Wellington Botanical Society
Te Rōpū Manāki i Ngā Tamariki a Tāne, o Te Whanganui a Tara

NEWSLETTER December 2025

Previous issue: September 2025

ISSN 1171-9982 (Print) ISSN 2815-9896 (Online)

Chairperson's message

Newsletter Editor

Our stalwart newsletter editor Chris Horne is stepping down after more than three decades of service. Chris has put in an amazing amount of mahi over the years, on the newsletter and other roles including programme coordinator.

We're now looking for a new newsletter editor. If you like to know all the news, keeping people up to date, plus correcting people's spelling and grammar—this is the role for you! If you're interested, please email or call me. Even if you're just curious!

Other than that, I hope everyone has a great summer, meets new plants and learns new things.

Ngā mihi,

Kate Jordan

New members

We welcome the following new members to BotSoc: Nicholas Bowker-Napp, Carys Collins, Hannah Duggan, Erica Hobbs, Amber Johnson, Molly McDougall, Theadora Wilkins.

We are keen to welcome more people to the delights of botany via BotSoc. If you know someone who might enjoy our field trips, newsletters, bulletin and informative meetings, please encourage them to join. New members can fill in the form at https://forms.gle/xTZJtENCV6qsyMLQ7, or print the form at the end of this newsletter or they can go to the website: https://www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz/membership.html.

Karen and Stephen Whitton, Membership Secretariat

What on earth?

Do you know what this photo depicts? You can find the answer at the bottom of page 18. Give yourself an extra pat on the back if you could identify both the feature and the species. It will likely be easier for people viewing it in colour—perhaps this is an extra incentive to subscribe to the digital PDF version of the newsletter instead of the printed version.

Articles for web site

We welcome articles for consideration for inclusion on our web site:

www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz

Please send your article to:

Richard Herbert

e-mail herbert.r@xtra.co.nz

Writing for the Bulletin

Do you have a botanical observation, anecdote, or insight that you could share with others in BotSoc? If so, please consider contributing it to the Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin. There is still plenty of space in the next issue. For more details and assistance, contact Eleanor Burton at: trogs@duck.com or 479 0497.

BotSoc on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/groups/322939557873243/

This is the unofficial page for Wellington Botanical Society.

Meetings

BotSoc meetings are usually held at 7.30 p.m., third Monday each month at Victoria University, WN – Lecture Theatre MYLT101, ground floor, Murphy Building, west side Kelburn Parade. Enter building 20 m down Kelburn Pde from pedestrian overbridge. No meetings December and January.

Meetings are in person and usually available on Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89547154619?pwd=bE0zRXRWSXBBUkVoUjdPcElJNXlJUT09.

Field trips

Day trips to locations in the Wellington region are usually held on the first Saturday of each month.

Extended excursions are usually held at New Year, and sometimes Easter and the first weekend in December.

DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR NEXT ISSUE – 20 March 2026

Articles may be edited for clarity and length

Wellington Botanical Society

Address:	PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140	
Web site:	www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz	
Chairperson:	Kate Jordan	wellingtonbotsocpresident@gmail.com
Deputy-Chairperson:	Dr Lara Shepherd	lara.shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz
Deputy-Chairperson:	Eleanor Burton	
Secretary:	Laura Girvan West	wellingtonbotsocsecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Paul Bell-Butler	wellingtonbotsoctreasurer@gmail.com
Membership Secretary:	Karen & Stephen Whitton	wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com
Auditor/Reviewer:	To be advised	
Submissions coordinator:	Vacant—volunteer sought—please contact Secretary	
Bulletin editor:	Eleanor Burton	04 479 0497
Newsletter editor:	Vacant	Contact the Chairperson to volunteer for the role.
Annual subscription:	ordinary $35; country $30; student $10; joint / group / family $40.	

Send your subscription to our bank account 020536 0017812 00.
Particulars: Name
Code: Membership type
Reference: amount of included donation
New subscribers: Please complete form at the back of this newsletter.

NOTICES

Events

2nd Saturday each month, except January. Ōtari-Wilton's Bush – Plant Care. Meet: Te Marae ō Tāne Visitor Centre, 160 Wilton Rd, Wilton at 9:00 a.m. Bus: No. 14 Wilton bus, Ct Pl 8.28, Molesworth St 8.36, alight Warwick St. Planting: winter months: weed clearance other months.

- *Wilbur Dovey. Landline 499 1044. Mobile 027 499 1044.*

Letters to the editor

We would welcome your comments on any aspect of BotSoc's activities:

- places you would like to visit on field trips
- topics you would like to have covered in evening meetings
- topics you would like covered in BotSoc's Bulletin and Newsletter
- other matters of concern or interest to you.

Thank you, The committee

Weekly opportunity to learn with others on Thursdays

John Barnett, a BotSoc member, offers learning-together trips on most Thursdays in different reserves & parks each week in Te Awa Kairangi (Hutt Valley), as far as Remutaka Trig to the North and Eastbourne to the south.

Email johnbarnett@inspire.net.nz if you'd like to be added to the BCC email invitation list giving the meeting time and place.

Ngā mihi, John Barnett

Information about attending meetings and field trips has been moved to the end of the newsletter.

Tom Moss Student Award

We welcome Jessica Beever's generous donation of $5000.00 for the runner up in the Tom Moss Student Award Fund for research on bryophytes.

Paul Bell-Butler, Treasurer

Membership for the year 2025–26 is now due

Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership. For those still to renew, please make payment to the account below and email details to wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com. Please make sure you have your name in the reference of your payment. Not all bank accounts show the full name on our statement.

Account name: **Wellington Botanical Society Inc**
Account #: **02-0536-017812-00**
Reference: **Name** – **Membership type** – Donation (optional)

Membership types and fees:

- Ordinary $35
- Country $30
- Joint/family $40
- Student $10

Donations are optional and go towards the Society's Jubilee Fund. Donations are also tax deductible. If you would like a receipt please ask.

Any questions about your membership status, please contact the membership secretarial team.

Thank you.

Karen & Stephen Whitton, Membership Secretarial team
wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com

Wellington Botanical Society Subscription reminder for the year ending 30 June 2025

Almost fifty members of BotSoc have yet to pay their subs as we approach the half year mark.

Pay now, be in before Christmas and start the New Year with a clean slate!

- Ordinary membership $35
- Country $30
- Joint/family $40
- Student $10

Please pay direct to BotSoc's Bank Account—02 0536 0017812 00—including your name and Sub20 as Reference. Or pay by cheque to the Wellington Botanical Society account above. Or post a cheque addressed to Treasurer, Wellington Botanical Society, PO Box 10-412, Wellington 6143, which will be deposited on your behalf.

Paul Bell-Butler, Treasurer

Developing fruit of the woodrush / *Luzula banksiana* var. *migrata*. There a five varieties of *L. banksiana*—the cream-coloured margins and dark brown centres of the tepals surrounding the fruit distinguish this variety from the others. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Gorge Gazette:** Trelissick Park Group
   - *View latest newsletter from the 'Gorge Gazette' page of the website at: Trelissick Park Group: Gorge Gazettes or directly at: Gorge Gazette 70 Dec25.pdf*
2. **Open Space. 109, 11/25:** Message from the Chair, Alan Livingston; digital subscription option – editor@qeii.org.nz; Rapanui's cliff shrubland home to rare petrel / ōi; deer in 2025 – another look; Tautane Station, Herbertville – restoration work; Our Changing Landscape – QEII Trust's vital work; our two species of native bats; Manawat[1]-Whanganui Regional Representative's work; controlling weeds; check before you spray; biodiversity credit markets; summary of 73 new covenants registered 1.3.25 to 30.9.25; list of 30 Regional Representatives.
   - *qeii.org.nz. PO Box 3341, Wellington 6140. info@qeii.org.nz; 04 472 6626.*
3. **New Zealand Botanical Society newsletter:** Quarterly. News from several botanical societies, book reviews, etc.
   - *www.nzbotanicalsociety.org.nz. Available online or hard copy. Subscription based on receipt of either a digital (PDF) or hard copy.*
4. **Heritage New Zealand. No. 176, Autumn 2025. The benefits of planting flax / harakeke – and its potential use in** industry; etc.
   - *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, PO Box 2629, Wellington 6140. Ph (04) 472 4341, information@heritage.org.nz. Antrim House, 63 Boulcott St, WN 6011.*
5. **Forest & Bird. No. 397, Spring 2025:** Mining Denniston Plateau would threaten Avatar moth; West Coast green gecko and striped forest gecko; rediscovery of little-spotted kiwi supports case for protecting West Coast stewardship land; Pest Control in Coromandel's Mahakirau Forest Sanctuary; carbon capture and climate protection by native forests; pest control in the Catlins; protecting Hauraki Gulf; Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari offers biodiversity credits for national parks for protecting indigenous nature … not trophy hunting; etc.
   - *Forest & Bird National Office, Ground Floor, 205 Victoria St., Wellington 6011. 0800 200 064 or 04 385 7374; office@forestandbird.org.nz*

6a. **Hinewai Reflections – The Artwork:** $80.00.

