



NEW ZEALAND PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

E-NEWSLETTER: NO 8. JULY 2004

Please send news items or events to events@nzpcn.org.nz

Postal address: P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington, New Zealand

Deadline for next issue: Wednesday 11 August 2004

Message from the President

The national conference is fast approaching with numbers filling fast for all the workshops and the field trip. Please tell your colleagues and friends to come along and learn about the threatened plants of Auckland, indigenous fungi and how to translocate threatened plants, as well as seeing the wonderful and award winning threatened plant garden at the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens.

The Network website continues to grow with visitor numbers regularly reaching 3000 each month. Funding has now been received for the next three years to continue to develop and improve the site. Work is currently focused on a 'News and Events' section that will go live in the next few weeks. We are also filling in information about the Nationally Critical species.

Members have started to record their observations of threatened plants via the on-line recording form. This information is particularly useful in determining more accurately the status of our threatened plants and for designing recovery programmes so please keep your eyes open and record what you find.

Data Deficient plant species

Where information is so lacking about a species that a conservation assessment is not possible, the species is assigned to the Data Deficient category. Information about all Data deficient plant species has now been loaded onto the Network's website. Some examples of Data Deficient species include: *Carex carsei*, *C. raoulii*, *Chenopodium pusillum*, *Epilobium pictum* and *Vittadinia australis*, Network members are encouraged to report sightings of Data deficient species using the species reporting form on the website:

http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/record_observations.asp

Plant of the month



Crassula bunua is 'Plant of the Month' for July. This is a tiny, cryptic, wetland plant found on muddy banks of water bodies and on seasonally inundated turf on lake, stream and lagoon margins. It now listed as Nationally Critical making it one of the most threatened plants in New Zealand. It flowers from December to March but is only known from the Hunua Falls in Auckland and from several sites on the Chatham Islands. It can also be found in bowling greens in Auckland and Christchurch. The Network's factsheet for this species can be found at

http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/detail.asp?PlantID=16

New *Baumea complanata* population found on the Kaipara Harbour

Baumea complanata is a distinctive species, well marked from other New Zealand *Baumea* species by its flat, green leaves. The species was described from specimens collected from near Ohaeawai (near Kaikohe, Northland) by Swedish Botanist S. Berggren in October 1874. Although it is known from Holocene-aged macrofossils found in the now drained peat bogs bordering Papamoia and Te Puke, Bay of Plenty, and from one 1950 collection from Lake Waaihi, near Huntly, all recent (post 1970 records) have come from the Northland Peninsula. There, the species was for a long time known only from Ngawha Springs, where it is still locally abundant around active fumaroles, mud pools and geothermal lakes in short gum land scrub. As the populations at Ngawha were (and possibly still are) threatened by proposed plans to develop that geothermal field, the species had been listed as Endangered. However, in 1987 plants were found near Rawene, Hokianga, and then during the 1990s several

populations were found at Te Pahi (in the far North), Waipoua Forest and near Trounson Park, Dargaville. Because of these new populations, all on secure sites, and two of which are extensive, the species conservation status has been downgraded from acutely threatened to its present "At Risk/Range Restricted" status.

However, over the last year the call for seeds by Dr Colin Webb for the upcoming Monocotyledon seed atlas has prompted a re-evaluation of the known populations. This field inspection suggests that *Baumea complanata* is probably still threatened (possibly qualifying for Chronically Threatened/Gradual Decline) as its habitats are now succumbing to natural succession to taller shrub lands, a change which may be responsible for the observed drop in flowering fruiting specimens of the light-demanding *Baumea*. With these observations in mind, it came as a pleasant surprise, when a new population of *Baumea complanata*, growing within a tidally influenced arm of the Kaipara Harbour was discovered by consultants undertaking a routine inspection of land up for subdivision. The consultants recognised the importance of the plant by visiting the website of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. Seeing the plant listed they then used the key contacts to find someone local who could confirm the identity of the plant. As a result of the discovery, negotiations are now underway with the landowner to see the site legally protected. Furthermore, as this type of habitat is extensive throughout the Kaipara the possibility that other populations might be found in similar sites has got local botanists keen to start searching.

