HELICHRYSUM DIMORPHUM: AN OLD LOCALITY RECORD FROM SOUTHLAND

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Helichrysum dimorphum Cockayne is an endangered lianoid daisy known at present from only a few populations in the Waimakariri basin near Cass (Wilson and Given, 1989).

The herbarium at the Museum of New Zealand has a specimen of *Helichrysum dimorphum* from the Waikaia Valley in Southland that appears to have been overlooked in recent times. It is accompanied by a letter to Leonard Cockayne from C.M. Smith that reads:

"State Forest Service
Invercargill
11.1.26

Dear Dr Cockayne,

Some few months ago I sent scraps of a lianoid shrub to Dr Holloway for identification: and he informed me that you had suggested it might be *Helichrysum dimorphum*. I now enclose better specimens of the spring growth: and I think you will agree that your previous diagnosis was correct. A solitary plant of it is growing on the edge of the beech forest in Wakaia Valley about 3 miles above Glenary homestead (within half a mile of Hutton's house, where you and Field had tea).

I am leaving Invercargill for Nelson this week: but Field now knows where the plant is and is keeping it under observation and trying to grow it so if you want more specimens (e.g. flowers or seed), you will be able to get them readily. We expect it to flower within a fortnight and I have arranged locally for flowers to be sent to me to Nelson.

With all best wishes for a pleasant year
I am
Yours sincerely
C.M.Smith"

The specimen (WELT 58661) is certainly *Helichrysum dimorphum* and shows both the whipcord and larger leaves with their distinctive netted venation. There is no herbarium label but the letter gives the locality details.

Three miles north east of Glenary homestead is Piano Flat. This summer I looked briefly for *H. dimorphum* on the margins of the mountain and silver beech forest at Piano Flat (at NZMS 260 F43 992088) without success. There is an extensive scrub margin with a mixture of species which would be a likely place for *H. dimorphum* to occur and thick enough to give some protection from animal browsing. Other

species present are: *Corokia cotoneaster, Myrsine divaricata, Coprosma propinqua, Coprosma rigida, Aristotelia fruticosa, Melicytus* sp. aff. *alpinus* (1.5 m tall) and *Rubus cissoides*. It is unlikely that a population known from a single plant will have survived, but in view of the species' endangered status a thorough search of the forest margins of the valley over a more extensive area would be worthwhile.

REFERENCE

Wilson, C.M., Given, D.R. 1989. *Threatened Plants of New Zealand.* DSIR Publishing, Wellington

GERMINATING MATAI SEEDS : AN INADVERTENT EXPERIMENT

COLIN BURROWS

Studying the germination habits of seeds is a bit like gold prospecting. A lot of hard, grinding work can be got through while achieving low returns. However, sometimes one strikes it lucky and a nugget turns up. Here I want to describe a chance discovery made about the germination of seeds of matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*).

In mid-April 1988 I collected freshly-fallen matai seeds, still with the fleshy outer tissues present, from the ground under a big matai tree at Ahuriri Valley, Western Banks Peninsula. That was a very good year for matai seeding in lowland sites throughout Banks Peninsula. I had hoped to get the seeds ready for a controlled experiment in petri dishes in a glasshouse at the University of Canterbury. However my time was taken up with teaching and field trips so I washed the seeds (605 in all) in tap water and put them in a plastic bag under a bench in a shade-house. No direct sunlight reached them and otherwise the light intensity was low. Though open to the air they remained moist and cool. They lay there, forgotten, I must confess, until in spring I remembered them again. In mid-September, with the thought of starting a proper trial, I removed the bag and tipped out the contents, a rather soggy mess of seeds plus the rotted remains of the fleshy tissues. To my surprise 30 of the seeds were already well germinated and the hard inner coats of others had begun to split.

I planted the germinated seeds out in small soil trays and, on the grounds of not interfering too much with a good thing, returned the remaining seeds to the bag and put it back under the shade-house table. I monitored them at intervals from then on, ensuring that they stayed moist. By mid-December 1988 a total of 188 seeds (31%) had germinated.