6b. **Pīpipi 62. 11/25:** Clear evidence of climate change as weather goes dangerously astray – drenching rain – severe gales – less snow; Pest Free Banks Peninsula at work; neighbour Paul Broady has gifted his 16 ha Kāpuka property to the Maurice White Native Forest Trust which owns Hinewai; podocarps at Stony Bay; etc.
   - *Pīpipi appears twice a year. There is no subscription & no obligation to donate but donations are much appreciated. Contributions of $5 or more are tax-deductible. They post a receipt if you give your postal address. BNZ 02 0832 0044225 00. Hinewai Reserve, 632 Long Bay Road, R.D.3 Akaroa 7583.*

7. **Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Backcountry:** Quarterly bulletin.
   - *www.fmc.org.nz. 11/25 issue has several articles on conservation topics.*
8. **Ōtari Native Botanic Garden Te Māra Huaota o Ōtari. 150 Wilton Rd, Wilton, WN. New brochure with map.**
   - *Wellington City Council. treehouse@wcc.govt.nz wellingtongardens.nz*

Help raise funds for BotSoc's Jubilee Award Fund – bring named seedlings/cuttings for sale at each evening meeting

FIELD TRIPS & EVENING MEETINGS

The following programme IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If you wish to go on a field trip, PLEASE help with planning by giving the leader 2 days' notice before a day trip, MORE notice before weekend trips, and SEVERAL WEEKS' notice before the New Year's trip.

Non-members are welcome to come to our meetings and to join us on our field trips.

FEBRUARY – MAY 2026

Saturday 14 February: Field trip — Remutaka Trig Track, State Highway 2

This short walk to the Remutaka trig (elevation 725m) traverses a range of vegetation types from low beech forest to subalpine. Over 200 plant species have been recorded in the area. We will be searching for some uncommon species including *Veronica venustula* (not confirmed from the Remutaka Range; see this iNaturalist observation), *Olearia avicenniifolia* (only known in the Greater Wellington region from a single specimen from the Trig Track in 2016) and *Coprosma decurva*.
Meet: 9:30am Trig Track car park
Co-leaders: Lara Shepherd (027 3635854) and Leon Perrie (027 4191378)

Monday 16 February: Evening meeting — Conservation status assessment of indigenous vascular plants in the Wellington region

Speaker: Philippa Crisp. Over the past year, a review of the conservation status of over 1,000 taxa in the Wellington region has been completed by an expert panel. More than 200 taxa were identified as being Regionally Threatened (Regionally Critical, Endangered or Vulnerable), with a large number (120 taxa) assessed as Data Deficient. It is hoped that the publication of the new conservation status list will act to drive field surveys that will add data and improve knowledge of regional indigenous flora.

Saturday 7 March: Field trip — Skyline Walkway

Botanise part of the Skyline Walkway, where wind and small-leaved shrubs dominate the vegetation. While at first glance the area appears to be mostly gorse, Darwin's barberry and pasture grasses, there is a range of interesting native species present in the shrubland, including some uncommon elsewhere in Wellington. The small-leaved shrubs include *Melicytus crasssifolius, Raukaua anomalus, Neomyrtus pedunculata, Lophomyrtus obcordata*, the hybrid *Lophomyrtus* × *ralphii, Dracophyllum filifolium* and several *Coprosma* species. There's also a range of interesting little plants, including *Hymenophyllum minimum, Nertera depressa, Leptostigma setulosum, Leptinella squalida, Syphelia nesophila*, *Geranium brevicaule* as well as bryophytes and lichens**.**
Meet: to be confirmed (check the WBS website closer to the time)
Co-leaders: Melanie Newfield and Paul Bell-Butler

Monday 16 March: Evening meeting — Plants of place – mana whenua connection to whakapapa and identity

Speaker: Maria Rodgers, PhD candidate and teaching fellow. Maria studies and teaches landscape architecture at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. In her teaching and research she seeks to learn more and share what plants can do in our urban public space. She will speak about how the benefits of having plants that were naturally occurring in the past in our urban public spaces can go beyond human and ecological wellbeing, place identity, and climate benefits, to contribute to decolonisation and to justice.

Saturday-Sunday 11–12 April: Field trips — eastern Wairarapa

We will spend two days exploring some interesting but little-visited sites in the eastern hills of the Wairarapa, overnighting in Carterton. Exact details of sites and botanical highlights will be posted on the WBS website once finalised.
Meet: 9:30am by the public toilets in Featherston
Accommodation: Carterton Holiday Park (https://www.cartertonholidaypark.co.nz/), which has a range of accommodation options.
Co-leaders: Lara Shepherd (027 363 5854) and Pat MacLean (027 4066 767)

Monday 20 April – Evening meeting: — A mycology of New Zealand in 10 fungi

Speaker: Dr Geoff Ridley. Fungi are often overlooked. Most people only become aware of them when there is a problem, the bathroom ceiling goes mouldy, the roses need spraying because of the black spot, mushrooms sprout all over the lawn. The bigger role that fungi play in our lives is missed. This is the story of ten little-known fungi that are important biologically, culturally, historically, and economically in Aotearoa. Geoff Ridley is a mycologist who studied the larger fungi in the Ōrongorongo Valley for his PhD at Victoria University of Wellington, and as a forest mycologist and pathologist at the Forest Research Institute in Rotorua. He currently works in the nationally significant collections of fungi held by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. His personal interest is in discovering the fungi of the Kaiwharawhara Valley in Wellington. He is a trustee on the Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

Saturday 2 May: Field Trip **Ōtaki Forks, Tararua Range**

We will do a quick march to the bottom of Fields Track and then botanise up until it's time to come home. The area was logged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but there has been significant regeneration. We will hopefully see a selection of ferns (including *Lindsaea trichomanoides* and *Cranfillia nigra*), two species of raukawa, and other forest delights.

Map: NZTopo50 BP33 Featherston. Train: 8.14 a.m. train on Kāpiti Line from Wellington Station to Waikanae Station.

Meet: 9.30 a.m. Waikanae Station north-end car park from where we will share transport to Boielles Flat campsite & picnic area.

Co-leaders: Kate Jordan kateljordan@gmail.com 027 899 0018, Finn Harvey finnharvey15@gmail.com

Monday 18 May: Evening meeting **Members' evening**

Share a pre-meeting bring-your-own supper: a flask of hot drink, cup and a small plate of 'nibbles'. Then listen to our speakers – limit 10 minutes/person. For a gold-coin koha, or even 'folding money', buy one or more of the books we put on display, and help to build up the Jubilee Award Fund which supports research on NZ plants. Room opens at 7 p.m. Bring:

- your botanical slides and photographs taken on BotSoc trips. Slides on a USB stick—limit 20/person.
- your favourite botanical readings or paintings;
- any spare botanical or other natural-history books you have and don't want to keep to have them auctioned. Take them home if they don't sell;
- plant specimens to sell or to discuss;
- botanical art—paintings, drawings, ceramics—to add to a memorable evening.

