Lake Edge 2 miles NW of Taumutu S83 760 196

Lepidospserma australe:

Small point south of Timber Yard Point S93 766 234
NW lakeshore- approx. midway between
Timber Yard Point and Selwyn Spit S93 777 293

## DROUGHT

JOHN THOMPSON

Plants respond to drought conditions in various ways. This is an account of the behaviour of two species of ferns growing under a large pear tree in my garden.

One is a sizeable patch of Hypolepis tenuifolium which normally sends up its most attractive new shoots in spring, grows up to around 42 cm and stays green until winter frosts cut them down.

Last spring new growth appeared at the usual time and grew well reaching a height exceeding normal by 15 cm; the bed was a delight to look at. However on arriving home after a holiday taken in the dry, hot February it was seen that all the fronds had browned off, probably due to the dry conditions. I cut away the fronds and watered the patch to try to keep the ferns alive until the autumn rains.

New growth appeared towards the end of March. This developed into a thick sward of excellent new growth up to 36 cm high. I wonder what effect the growing of two sets of fronds on one season will have on next springs growth.

The other fern is Blechnum discolor, a plant that I have had for some years. This plant also sent out a set of new fronds late in March. They developed to their usual height of some 60 cm. The edges of the fronds look a bit tatty now. Apparently the new fronds had not hardened sufficiently to withstand the early frosts.