The new discovery also heightens the possibility that *Baumea complanata* may be a wide ranging species with no set vegetation preferences. So far the species has been gathered from compacted sand, geothermal ground, acidic peat, and open gum land scrub developed over clay podzols, and now from a partially brackish, semi-consolidated organic soil. Although there are no set species assemblages unifying these habitats, chemically all the populations known are unified by their lack of freely available nutrients, being either very acidic or extremely alkaline.

New threatened plant field guide for the Waikato

The Department of Conservation has recently published a field guide to the threatened plants of the Waikato. Written by Andrea Brandon, Peter de Lange and Andrew Townsend the guide has information about the 48 threatened plants of the region and their regional distributions. Copies of the guide are available for \$12-50 from Andrea Brandon (abrandon@doc.govt.nz).



Wellington Botanical Society Jubilee Award

Wellington Botanical Society invites applications for an Award of up to \$2000 to encourage and assist applicants to further knowledge of the New Zealand indigenous flora, and to commemorate the 50th Jubilee of the Society. The Award is open to anyone working in New Zealand and will be granted for: field work; artistic endeavour; publication; research; propagation or cultivation of NZ native plants for educational purposes and/or other studies which promote the better understanding of the NZ indigenous flora and vegetation. The interpretation of these conditions will be flexible, except that the main criterion will be the furtherance of knowledge or promotion of the intrinsic value of the indigenous NZ flora and vegetation. The Award may be used to defray costs such as travel, accommodation, materials or publication.

Applications should be made in typescript to: Secretary, Wellington Botanical Society, P.O. Box 10-412, Wellington, by 31 October 2004.

There is no prescribed application form, but the following must be provided:

- the applicant's name, postal address, telephone number, any relevant position held;
- a summary statement of the applicant's accomplishments in the field of botany (no more than one page);
- an outline and timetable for the proposed project for which the Award is sought;
- a proposed budget for the project.

The award will be made to one or more applicants selected by a subcommittee nominated by the general committee of Wellington Botanical Society. Award(s) will be made, and applicants informed of the results in writing, by 24 December 2004. Successful applicants will be required to provide, at an agreed time, a short report on what they have achieved and an account of their expenditure of Award funds. The names of Award recipients, the value of the Award(s), and a synopsis of the project(s) will be published in the Annual Report of Wellington Botanical Society.

New Zealand's favourite plants



Pohutukawa: New Zealand's favourite native plant.

Results of the annual survey to find New Zealand's most-loved plants has shown that pohutukawa (*Metrosideris excelsa*) is still number one. The survey was conducted by Professor Ian Spellerberg through the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society. Kowhai and cabbage tree came in second and third. Then came rimu, nikau, kauri and haraekeke or flax. And finally, clematis, tree fern and manuka make up the top 10. Also popular but not making the top 10 was the nationally threatened kaka beak (*Clianthus puniceus*). There are plans for a 2004 vote and details will be announced in November.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the Network you can contact Council members directly (contacts are listed in the 'Key People' section of the website - www.nzpcn.org.nz). Our postal address is P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington or email the Network at info@nzpcn.org.nz

Upcoming events

If you have important events or news that you would like publicised via this newsletter please email the Network (events@nzpcn.org.nz).

Wellington Botanical Society Evening meeting - Environmental Weeds in the Wellington Region Monday 19 July. Mike Urlich, Biosecurity Officer (Pest Plants), Greater Wellington, talks on current and potential environmental weeds of the Wellington region. Bring sample weeds and your questions. Discuss the different approaches to weed management: species-led versus site-led. Find out about "good" garden plants that have gone "bad" and how you can help.

Botanical Society of Otago – Evening talk: Pachymenia – a question of species- Wednesday 21 July, 2004. A talk by Lisa Russell starting at 5:20 p.m. on "The taxonomy of the New Zealand members of red algal genus *Pachymenia* J. Agardh (Halymeniaceae, Rhodophyta). Three New Zealand endemic species of are currently recognized: one prostrate species *P. crassa* and two foliose species *P. laciniata* and *P. lusoria*. At the NEW Zoology Benham Building, 346 Great King Street, behind the Zoology car park by the Captain Cook Hotel. Use the main entrance of the Benham Building to get in and go to the Benham Seminar Room, Rm. 215, 2nd floor. Please be prompt as we have to hold the door open. Contact [Ian Radford](mailto:Ian.Radford@otago.ac.nz), phone: (03) 479 9065.