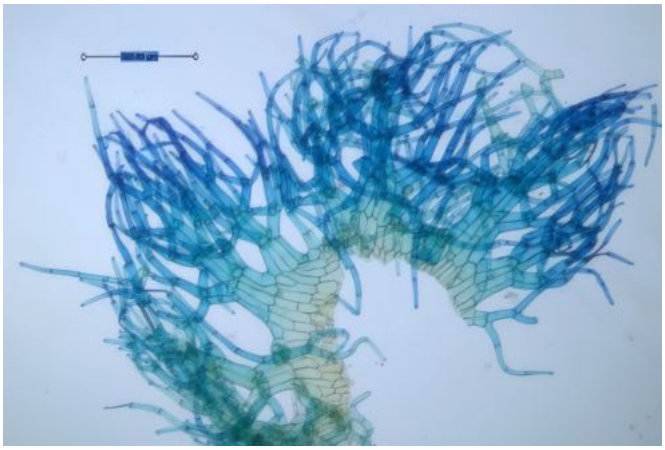
Testing species boundaries in New Zealand *Trichocolea*

Marcela Moreno, Curatorial Assistant, Systematics, NZ Institute for Bioeconomy Science Ltd.

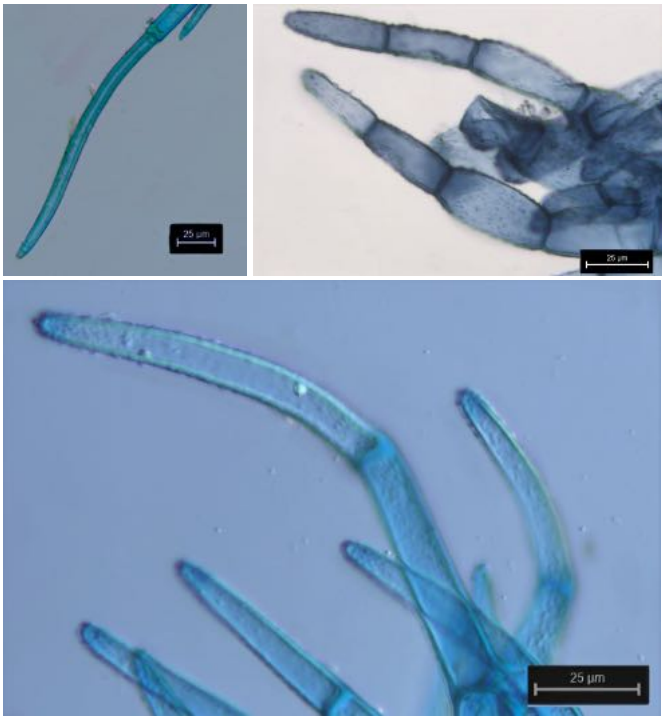
This semester, I had the privilege of being guided and supported by Dr David Glenny (Landcare Research) and Professor Pieter Pelser (University of Canterbury) while working on a small taxonomic project in the liverwort genus *Trichocolea* in New Zealand. It was a wholesome and rewarding experience during which I gained skills ranging from research and science communication to taxonomy, and microscopy. Coming from a background in amenity horticulture, I went from appreciating showy, colourful plants to being amazed by the intricacy and complexity of liverworts.

The project aimed to determine whether some entities observed by David Glenny and provisionally labelled as *Trichocolea* "eastern form" represented an undescribed species. The characters of the terminal cell of the leaf cilia have been used consistently by several authors to distinguish species in this genus. Therefore, I set out to examine the morphology of these cells in samples of the known New Zealand species (*T. rigida*, *T. wattsiana*, and *T. mollissima*) and compared them with the same structures in *T.* "eastern form."

T. wattsiana (Photo David Glenny, Landcare Research, 2025, CC-BY-SA 4.0).



Deeply lobed leaves with multi-cellular cilia of *Trichocolea rigida*.



Microscopic images of the terminal cells of leaf cilia for New Zealand *Trichocolea* taxa: (top left) *T. mollissima;* (top right) *T. rigida*; (bottom) *T. wattsiana*.

While the task seemed straightforward in principle, my patience and dexterity were certainly put to the test. For each specimen, I attempted to manually dissect leaves measuring about a third of a millimetre across, with a web of cilia that stubbornly overlapped under the cover slip—making it very difficult to observe and measure single cells. Liverwort taxonomy, I discovered, is not for the faint-hearted or those with shaky hands!

With plenty of help and practice, I eventually compiled a dataset suitable for statistical analysis (Principal Coordinate Analysis and Permutational Multivariate Analysis of Variance). The results showed that the putative undescribed species actually belongs with *Trichocolea wattsiana*, meaning the number of taxa in the genus in New Zealand remains unchanged. However, the analysis also revealed overlapping variation between *T. rigida* and *T. wattsiana*, which complicates their separation based on the traits examined. This suggests that updated species concepts and diagnostic keys that better reflect existing variation would be valuable. A taxonomist's work is hardly ever done.

Many thanks are due to the organisers and participants of the John Child Bryophyte Workshop for creating a welcoming and encouraging environment for students such as me venturing out into the field of bryology.

QEII National Trust update

Natalie Morrison – Communications Advisor

Jamie Pearson – Land Protection Advisor

QEII National Trust is an independent charitable trust that partners with private landowners to protect natural and cultural heritage sites on their land. Landowners retain ownership of their property and special areas are protected with legally binding agreements called covenants, which remain on the land title forever.

As of November 2025, QEII has a total of 5,460 registered covenants protecting 187,289 hectares throughout New Zealand. In the Wellington region there are 158 Open Space Covenants registered, protecting 6,606 hectares. The largest registered covenant in the Wellington region is 824 hectares, and the average size is 16.6 hectares.

Newly protected gully covenants support exciting species

Just south of Pukerua Bay on the Kāpiti coast, two open space covenants named *Te Ngahere Tapu a Tiaki me Amanda* have recently been registered, protecting a small gully. Despite its small size (the covenants protect 2 ha combined), this gully is a piece of an important ecological corridor in the area and is home to some interesting fauna species. The mānuka/kānuka canopy protects tawa, kohekohe and broadleaf species regenerating underneath. Small wetlands on the gully floor contain *Carex virgata* and *C. geminata*. This small regenerating gully has some other remarkable residents: three special herpetofauna, mātātā/fernbird (*Poodytes punctatus*) and brown mudfish (*Neochanna apoda*), all of which are At Risk - Declining. With further seed dispersal from the surrounding forested areas and continued care for the covenanted sites, this small gully will mature into a healthy and diverse forest.

Wetland on gully floor.

(Left) The elusive mātātā/fernbird (*Poodytes punctatus*) is more often heard than seen and has disappeared from large areas of the country. (Right) Mudfish (*Neochanna apoda*), found in wetlands and other lowland swampy habitats, have been an exciting find at the protected gully.

Kohekohe (*Didymocheton spectabilis*) and tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) seedlings beneath closed canopy.

Changes to new protection at QEII National Trust

From 1 July this year, QEII has had to make the difficult decision to reduce the number of new covenants processed due to funding constraints.

Every year, landowners around the country approach

Newsletter by e-mail?

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically in PDF format, please contact Memberships Secretary, wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com. The PDF newsletter includes hyperlinks to e-mail and website addresses, and colour images instead of the black-and-white images in the print version.

Ngā mihi, Laura Girvan West, Secretary

QEII interested in protecting special sites on their land. Until we receive an increase in funding, QEII will only be able to process a limited number of new QEII covenants each year, prioritising the protection of areas with very high open space values, with a focus on biodiversity.

We hope that this will be a temporary situation, and we are continuing to seek an increase to our baseline funding and to raise funds in other ways.

Our priority continues to be supporting landowners to care for their existing QEII-protected sites and adding to protection of highly threatened landscapes where we can.

Become a member of QEII

Support QEII's work by joining a passionate group of over 5,000 members. An individual membership is just $30. You get two copies of QEII's *Open Space* magazine a year, plus other perks. Join online and help to encourage conservation on private land: qeiinationaltrust.org.nz/membership/

Ōtari-Wilton's Bush report

Ōtari has had an explosive spring after an unseasonably calm winter when it seemed nothing would dry out. By explosive, I mean that it is a massive flowering season in the gardens and particularly the forest here at Ōtari, with the kaikōmako, rewarewa, tawa and hīnau all in full flower. Watch out for the hīnau flowers which will soon be sprinkled across our paths like confetti.

