Eragrostis amabilis (L.) Wight & Arn. ex Nees (= *E. tenella*), subfamily: Chloridoideae – is an annual or perennial grass native to southern tropical Asia, and widely introduced throughout the warmer parts of the world (Smith 1979). It occurs in open waste places, between stones, near beaches, and is locally abundant, 0-550(-1400)m altitude (Veldkamp 2002). Close to New Zealand it occurs in Queensland and on most tropical island groups of the SW Pacific, including New Caledonia. Rather surprisingly it is not recorded for Norfolk Island (Green 1994) or New Zealand's Kermadec Islands.

The Ellerslie record was from a single ground-hugging clump in a crevice between a brick planter box and paving blocks. The seeding culms were 14-43cm long. At the Domain it was occasional as small plants, culms only 10-15cm long (Fig. 1), rooted in the cracks between the Cenotaph flagstones which cover an area c.110m x 30m. The plants survive hundreds of people daily walking over them by being low-lying and rooted down in the cracks. They were associated with other pavement species: spotted spurge (*Euphorbia maculata*) native to North America (AK 289521) which were reddish and prostrate, and the dense, low tufts of the hardy moss, *Bryum argenteum*. The area has recently been water-blasted, but a few tatty plants have managed to survive.

Because Japanese love grass was locally well established in the Domain, it is likely to have been growing there for some years. This is a little concerning because of its proximity to my front door of work I have to assume that I've been walking on it for at least several years before noticing it. The impact of this grass in New Zealand is likely to be low. Because of its rather tropical preferences at the most it is likely to become a minor weed of disturbed northern areas of the North Island. Next summer keep an eye open for a rather stiff little grass appearing from the cracks in the Auckland pavements.

Fig. 1. Japanese love grass (*Eragrostis amabilis*) from by the Cenotaph in the Auckland Domain (part of AK 289517).

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Fruiting of a lone kaikomako (*Pennantia corymbosa*)

Rhys Gardner

A planted kaikomako at the ARC Arataki Visitor Centre on the Scenic Drive is currently (April '05) bearing a great amount of ripe fruit — on most inflorescences as much fruit has been set as has failed. This tree can stand as a reminder that a job is seldom finished (properly), because it was just a few years ago that Peter de Lange and I checked out the genus, one of its attractions of course being the world's rarest tree *Pennantia baylisiana*, supposedly a female capable only of illicit liason with *P. corymbosa* or Norfolk Island's *P. endlicheri* (Gardner & de Lange 2002; Gardner, de Lange & Davidson 2004).

In agreement with Moore & Irwin (1978) we described the male and female flowers of *P. corymbosa* as being much alike, except that the stamens of the latter are somewhat smaller and contain only a little pollen, whose walls are (mostly) abnormally thickened. As far as we were aware (we did not carry out any experiments) fruit set in females would very largely result from pollination by males.

The Arataki tree is exceptional though: its anthers, quite as large as in any male, were shedding copious pollen when examined in November '04, and these grains were of normal shape and wall thickness and stained well with acetocarmine. There are no other kaikomako trees in the plantings, nor are likely to be any in the bush around. All of the several fruit I have cut open have a seed of viable appearance, and I would expect they will germinate in my potting arrangement in due course (providing two and half year old Theo de Lange can be excluded).

Its parent may have been selected in the wild by the originating nursery person because of the copious fruit set, which does make for horticultural attractiveness, or it may just have been seen as being a specially healthy tree. If it originated through a cutting then other similar trees are likely to be growing here and there in Auckland gardens of "Arataki Age", i.e. c**.** 25 years BP.

The ability of a hermaphrodite *Pennantia* flower to set fruit suggests an answer as to how this "dioecious" tree managed to disperse between Australia, Norfolk I., Three Kings Is. and the New Zealand mainland. And two dispersal events of hermaphrodite *P. corymbosa* from New Zealand could explain the conclusion by my molecular biologists (Keeling, Gardner & de Lange 2004) that *P. baylisiana* and *P. endlicheri* seem not to be sister species, despite their morphological similarity.

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Voucher Specimens

Pennantia corymbosa, Arataki Visitor Centre, Waitakere Ranges, on south side of Scenic Drive by carpark and new overbridge, c. 5 m tall and still with juvenile foliage below, flowering, all flowers apparently hermaphrodite, 5 November 2004, ROG 10599, AK.

Tree as above, fruiting copiously, much of it ripe (very dark crimson skin, pale flesh, slightly sweet, insipid but not bitter), 10 March 2005, ROG 10637, AK.

Discovery of sea lavender (*Limonium companyonis*) at Ahuriri Estuary, Napier

Mike Wilcox

Sea lavender (*Limonium companyonis* (Gren. & Billot) Kuntze) of the family Plumbaginaceae is native to southern Europe. It is also known as Riviera sea lavender. It was first recorded at one site on the Heathcote Estuary, Christchurch in 1998 (Heenan *et al.* 1999). It was known from two saltmarsh sites in the estuary in 2003. The Christchurch City Council decided it was a possible ecological threat as it spreads out quickly and could compete with native saltmarsh vegetation (Christchurch City Council 2004).

Fig. 1. *Limonium companyonis* at Ahuriri Estuary. Associated plants are wild beet (*Beta vulgaris*) and glasswort (*Sarcocornia qinqueflora*).

On 14 January 2005 I came across an extensive colony of *Limonium companyonis* in the Ahuriri Estuary, Napier. It is a semi-woody herb with pink flowers. A collection was made (CHR 570837) – the first record of this species in the North Island.

Fig. 2. Specimen CHR570937 of *Limonium companyonis*.