

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, *Pittosporum turneri* is a forest margin species with life history attributes that can ensure local survival after disturbance. The species appears short-lived and progresses in form through three quite distinct developmental, architectural stages. The wild population is probably devoid of adult plants currently, an absence apparently linked to widespread adult mortality some 20 years past. However, the possibility remains that lurking out there on bogs and forest margins of central North Island, are adult trees which have avoided detection despite the diligent efforts of many observers in the last 20 years.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Footnote:

Members of the Rotorua Botanical Society saw 40 flowering plants of *P. turneri* at Whenuakura on 12 November 1988. Flowers appeared to be functionally dioecious and were associated with adult foliage only; lower parts of all plants bore juvenile foliage.

## Book Reviews

**Wetlands: Discovering New Zealand's shy places.** Gordon Stephenson. Government Printing Office Publishing, 1986. 117 pp, 8 pp colour plates, 13 black and white photographs, 50 line drawings, 3 location maps. \$16.95 incl. GST.

Gordon Stephenson describes his reason for writing this book in his Preface: "I've had a long-standing affection for steep mountains and wild coastlines and the deep bush, but of wetlands, I knew and cared little . . . I am not a botanist, zoologist, or geologist, but rather an amateur in the sense that I became enthused and wished to share the pleasure and excitement with others." Gordon Stephenson anticipates that there are others like him who have yet to discover the delights of wetlands, thinking them only uninviting and unattractive. He hopes his book will help some of these people discover New Zealand's shy places, its wetlands, all the sooner.

The book describes 16 wetlands from different parts of New Zealand. They represent the diversity of wetlands from kettleholes and stringbogs to salt-marshes, peat lakes and braided rivers. His main criteria for choice were ease of access and range of wetland types. The style of the book is a hybrid between bedtime reading and field guide.

A chapter is devoted to each wetland and Stephenson describes them "as they were found". He often describes the process of getting to the wetland, and an anecdote or two about his time spent there. Most of each chapter is about what one can see at the particular wetland and what it feels like to be there. In addition, he gives some botanical and wildlife details and often explains how and when the wetland was formed.

Each chapter usually includes a black and white landscape photograph of the wetland, and some rather nice line drawings. The photograph of Taupo Swamp is particularly splendid. One or two of the others are a little (atmospherically?) murky. Each chapter ends with a brief section listing similar New Zealand wetlands and then information on access to the wetland, places to go for further information and suggested reading. This additional information is well-researched, precise and very useful.

Clear maps at the beginning of the book show the location of the wetlands on a New Zealand scale. A short section on selected further reading is given at the back. There is also an index to illustrations.

The order in which the wetlands are described is a little mysterious. The author describes it as "purely as I felt the readers would enjoy them". The random order makes it more difficult to find the relevant chapter or pursue common themes between the wetlands. It may serve however to underline the author's primary aim of presenting a package of information to stimulate readers to seek out the delights of wetlands for themselves.

Those with botanical leanings will note the line drawings and the botanical descriptions. The drawings by Tim Galloway are excellent. They have been drawn with so much precision and 'life' that they should make plant identification easy. Unfortunately there are only on average 3 drawings per chapter. However, an index to all the drawings is given at the back of the book and, in all, 48 plant species are drawn. In the diversity of wetlands covered this is not many species but it is a jolly good start.

For someone with a little botanical knowledge the level of detail in the descriptions can be a bit frustrating at times. Rather than providing a 'thumb nail sketch' of the community, Stephenson often provides a sprinkling of plant names with only limited indication of their importance in the wetland or where they are found. This situation is slightly improved by the photographs.

Another irritation, for a pedant, is the lack of consistency in referring to species — sometimes a common name only is used, sometimes the scientific name, and sometimes both. When included, the translation of the common name to scientific name does not always occur at the first mention. A little more editing would have solved this problem, and could have eliminated the occasional repetition. Editing could also have brought together in one chapter all the interesting tidbits relating to one species. Sometimes these are scattered across several chapters, eg information on pingao.

Perhaps it is not so critical in a book which aims principally to enthuse people about wetlands but there are occasional botanical mistakes. For example, tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*) is said to be present in Saltwater State Forest, South Westland, when mountain toatoa (*P. alpinus*) is intended. The

former does not occur that far south. Such errors could have been avoided if all the draft manuscripts had been checked by the "helpful enthusiasts" acknowledged at the beginning of the book who accompanied the author to the sites and/or provided information.

At the end of the preface, the author comments that he hopes readers, on seeing a wetland during a journey, may say "that could contain one of those rare rushes. Pass me the binoculars please — and that book on wetlands". His chatty style and undoubted fondness for his new-found friends, wetlands, will surely convert many people who will indeed seek further information.

As a book exuding enthusiasm for wetlands Gordon Stephenson's *Wetlands: Discovering New Zealand's shy places* has filled a niche in New Zealand nature literature. Perhaps it might persuade your disbelieving friend or colleague that this sloshing around in gumboots, nose-down, bottom-up has something to recommend it after all!

**Susan M Timmins**

*Vegetation of Egmont National Park, New Zealand — Druce D Clarkson, Illus. J Bruce Irwin. National Parks Scientific Series Number 5 — Science Information Publishing Centre, Wellington. 95 pp \$29.50.*

Taranaki or Mount Egmont has always had a special character of its own. Its shape, isolation and the gaps in its flora are part of this. Obviously the Maori people felt this difference as witness the legend of its journey from the centre of the island; and the inhabitants of Taranaki generally are proudly attached to it. Indeed it has always seemed to me to hold a special interest to most New Zealanders and to botanists as a whole.

Here, at any rate, following the excellent example of the earlier works in this National Park Series, is a reasonably compact but detailed description of the Park of which Taranaki forms the bulk. Geology, landforms, soils, climate, browsing mammals and human activity are covered succinctly, but sufficiently to satisfy most of us. Then we get into rather more intimate detail on previous botanical work and vegetation patterns before we reach the heart of the work — the vegetation and substrate classes and then the flora. The book terminates with the necessary apparatus of sources cited, appendices and the standard 1:40,000 National Park Map. Scattered throughout are good illustrative photographs and many varied diagrams and charts. A major feature is the noble plant drawings of Mr Irwin, some of which are going to be prized by botanists well into the future as the best available illustrations of their subject matter.

As to the vegetation, one has to go to the book itself, since only minor points can be mentioned in a review. The Park contains over 650 vascular plant taxa of which 85% are indigenous. Of these five or six plants are considered to be endemic to the mountain or the Pouakai Range. A particularly striking feature, however, is that something like 460 Central North Island species are unknown from the Mountain. Most of these are tussock and herbfield species but all the beeches, *Halocarpus* species, silver pine, quintinia, several coprosmas, *Melicope simplex* and *Melicytus micranthus* are also absent.

Anyone interested in any way in the Egmont National Park ought to have or have access to this book. It is indispensable to the interested botanist. Any criticism would be hard to formulate beyond saying that to me a comprehensive plant list in one place might have been an advantage.

**Ted Williams**