Over winter we planted an area along Wilton Road between Hampshire Ave and Berkshire Ave, which we call "The Shire". We have been clearing blackberry, sycamore and other weeds from here for the last year or so. It was great to have Wilbur Dovey and his dedicated group of revegers and some local schools help us plant and mulch the area. Many hands do make light work. Keep an eye on the plants as they bulk up over summer – it is so much nicer seeing native plants given a chance over brambles. We also planted a large number of harakeke in our Pā Harakeke. These areas are looking fantastic and we will continue to expand our harakeke collection.

This spring we have begun a trial of a new native lawn grass variety (*Poa imbecilla* "Stewart's Slender"). This has been selectively bred as a fine lawn turf grass by PGG Wrightson's and is now commercially available. To achieve this we removed the old turf, replaced the edging, installed irrigation and brought in new top soil before sowing the very fine seed – on a rare spring day without a breath of wind! Now the covers are off it looks green, but we have some work to do to ensure that we allow only the native grass to prosper. It is hugely rewarding to trial this native lawn in the lead up to our centenary. Something Cockayne wanted to achieve to fulfil his vision for Ōtari was to have a native lawn which would allow us to have a completely native botanic garden.

Much work has been happening in the forest, particularly as Jonathan Kennett and Bronwen Wall have been leading monitoring of the restoration planting done 20 years ago. This is between the Troup Picnic Lawn and Ian Galloway Park. The work is being supported by OWBT, WCC and volunteers who have been mucking in at work parties to remeasure the vegetation monitoring plots which were established to measure the success of the plantings. They are also clearing rubbish such as carpet squares, weeds and doing careful 'light welling' to give podocarps and long-term canopy species a chance to get into the canopy. Much of the work is being done in the areas that have been weeded by the Thursday Forest Weeders, many of whom have got deeply involved in the plot re-measurement and carpet removal.

We have had overwhelmingly positive and glowing feedback from visitors and the local community about the re-jig of the walking tracks. It is great feeling to know that all our tracks are clearly signposted, and new visitors are able to find their way around without a fuss. If you have any feedback please let us know.

If you find yourself on Courtenay Place in the next few months, have a look at Gabby Ōtari'Connor's lightbox exhibition "Assembly". All the photos were taken in the nursery at Ōtari of our plants and are not photoshopped! Gabby has taken the photos through coloured stage lighting gels. The concept of the exhibition was to re-assemble the plants that once made up the pre-human ecosystems that existed around Courtenay Place. It is very nice to have some of our plants on public display and be able to support artists who come to their work with an environmental mindset.

Much work is underway to plan our centenary next year.

We have hosted several workshops and events. Last week we hosted a group of arborists who were learning how to 'veteranise' trees to create habitat for wildlife. This is a practice used to create nest sites and other habitat improvements. Ōtari was a great place for them to see natural kākā and kākāriki nests. On the weekend Predator Free Wellington and Predator Free New Zealand organised a regional hui for trappers. It was a great opportunity to tell the story of trapping and pest control at Ōtari, which was the first reserve in Wellington City to receive targeted and sustained possum control, and was also the first place where community trapping started in the city.

I hope you have a lovely summer and you are able to visit Ōtari regularly to enjoy this amazing place we work hard to look after,

Tim Park, Kaiwhakahaere Ōtari – Manager - Ōtari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve

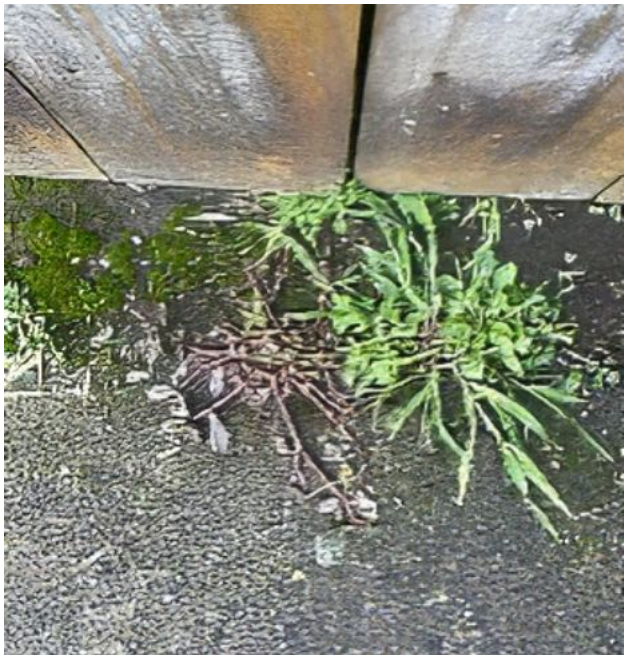
Greater Wellington pest plants update

We've been busy with several activities in the last quarter—of note are the following:

- The Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan 2025/26 was published to our GW website, and the RPMP Operational Plan Report 2024/25 will be out soon.
- We submitted to EPA supporting the release of Chilean flame creeper leaf beetle by Environment Southland.
- We're completing our annual inspections—and any control work—at our known woolly nightshade, moth plant, blue passionflower, Senegal tea and eelgrass sites.

- Mature woolly nightshade found tucked beneath thick banana passion-fruit foliage in the Ōtaki Gorge Road area:

- Our alligator weed sites are regularly checked and only small amounts of regrowth have been found—at one site a new plant was spotted growing through a concrete crack onto a neighbouring property:



- At a larger site in Marsden, Lower Hutt, a small patch of alligator weed that was missed during initial control was discovered and treated with herbicide:

- A new Senegal tea site was discovered in Waikanae near where Tīkotu Stream meets the Waikanae River so control work is being done:

- We've done boneseed annual inspections at high-value coastal sites in Queen Elizabeth Park (Paekākāriki), Parangarahu Lakes, Castlepoint, Ngāwi, Cape Palliser, Big Mangatoetoe, Whatarangi, Tora and Riversdale—where several are being eradicated. The once heavily infested pine blocks behind Riversdale township had only a few plants controlled this year versus the thousands of plants found about 6 years ago. We're reassessing Riversdale area to potentially become an eradication- level effort.

- While completing our last 4-monthly check for 2025 at known sea spurge sites in Paraparaumu, we found and controlled several mature plants:

- We've done a range of work around the region under our Site-Led Key Native Ecosystem programme, on several weed species such as aloe, angelica, banana passionfruit, blackberry, boxthorn, cape ivy, climbing asparagus, echium, German ivy, grey willow, helichrysum, holly, horned poppy, marram, OMB, selaginella, tree lupin, wilding pines.

Parangarahu Lakes area, Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui

A lot of work has been done in this area. We controlled weeds in rahui areas for dotterel nestings before the birds settled in – happily finding less weeds than expected - mainly horned poppy, marram grass and angelica. At Lake Kohangatera we continued with boneseed control, finding many plants. We checked for climbing asparagus in the planting plots, as we had discovered the potting soil had been contaminated with seeds. We've now inspected all those plots, and will monitor them. We've been waiting for yellow flag iris to emerge, which we then surveyed via drone to determine how far it spreads back into the raupō.

Biocontrol

Probably one of our easiest and most successful agents to date is the tradescantia yellow-leaf spot-fungus, now spreading around the region of its own accord. We've transferred it manually within the Wairarapa region where it is still in the early stages of establishment. To date this biocontrol doesn't seem to be having any visible reduction in density, but it is still early days.

Check Clean Dry

As part of our responsibilities, we ran a bike-wash station at the most recent Big Bang Adventure Biking event.

Non-RPMP pest plant species of interest

- **Japanese wax tree** (*Toxicodendron succedaneum*) growing in the Te Mārua Lakes area was spotted, starting to naturalise and spread. We will finish removing the plants (about 100) before they can reproduce this season. As shown below:

- **White-edged nightshade:** one known site in the region on the East Coast—we're working with a landowner and have surveyed the extent. Control work is being planned.
- ***Phragmites karka***: Lake Waiorongomai site shown below. Control may be a substantial project, for which we need to look at investment and outcome very closely before starting work. We have discussed this with Horizons Regional Council, DOC and MPI.

- And every now and then we get to help different teams—some of our staff helped plant over 200 plants at Muaopoko wetland, located between Waikanae and Ōtaki, a beautiful area.

