THE VASCULAR PLANTS OF "THE BUSH" IN AHURIRI VALLEY

L.N. Conner

An extensive patch of bush can be found on the southwest side of Banks Peninsula (centered around S84 969377) which covers the greater proportion of Ahuriri Valley. This is the second largest area of continuous native bush on Banks Peninsula, being approximately 80 hectares (Ogilvie, 1978). Only the area of native bush in the Mt. Herbert Reserve (135 ha.) is larger (Kelly, 1972). This bush is on the Ahuriri property owned by Mr. D.P. Graham and should not be confused with the area known as Ahuriri Reserve, for which a check-list already exists (Kelly, 1972).

During the 1850's and 1860's Ahuriri Valley was extensively milled (Ogilivie, 1978). Many charred stumps and logs can still be found throughout the remaining bush, especially in its lower regions.

The bush forms a continous cover over several gullies along the southern aspect of Ahuriri Valley. Cooler and moister conditions of this aspect have undoubtedly aided regeneration.

The canopy is mainly dominated by second growth broad-leaved species of various ages. Major canopy species in the lower gullies include Dodonaea viscosa, Leptospermum ericoides and Myoporum laetum, with patches of Griselinia littoralis, Alectryon excelsus, Melicytus ramiflorus and Fuschia excorticata dominating in places. In the upper regions of the valley the common canopy species are Myoporum laetum, Hoheria angustifolia, Sophora microphylla, Pseudopanax arboreus, Pittosporum eugenioides and towards the margins, Leptospermum ericoides. In several places emergent Podocarpus hallii and Podocarpus spicatus tower above the other canopy species. These trees are undoubtedly remnants of the bush prior to milling. Regeneration of P. hallii is poor, but P. spicatus regeneration is good and is probably sufficient to maintain the population of mature trees. A single mature Podocarpus dacrydioides is present towards the head of the valley.

The bush in places gives way to Leptospermum scrub and/or shrubs such as Coprosma species, Melicope simplex and Helichrysum aggregatum, especially at the bush edge.

The undergrowth is sparse in most places, particularly at the bush margins under Leptospermum scrub where stock tend to wander. However, it increases in density towards the head of the valley and up the smaller side gullies. Its development is probably influenced by seasonal droughts and grazing. The bush margins may also be modified by aerial spraying of adjacent farmland.

Some interesting finds include several impressive individuals of Myoporum laetum and Dodonaea viscosa (up to 10m tall and 0.5m diameter just under the lower branches). A few trees of Podocarpus ferrugineus can be found together with some Podocarpus spicatus trees about half way up the bush. On Banks Peninsula P. ferrugineus is only known from a few other sites (Molloy, 1976). The presence of Pseudopanax ferox is pleasing, especially since this species is included on the register of rare and endangered species

(Given, 1976). Juveniles of this species are one of the more abundant understorey plants in the lower gullies. Other species present which are also on the rare and endangered list include Microlaena polynoda and Tetrapathaea tetrandra.

A species list for the bush in Ahuriri Valley is given below. However, a number of naturalised plants which are common on the surrounding farmland and occur under the Leptospermum scrub, have not been included. The naturalised species listed are those which extend well into the bush.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. D.P. Graham for allowing repeated visits to this bush, and friends who provided company and assistance on several visits to the area. Thanks also to Dr. Andrew Dobson and Professor John Lovis for confirmation and identification of some species.

CHECK LIST OF PLANTS (* NATURALISED PLANTS)

FERNS

Asplenium bulbiferum
Asplenium flabellifolium
Asplenium flaccidum ssp. flaccidum
Asplenium hookerianum
Asplenium terrestre
Blechnum discolor
Blechnum fluviatile
Blechnum minus
Blechnum penna-marina
Cheilanthes distans
Cheilanthes sieberi
Histiopteris incisa
Lastreopsis glabella
Lastreopsis velutina
Pellaea rotundifolia
Phymatosorus diversifolius
Polystichum richardii
Polystichum vestitum
Pteridium esculentum
Pyrrosia serpens

TREES AND SHRUBS

Alectryon excelsus
Carmichaelia sp.
Carpodetus serratus
Coprosma areolata
Coprosma linariifolia
Coprosma propinqua
Coprosma propinqua var. latiuscula
Coprosma rhamnoides
Coprosma robusta
Coprosma rotundifolia
Coprosma virescens
Cordyline australis
Coriaria aborea
Corokia cotoneaster
* Cytisus scoparius
Discaria toumatou
Dodonaea viscosa
Fuchsia excorticata
Griselinia littoralis
Hebe salicifolia
Helichrysum aggregatum
Hoheria angustifolia
Hoheria sextylosa

TREES AND SHRUBS (Continued)

Leptospermum ericoides
Lophomyrtus obcordata
Macropiper excelsum
Melicope simplex
Melicytus micranthus
Melicytus ramiflorus
* Mentha sp.
Myoporum laetum
Myrsine australis
Myrsine divaricata
Olearia fragrantissima
Paratrophis microphylla
Pennantia corymbosa
Pittosporum eugenioides
Pittosporum divaricatum
Pittosporum tenuifolium
Plagianthus betulinus
Podocarpus dacrydioides
Podocarpus hallii
Podocarpus ferrugineus
Podocarpus spicatus
Pseudopanax arboreus
Pseudopanax crassifolius
Pseudopanax ferox
* Rubus rubiginosa
* Sambuscus nigra
Schefflera digitata
Solanum laciniatum
Sophora microphylla
* Ulex europus
Urtica ferox

CLIMBERS AND PARASITES

Clematis australis
Clematis paniculata
Loranthus micranthus
Metrosideros diffusa
Muehlenbeckia australis
Muehlenbeckia complexa
Parsonsia capsularis
Parsonsia capsularis var. rosea
Parsonsia heterophylla
Ripogonum scandens
Rubus schmidelioides
Rubus schmidelioides var. subpauperatus
Rubus squarrosus
Tetrapathaea tetrandra

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

Acaena anserinifolia
Acaena novae-zealandiae
Cardamine debilis
Cotula australis
Cotula squalida ssp. mediana
Dichondra repens
* Galium aparine
Geranium molle
Geranium potentilloides
Gnaphalium sp.
Helichrysum bellidioides
Hydrocotyle moschata
Hydrocotyle novae-zelandiae
Mycelis muralis
Ranunculus hirtus
Rhagodia triandra
Schizeilema trifoliolatum
Tillaea sieberiana
Urtica incisa
Wahlenbergia gracilis

GRASSES AND LIKE PLANTS

* Agrostis tenuis
* Anthoxanthum odoratum
Arthropodium candidum
Astelia fragrans
Juncus distegus
Juncus gregiflorus
Microlaena polynoda
Phormium tenax
Poa laevis
Pterostylis banksii
Pterostylis sp.
Uncinia uncinata
Uncinia scabra

REFERENCES

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Kelly, G.C. 1972: Scenic Reserves of Canterbury. D.S.I.R. Biological Survey of Reserves Report 2, 390pp.

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PROPAGATION OF NATIVE CLEMATIS

Joe Cartman

The native Clematis have a considerable popularity with our members, several of whom have plants growing in their gardens.

The easiest method of propagation is seed. This method is described in Journal No. 13.

The major disadvantages are the length of time between sowing and flowering, usually several years and the sex and quality of the plants is also unknown until flowering.

With vegetative propagation a plant with the desired features can be found and then propagated.

Points to look for are:-

(a) Sex of plant.

(b) Colour of flower.
A close inspection can reveal subtle differences in colour in some of our Clematis - C. foetida can be quite yellow in some plants. C. paniculata can have very pronounced purple stamens.