

With very few exceptions the flowering times recorded for 1976-77 were repeated in the 1977-78 season. In a few cases the duration of flowering was extended by a fortnight in the last season.

Reference

Molloy, B.P.J. 1977: Flowering times of some cultivated native plants, Canterbury Botanical Society Journal 10: 29-34.