Pest Animals update

Rabbit and magpies are the focus of enquiries from the public at present. Highlights of our work include:

- Trialling cacophony cameras with regard to their suitability for wallaby invasion responses and for ungulates in Wainuiomata-Ōrongorongo.
- **Ungulates:** Ungulate control completed in Parangarahu Lakes and East Harbour and reactionary goat control at Battle Hill.
- **Mustelids:** We've caught five ferrets on the Ōtaki Coast this year – this area and Transmission Gully are key areas to focus on ferrets as much of the region is free of ferrets, so we want to prevent invasion.
- **Possum and rodent control:** 1080 bait was applied aerially in Wainuiomata-Ōrongorongo mid-August. See this article for more: Greater Wellington — Conservationists celebrate rare moment of zero possums in Wainuiomata
  - Rat monitors in a number of reserves showed low rat numbers this quarter, reflecting a combination of effective pest control and low fruit supply in those forests.
  - At the Baring Head lizard protection area, numerous geckos and skinks have been seen, showing the effectiveness of this programme.

Katrina Newfield, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Percy Scenic Reserve news – Spring 2025

Another wet and windy spring has caused a few problems with weed control in the reserve, especially regarding spraying. Thus there are more weeds around now than I would like. On the flip side we are having another bumper year with flowering—many plants producing many flowers—always great to see.

We have been growing some *Sonchus kirkii* and *Lepidium oleracium* for Wellington Zoo and Ōtari–Wilton's Bush, also some for ourselves to maintain stocks. The *Sonchus* for the Zoo have gone to be used in the penguin enclosure. We will retain the *Lepidium* a while longer as they are a bit small - likely to be ready in the autumn.

Downer NZ have renewed our contract with Hutt City Council for maintaining the green spaces around the lower Hutt Valley, Percy Scenic Reserve being one of these areas. Respective managers are busy finalising how this will work for both parties. Fair to say things will be different in future as financial restrictions mean there will be a few cut-backs in certain areas, e.g., plant propagation will be reduced here.

The new climate-controlled glasshouses are now in operation. We moved in to them the plants which were originally in the old house, which was demolished. Some of the grasses have struggled in the other houses while waiting for the new houses to be completed - a bit too shady for them in there, so we lost a few and others are not looking their best. Most of the other plants are looking well. The plants in the alpine collection as a whole look well with much new growth and many in flower.

We had a disaster with our *Myosotis petiolata* propagation for DOC Hawke's Bay. We had managed to propagate about 450 plants over the last two years. Most had been looking well going into winter, with some struggling, but unfortunately almost all of them collapsed through the winter and into spring, with probably only about half a dozen left and they are struggling. Fair to say we are more than a little disappointed.

Cliff Keilty., Gardener

Pat Enright

Patrick Enright passed away on 5 August. Pat had many friends all over the country and he is probably best known to all who knew him as that quiet, kind and generous man whose attention to detail and intellect made him an outstanding botanist.

Early life

Pat was born on 14 April 1946 and spent his childhood in Milton, a small town south of Dunedin. Margaret, Pat's wife, recalls Pat saying he was very interested in the natural history from an early age. Pat was also a harrier until he had problems with his knees and back which encouraged him to focus more on the natural world.

After marrying Margaret, the couple moved to Dunedin and produced five children. The family owned a crib in Naseby where they spent many holidays. Pat had a special interest in the alpine flora and botanised the area extensively in the Ida Range around Kyeburn and Danseys Pass. John Barkla, who knew Pat for decades, recalls Pat also enjoyed botanising the Otago Peninsula "… usually with Rory Logan. Peter [Johnson] was very helpful to a novice botanist back in those days, in fact he was too nice to tell me to give him a break." In his typical quiet and humble manner, Pat told John "There is a special copy of Phillip Grove's work on the Ida Mountain area (I helped him with a bit of "local knowledge")."

Pat botanising in Featherston 2023. Photo: Jane Lenting.

The Catlins was another favourite area of Pat's, after he first visited to do a blue duck survey of the Maclennan River. After creating many plant lists for various areas, Pat produced an extensive species distribution list for the whole of the Catlins Ecological Region which was a huge help to John and Brian Rance when they worked on the 'Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Otago.'

Pat and Margaret, with one of their sons, moved to Wellington for work in 1993 and Pat's first Christmas trip with the Wellington Botanical Society was to North-West Nelson. In Wellington, he met many fellow botanists who became long-time friends such as Olaf John who joined Pat on many botanising trips in and around the Wellington region. After studying and identifying species, Pat would give specimens to Arnold and Ruth Dench's native garden in Newlands, Percy Scenic Reserve in Petone and Ōtari Native Botanic Garden.

Pat met Tony Silbery soon after moving to Wellington at a Wellington Botanical Society meeting and visited Percy Reserve not long after to see the Tony Druce alpine collection that Tony curated. Tony moved to the Wairarapa and Pat, often with Olaf, spent a lot of his spare time botanising with Tony finding botanical treasures all over lowland Wairarapa. He collated 27 plant lists in his spare time over that period. While living in Wellington, Pat was the Secretary of the Wellington Botanical Society from 1994 to 1996 and again in 1998.

Pat and Margaret moved to a property on the outskirts of Featherston in 2003. Retirement from paid work a few years later allowed Pat to spend more time botanising, collating plant lists, and adding to the collections at several herbaria around the country. Ines Schönberger, Collection manager at Allan Herbarium at Landcare Research writes "the staff of Allan herbarium will fondly remember Pat for his extraordinary dedication and tireless contributions to the botanical community… His meticulous attention to detail and deep botanical knowledge meant that he was always ready to provide insightful feedback, helping to improve the quality and accuracy of our databases." Over a period of 48 years Pat provided 824 specimens to the Allan Herbarium, 938 to the Auckland Museum Botany collection and 544 to the WELT Herbarium at the Museum of New Zealand.

Pat at Ōpau stream 2021 wearing his holotype uniform. Photo: Carol West.

Pat embraced iNaturalist, a website to record observations of biodiversity, from 2015 recording 3,084 observations of 1,413 species, identifying 3,127 records and making 1,111 annotations. Pat included observation fields such as flowering, fruiting, sex, notes on names and the prevalence of the plant in the area which is very important information when deciding on the conservation status of indigenous plants. Pat has joined the Fallen Tōtara of iNaturalist NZ – Mātaki Taiao which celebrates and commemorates members who have passed away.

Tony Silbery frequently botanised with Pat, and one time took him up into the mountains to look for *Wahlenbergia pygmaea* subsp. t*ararua* whose distribution was vague but widespread—Mitre Peak, Mt Holdsworth and the Tararua ranges. To cover likely sites amongst that huge expanse, they helicoptered to Powell Hut and late in the day they were picked up from Jumbo Hut. They found only one community of this tiny harebell on a scree slope and a hairy caterpillar which Tony thinks was the highlight for Pat.

Pat was a gentle man and had an amazing ability to get permission to botanise bush remnants from rural landowners. Guaranteeing privacy of those plant lists was key to building relationships.

As happens on most botanical forays, the distance covered is short if you want to do the area justice. Tony says it took Pat the equivalent of 6 weeks to botanise from the Waiohine Road end to Totara flats in the Tararua foothills, which is normally a 4 hour walk.

Pat looking for botanical treasures on Old Man Range during a lunch break. Photo: Leon Perrie.

Pat corresponded with many botanists all over the country and Tony attributes Pat's friendships with Olaf and Jeremy Rolfe to Pat's photographic excellence, especially close-up shots essential for identification.

Pat also joined the Canterbury Botanical Society and enjoyed many field trips and camps with them. Melissa Hutchison recalls Pat was always keen to share his knowledge of native plants, especially those that were obscure or difficult to identify, and was always planning the next botanical treasure hunt.

Local restoration groups such as He Kōtare nursery and South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group, fondly recall Pat's generosity in sharing his knowledge. His dedication and generosity came through as a valued member of the expert panel of the conservation status of vascular plants in the Wellington region, providing assessments until the week before he died.

Because Pat knew he had an incurable disease, he distributed his book collection and papers to many people around Aotearoa. Marley Ford, one of the recipients, wrote "I will miss Pat and his random, interesting questions and good humour but will remember him by the pile of books he left."

Pat botanising at Whitireia Park 2014. Photo: Robyn Smith.