Botanical Society of Otago – Field trip to Tavora Reserve (Bobby's Head), with Pat Mark. Sunday 25 July, 2004. Start time: 9:00 a.m. Finish time: 5:00 p.m. Trip to Tavora Reserve (Bobby's Head), with Pat Mark. Tavora Reserve is the site of a restoration project undertaken by the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust, to return former grazing land, pine forest and patches of remnant vegetation back to native bush. This is both to provide nesting habitat for the Yellow Eyed Penguin, and to restore vegetation for its own sake. The Reserve provides a diverse array of botanical habitats, and can be divided into hillside, dune and wetland/riparian vegetation types. Leave Botany car park at 9 a.m. Sunday and return mid to late afternoon. Pack lunch, water and protection from the sun, wind, rain and cold. Contact [Pat Mark](mailto:Pat.Mark@otago.ac.nz), phone: (03) 476 3229.

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network – National Conference/Workshop - Saturday 7 August 2004 in Auckland. Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens. Registration forms available from the network (info@nzpcn.org.nz). Workshops to be held on several subjects such as the threatened vascular plants of Auckland, New Zealand's indigenous fungi and the translocation of threatened plants. Field trip to visit threatened plant sites in Auckland on Sunday 8 August 2004. Contact: Steve Benham (steve.benham@arc.govt.nz), Mike Oates (Michael.oates@wcc.govt.nz) or John Sawyer (jsawyer@doc.govt.nz).

Photo exhibition: "Raoul Rough" and "Low Flat 08 - a Grid Search" - Thursday 17 July - 14 August. Photospace, 1st floor, 37 Courtenay Place, Wellington. Photographs by Julia Brooke-White, a member of Wellington Botanical Society and sculptures of weeding by Deborah Anne Hall. Both artists were weeding together on Raoul last year. For more details look at www.photospace.co.nz

Conservation Week 2004: 2-8 August 2004. Conservation Week 2004 will focus on conservation with communities. More information is available from the DOC site (www.doc.govt.nz)

Wellington Botanical Society Field Trip - Waikanae wetlands on private land.

Saturday 7 August. Botanise a diverse selection of protected areas including threatened species, podocarp forest and flax swamps. Wet feet possible - suitable footwear recommended. Meet: at Paraparaumu Station 9 a.m. then drive to Ngarara Road. Arrange car pool in advance. Train to Paraparaumu departs Wellington 8 a.m., arriving Paraparaumu 8.55 am. 4WD vehicles a bonus.

Leader: Tim Park, 472 6626 w, 384 1111 h., deputy leader: Barbara Mitcalfe 475 7149.

Botanical Society of Otago – Evening talk: Growing New Zealand Alpine Plants.

Wednesday 18 August, 2004. Start time: 5:20 p.m. A talk by David Lyttle. The New Zealand alpine flora contains a diverse assemblage of species many of which are desirable and challenging horticultural subjects. Unfortunately New Zealand alpine plants are often appreciated more overseas than in their own country. This talk will provide an introduction to the propagation of New Zealand alpine plants from seeds and cuttings and will discuss problems frequently encountered in their culture. At the NEW Zoology Benham Building, 346 Great King Street, behind the Zoology car park by the Captain Cook Hotel. Use the main entrance of the Benham Building to get in and go to the Benham Seminar Room, Rm. 215, 2nd floor. Please be prompt as we have to hold the door open.

Contact [Ian Radford](mailto:Ian.Radford@otago.ac.nz), phone: (03) 479 9065.

Wellington Botanical Society Evening meeting - Druce Memorial Lecture: Wit, wisdom and witness in the Druce experience. Monday 23 August. Speaker: Dr. Geoff Rogers, scientist, Department of Conservation. A light-hearted look at Tony's landscape-reading ability and his witty and wise mentoring of our current crop of botanists. Witness the Geoff Roger's experience maintaining the Druce inheritance in central North Island and South Island high country.