As Ines Schönberger wrote of Pat,

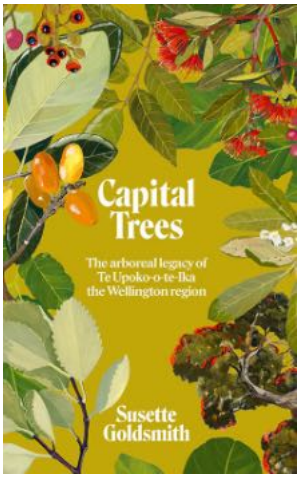
"Pat Enright's generosity with his time, his knowledge, and his feedback has left a lasting legacy at the Allan Herbarium and within the broader botanical community. His contributions will continue to support and enrich the work of researchers, volunteers, and fellow botanists for years to come."

Many thanks to all the contributors: Margaret Enright, Tony Silbery, Ines Schönberger, Melissa Hutchison, John Barkla, Jane Lenting, Karen Mikaera, Marley Ford, Chris Horne, John Sullivan, Leon Perrie, Lara Shepherd, Philippa Crisp.

Robyn Smith

Capital Trees: the arboreal legacy of Te Upoko-o-te-Ika the Wellington Region

by Susette Goldsmith



Anyone interested in trees and human history will find a lot of interest in this book. Whereas the title indicates Wellington region is the focal area, much of the information relates to urban trees, most of which are introduced from other parts of New Zealand or the world. Reading about the many specific trees and plantings in this book I did wonder whether Wellington should be tag-named Pōhutukawa City or Pine City as both species seem to have played a prominent role in our history. Even today, it is impossible to not see either species in most views of the city.

Capital Trees is in three parts. The first discusses notable trees, tree registers and the evolution of systems for curating these lists, including the role that various people have played. Among those was H. H. Allan who, as the NZ Institute of Horticulture's Honorary Botanist, published the first list in 1940. The herbarium at Te Papa (WELT) is noted for its place in Wellington's arboreal heritage, with illustrations of herbarium specimens of *Fuscospora* species collected through time by Banks and Solander, W.R.B. Oliver and Eleanor Burton. The two other main herbaria in Aotearoa are also mentioned – Auckland (AK) and Lincoln (CHR) but I think Susette missed an opportunity here by not referring to the full name and history of CHR: the Allan Herbarium, named for H.H. Allan who founded the plant collection when he was appointed as a systematic botanist to the Plant Research Station in Palmerston North in 1928. The herbarium was relocated from Palmerston North to Wellington in 1936 when the Plant Research Station was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and Botany Division was created, with H.H. Allan as its first Director. Then in 1954 Botany Division was relocated from Wellington to Christchurch and four years later moved again to Lincoln where the purpose-built Allan Herbarium was established. Thus, Wellington has housed two major plant collections as part of its arboreal heritage.

The second part of *Capital Trees* deals with native and non-native trees and the debate that has raged for decades about the merits and influences of non-native trees – refer here to my musings above about a tag name for Wellington city. Pōhutukawa is the first word in this Part but very quickly we are joining Wellington BotSoc's very own Lower Hutt rātā walks, led by our current President, Kate Jordan! It's wonderful that this initiative by the late Dave Holey, revived by Kate and now being led by John Barnett has proved useful for Susette's research and features in *Capital Trees*. If you haven't been on one of these walks, consider joining one to learn more about our arboreal heritage! John Gretton MacKenzie (Pōhutukawa Mac), Wellington Gardens' boss went all out planting pōhutukawa because they were so resilient to local weather. Readers may be astounded to learn just how many have been planted over

the years. There is some interesting history in this Part about some of the people involved in the debate over the years.

Part Three discusses trees as monuments and here we learn whether some trees really do have the connections to locations of historic significance that they are purported to be linked to—(DNA analysis reveals true ancestry). We also learn of the checkered history of some individual trees that, often more than once, have been inconveniently in the wrong place at the wrong time. Interactions between kākā and trees are briefly discussed: their well-known ability to destroy introduced species by ring-barking them to access sap. Our native species are similarly targeted but most survive, especially tōtara with bark that strips along the trunk and an active cambium that heals wounds over time. Zealandia and Ōtari-Wilton's Bush and particularly Moko, the old rimu, are mentioned for their arboreal legacy value to the City. In this Part is a lovely two-page photograph by Julia Stace of the karaka grove on Taranaki Street Wharf (pp. 220–1).

One thing I really like about this book, apart from all the fascinating information, is the cover. The colours are fabulous and the illustrations, with the exception of the oak on the back cover, are all by Nancy Adams. I would buy the book for the cover alone! Most of the photographs are by Jean-Claude Stahl and they are excellent but I think many of them would have looked even better if they had been bled out to the edges.

A few wee comments I'd make are: the Department of Conservation began life on 1 April 1987 (top of p. 60); Te Papa's herbarium actually transitioned from Buckle Street to Cable Street via a temporary home in Taranaki Street for much of the 1990s—slightly less distance to transport it once the shift to purpose-built premises came (p. 63); the fuss over the sycamore that was felled in Sycamore Gap near Hadrian's Wall (somewhat outside of the Wellington region!) is notable because sycamore is not native to the UK (pp. 208–9)—so many forests are dominated by sycamore in Britain that the locals don't realise it has usurped native species. It was introduced in the 1500s!

Having read *Capital Trees* from cover to cover to write this review, I know I will be dipping into it time and again for the specific details about different trees or history associated with trees. The excellent index will be a big help in finding the bits I'll be looking for. I definitely recommend this book, if you haven't already got a copy.

Dr Carol West

Kaiwharawhara regeneration volunteering

Most Wellingtonians are close to a naturally regenerating gully somewhere near their home; each gully has a stream or a trickle that ends up in the harbour (a small water catchment). Wellington's largest catchment is the Kaiwharawhara.

Let me take you on a journey down the Kaiwharawhara catchment. It starts below the Brooklyn wind turbine, flows through Zealandia, Birdwood Reserve, under Appleton Park, alongside and under Ian Galloway Park, through Ōtari, under the Johnsonville railway line at Crofton Downs, where it is joined by the Korimako Stream which rises on Mt Kaukau. It then flows through beautiful Trelissick Park / Ngaio Gorge. When it emerges from the park at Kaiwharawhara, it goes underground again, under the oil tank on Kaiwharawhara Rd, then behind the Kaiwharawhara businesses, under the Hutt Rd, the motorway and the main trunk railway line to Centreport, where it enters the harbour beside the InterIslander Ferry Terminal. It is the only Wellington City catchment with a natural estuary! It is a natural corridor for native birds, fish and plants with remarkable biodiversity for such a complex urban catchment. It's a Wellington treasure.

Over many decades, a veritable army of volunteers has worked to restore the catchment—from Zealandia at the top of the catchment, through Ōtari, to Trelissick Park at the bottom. If you are able, the Trelissick Park Group is looking to grow its volunteer numbers. There are two working bees each month, on the first Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30pm, and then again on the Wednesday ten days later, from 1:30 to 3:30pm. Details can be found on the Trelissick Park Group website. Working bees focus on weeding in the summer and planting in the winter. If you are unable to commit to a regular working bee but want to help, you might consider adopting a spot in the park to look after in your own time. Again you can find details on our website.

The park is also a great place for botanising. And of course, the Wellington Botanical Society was one of the organisations that founded the Trelissick Park Group back in 1991! You're very welcome to join our committed group of restoration volunteers.

Anne Tuffin

Te whaitua o Te Kaiwharawhara. Photo: Rob Suisted.

TRIP REPORTS

11 October 2025: Kaitoke – Puffer Track area, Tararua Range

Wet but worth it was the general opinion. In drizzle or rain with good bush shelter, our party of sixteen headed off from the DOC Kiwi Ranch carpark along the very muddy track. Opened in 2014 to replace the previous carpark at the end of Marchant Road, the track climbs via a series of steps through beech and mixed broadleaved forest until reaching the benched track, just below the ridge of the old Puffer Track. In the mixed forest, we noted one or two *Syzygium maire* / swamp maire not far from the carpark and the stream, along with a good variety of trees, shrubs and ferns. We discussed the pale-looking *Rubus australis* young plants at ground level beside the track and *Alseuosmia pusilla,* unfortunately too early for flowering. A white maire / *Notolaea* (*Nestegis*) *lanceolata* invited the usual discussion.

A little higher up, orchids and common sundews / *Drosera auriculata* were plentiful. *Chiloglottis cornuta* and *Corybas oblongus* were just coming into flower. Also present under mānuka were patches of *Gleichenia ?dicarpa* and increasingly frequent *Dracophyllum filifolium. Pseudopanax colensoi* / mountain five-finger was appearing too.

White maire / *Notolaea cunninghamii* (formerly *Nestegis cunninghamii*). Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

At the level of the benched track the vegetation is mānuka/kāmahi dominant, with much *Gahnia* (*G. xanthocarpa* and *G. procera*) and kiokio fern. As the track winds into little gullys, beech/mixed forest species are seen again towering above dripping wet banks. Pausing with a hand lens showed *Hymenophyllum bivalve* to be prominent along with some of the other eight *Hymenophyllum* species we recorded and two specimens of *Lindsaea trichomanoides*. A particularly large *Cordyline banksii* was spotted above the track on the return walk.

The front of the party continued beyond the Dobson Loop Track turnoff towards the Puffer Saddle, turning back after a while, some planning to eat later in the day. Others ate beside the northern rātā tree at the turnoff.

No-one used paper in the rain—everyone opted to record on cameras/phones.

Hymenophyllum bivalve.
Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

Participants: John Barnett, Paul Bell-Butler, Eleanor Burton, Eric Cairns, Michele Dickson, Joe Dillon, Jenny Fraser, Juliette Fuerhop, Erica Hobbs, Tayla Hook, Russel Hooper, Ned Johnston, Mick Parsons, Janelle Veenendaal, Ingrid Ward.

15–16 November 2025: Hiwinui Forest Park – northern Aorangi Range

Saturday 15 November

On a fine but windy day a party of nine keen botanists met up in Martinborough. Traveling in convoy via Dry River Road we set off to explore the upper Dry River catchment above the road. The Dry River catchment above the road is owned and managed by the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) which inherited the property from the old Wairarapa Catchment Board. Currently much of the catchment is pine plantation but has mature remnants of mixed red, black and hard beech forest, and what was tōtara mataī forest at the bottom of the property, but this is now highly degraded. The Dry River drains the very north–northwest of the Aorangi Range toward Martinborough and the Ruamahanga River, with the head of Dry River and the GWRC property backing onto the Aorangi Forest Park. GWRC intends to open the catchment up to non-motorised recreation, and the purpose of the Wellington Botanical Society's visit was to make a comprehensive list of the species seen and heard.

The day was dry, with occasional cloud and not too hot. We initially parked on the side of the road before the first ford where we organised into two 4WDs and setting off anticlockwise along spurs around the block using the forestry roads. Eager for the first stop we halted at a small patch of black beech - hard beech forest adjacent to the road. The first impression was created by the prolific flowering of the *Pomaderris amoena.* The flowering drew attention to the neighbouring sedge *Morelotia affinis*. A great start. With the adrenalin flowing we looked for *Drymoanthus* species on the beech trees, *Leucopogon fasciculatus* and *Leptecophylla juniperina,* without success. Only one dead specimen of *Drymoanthus adversus* was seen all weekend. The beech remnant was small with an open understorey, invading saplings of *Acacia melanoxylon* and occasional patches of deer droppings. We walked up the road a short distance noting the abundance of *Poa anceps* growing on the roadside banks, and number of *Euchiton species.*

The next stop was at a crossing of the head-waters of a creek. We botanised downstream from the culvert to the first fork then a short way up the left hand branch returning the same way. Travel was easy due to the plentiful animal trails. Discussion was had regarding which species each *Hoheria* tree was with both *H angustifolia* and *H sexstylosa* present. We added *Carex* spp, *Astelia fragrans* and *Myosotis forsteri* to the list

Lunch was had at the lower boundary next to a *Carex geminata* wetland. A nearby seepage also got a close

inspection, with *Stellaria parviflora* an addition to the list. It was noted the boundary fence is in poor condition and not stock-proof.

The small south-facing beech remnant.

Prolific flowering of *Pomaderris amoena*.

After lunch we headed for the top of the catchment around 600 m above sea level. Firstly, we botanised below the road in east-facing red beech-black beech forest with a kāmahi subcanopy on steep slopes. After this, one vehicle returned to the bottom and the parked cars where Pat and Linda returned to Carterton. The remaining five headed up the spur on an overgrown logging road into scrub and regenerating kāmahi. The flora here was very different with *Gaultheria rupestris* added to the list along with a number of orchids.

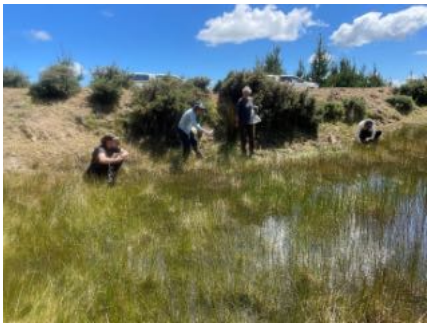
Camp was set up on the flat paddocks next to Dry River. The evening was calm and cool and after dinner and some night searching for invertebrates we retired to bed.

Sunday 16 November

We awoke Sunday to another fine calm day. The seven of us headed back up the catchment on the forestry roads in a clockwise direction. We were keen to botanise the lower streams so did not proceed far before getting out of the vehicles where the stream was still alongside the road. Here we added a lot of shrubs, ferns, herbs, bryophytes and some more orchids to the list. A second stop further up the stream added to the list of species with most of the regenerating forest species present. Back at the vehicles we had only proceeded a short way up the road up the spur when eagle-eyed Leon spotted the weedy fern *Polypodium vulgare.* We stopped and weeded the plant and made a collection for the Te Papa herbarium. The location was noted and reported to the GWRC pest plants team and a follow-up sweep for more plants was conducted a couple of weeks later.

We carried on half way up the spur to a large patch of regenerating scrub with the occasional young beech tree. Here we added the surprise find of a terrestrial *Metrosideros robusta*, *Knightia excelsa* and *Geniostoma ligustrifolium* to the list, along with more fern species.

Driving up the spur our next stop was a small wetland near the top of the catchment. Here a number of sedges, rushes and aquatic herbs like *Myriophyllum propinquum*, *Schoenus apogon*, *Eleocharis acuta* and *Luzula picta* were added to the list. After thoroughly botanising the wetland we had lunch with expansive views across the lower Ruamahanga.



Small wetland in the upper catchment.

The final stop for botanising was a large patch of black-red-hard beech forest with an emergent rimu. Again, there was animal browse and sign throughout. *Corybas species* were abundant through the leaf litter and *Pterostylis trullifolia* along with *Nestegis lanceolata,* and *Dacrydium cupressinum* were added to the list. We exited this site to finish what had been a rewarding and interesting weekend of botanising.

The plant list totalled at least 207 native and 88 adventive plants, plus bryophytes, lichens and invertebrates lists still being worked on. The bird list included 11 native and 6 exotic species.

Participants: 2 days – Owen Spearpoint co-leader and scribe, Laura Girvan West co-leader and chief organiser, Janelle Veenendal, John Barnett, Leon Perrie, Lara Shepherd, Eleanor Burton. Saturday – Pat Mclean, Linda Sexton.

Lunch time view

4 and 6 December: Rātā-viewing walks – Woburn, Lower Hutt

Twelve came on Thursday: Fiona Angus, John Barnett (trip leader), Wendy MacDougal, Thomas Metz, Chris Milne, Cr Andy Mitchell, Allan Munro, Mick Parsons, Gabe and Alan Sorensen, Fiona Strachan, Sheng Xu. Four of us on Saturday: John Barnett (trip leader), Cr Catherine Field-Dodgson, Andy Mitchell, Simon Wilkinson. This compares with 13 and 12 on the walks in 2024.

Flowering of northern rātā was at its peak, the best in three years. The most spectacular was on Waiwhetu Rd at St Paul's Anglican Church. Around the corner in Guthrie St, beside a second northern rātā, the Reverend Karl Weeks-Dickson kindly served cold drinks and told how in 2005 a garage was demolished, not the northern rātā as proposed. This was due to the concerted interest of several parties, including BotSoc.

The large tree on the corner of Leighton Avenue and Whites Line East (WLE) was flowering grandly on the north side, while bare on the south. Young flowering northern rātā planted by Hutt City Council at the intersection of Hawkins St and WLE were thriving, with Mick reporting no sign of myrtle rust. A former mystery tree outside 138 WLE, has been identified by Jeremy Rolfe as *Metrosideros collina* and was again in flower. About six trees could be seen flowering in Hayward Reserve. The 3-km route gave us time for discussion of growth forms and identification features of *Metrosideros robusta*, *M. excelsa*, *M. umbellata*, *M. perforata*, *M. diffusa* and *M. fulgens*. Mnemonics shared were N for Northern and Notch. S for Southern and Sharp-tip. And PDF for M. perforata, M. diffusa and M. fulgens. Leaves of each of these six species were handed out for comparison. A two-page handout pamphlet was given out and further resources were emailed to participants after the walks.

John Barnett

ATTENDING FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

Ideas please

We welcome your ideas about:

- places to visit on field trips, and potential leaders of those field trips.
- topics and speakers for evening meetings

Please send your ideas to Dr Lara Shepherd, lara.shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz, PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140 .

Field trips—single day

A field trip, usually lasting 4–5 hours, is an opportunity to learn how to identify native plants and adventive plants (weeds). During the trip, experienced participants record the species seen. After it, a new or updated plant list will be produced for the site. This list will be published on the NZ Plant Conservation Network website, and copies sent to trip participants, landowners and managers.

If you intend to join a field trip, PLEASE phone or e-mail the leader at least TWO DAYS beforehand, so that he / she can tell you of any changes and / or particular requirements. If you cannot ring or e-mail in advance, you are welcome to join on the day. If you e-mail your intention, the leader will send you a copy of the draft plant list, so that you can print it out to bring with you. If you do not have a printer, tell the leader. At the meeting place, the trip leader will ask you to write on the registration form your name, email address (so that you can receive the updated plant list), and a phone number for the leader to ring your next-of-kin in an emergency.

Booking on field trips: Give the leader/s your cellphone number so that we can contact you if you are running late.

What bring—clothing

Choose from the following items, according to the weather forecast, and your personal needs: sun hat, woollen or polyprop beanie or balaclava, waterproof / windproof raincoat (parka) and over-trousers, long-sleeved cotton shirt*, singlet*, thermal or woollen top, woollen jersey or fleece jacket, nylon shorts or trousers*, polyprop long-johns, underclothes, thick socks, boots or walking shoes, gloves / mittens.

*Note: In wet, cold weather, do not wear cotton shirts, singlets, t-shirts and trousers.

What to bring—gear and food

Day pack with lunch, biscuits or scroggin, hot or cold drink, spare clothing, personal first-aid kit, notebook, pen, pencil, mobile phone, wallet. Optional: walking pole, clipboard, map or park brochure, camera, binoculars, hand lens, sunblock, sunglasses, insect repellent, whistle, toilet paper.

Field trips—overnight

Field trips usually last two days; at Easter, three days. We may be based at a campground with or without cabins, or a rented house, or a private bach. The field trip may last 4–7 hours each day.

Overnight trip gear and food

Add to the day-trip gear, food and drink listed above: breakfast, fresh fruit, torch, spare bulb and batteries, candle, mug, plate, knife, fork, spoon, small towel, soap, tooth brush. If accommodation is not provided for, bring tent, fly, poles and pegs, groundsheet, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, sleeping-bag liner and stuff bag. Optional: matches in waterproof container, water purification tablets, pocket knife, large plastic survival bag to line pack, gaiters. Note: dinners may be 'pot-luck'—ask the leader to suggest what your contribution might be.

Summer camps

These field trips last 7–10 days. Full details will appear in the newsletter.

Postponing field trips

The committee has decided to postpone field trips affected by bad weather or other reasons, rather than to cancel them. Generally, they will be postponed until the following Saturday. However, this will not always be possible. You must register with the trip leader and provide your phone number. If the trip is postponed you can then be contacted and told about rescheduling arrangements.

Health and safety

The leader will bring BotSoc's comprehensive first-aid kit, a topographic map, a mobile phone, and give a health and safety briefing.

The leader will describe the route, and approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip.

Bring your own first-aid kit. If you have an allergy or medical condition, bring your own anti-histamines and medications, tell the leader of any problems you may have, and how to deal with them.

Before the trip, if you have any doubts about your ability to keep up with the party, discuss this with the trip leader, who has the right to restrict attendance.

If you decide to leave a trip early, you must tell the leader, and be confident that you know your way back to the start. Enter your name on the 'register' under a windscreen wiper on the leader's car, or other agreed place, to record your safe return.

Fitness and experience

Our field trips are mostly on established tracks, and at a leisurely pace, but vary considerably in the level of fitness and tramping experience required. Although our main focus is botanical, our programme sometimes offers trips which, in the pursuit of our botanical aims, are more strenuous than others. Although leaders take care to minimise risks, you participate at your own risk.

Transport

When the use of public transport is practical, details will appear in the newsletter.

We encourage the pooling of cars for trips. If you need a lift, tell the trip leader.

Passengers: Pay your driver your share of the running costs. We suggest 10c per km / passenger. If a trip uses the inter-island ferry, pay your share of the ferry fare. If you change cars mid-trip, leave a written note for your driver, under a windscreen wiper on her or his car, and check that your new driver adds you to her or his list.

Drivers: Ensure that you know the route to the start of

the trip, and that you have a written list of your passengers. Zero the odometer at the start, and agree on a return time. Check from your list that all your passengers are in the car. Collect contributions towards transport costs.

Trip leaders

Draft a trip report for the newsletter, including a list of participants, then send it to the editor.

When leading a field trip into a regional park please tell the park ranger beforehand.

Other matters

After your first BotSoc field trip, tell the leader if you think there is information newcomers would appreciate seeing about future trips, in the newsletter, on the web site, or on Wellington Glean Report.

If you would like to offer to lead a field trip, or be a deputy leader on a field trip, contact our programme organiser, Sunita Singh, sunita@actrix.co.nz

Meetings

Public transport to meetings

The following bus services stop on Kelburn Parade near Victoria University's Murphy Building Lecture Theatre M101:

TO MEETINGS

No. 18 Karori: 6.45 p.m. from Darlington Rd, Miramar, 7.17 p.m. @ VUW Stop B.

No. 18 Miramar: 6.51 p.m. from Allington Rd, Karori, 7.03 p.m. @ VUW Stop A.

No. 21 Courtenay Place: 7.02 p.m. from Karori Mall – Beauchamp St, Karori, 7.14 p.m. @ VUW Stop A.

No. 21 Wrights Hill: 7.00 p.m. from Courtenay Place – Stop B, 7.08 p.m. @ VUW.

No. 4 Mairangi: Strathmore Park 6.30 p.m., Courtenay Place 7.02, 7.22 p.m. @ VUW. Stop B.

No. 4 Strathmore Park: 6.50 p.m. from Norwich St, Wilton, 7.05 p.m. @ VUW. Stop A.

Cable Car: 00, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 minutes past the hour from Lambton Quay terminus to Salamanca Station. Ten-minutes walk up Kelburn Pde to Murphy Building lecture theatre M101 at VUW.

FROM MEETINGS

No. 4 Strathmore Park: VUW Stop A 8.45 p.m., 9.15 p.m. or 9.45 p.m.

No. 4 Mairangi: VUW Stop B 8.57 p.m. or 9.27 p.m.

No. 21 Courtenay Place: VUW Stop A 9.14 p.m. or 10.14 p.m.

No. 21 Wrights Hill: V.U.W. Stop B 9.38 p.m. or 10.38 p.m.

Cable Car: No service after 8 p.m.

Further information info@metlink.org.nz Metlink, 0800 801-700.

Zoom link for meetings

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89547154619?pwd=bE0zRXRWSXBBUkVoUjdPcElJNXlJUT09.

'What on earth?' revealed

Seeds in a dehisced (split open) capsule of mīkoikoi / NZ iris / *Libertia grandiflora*. *Libertia grandiflora* is the largest of five species of *Libertia* that can be found in the Wellington region. The flowers and, therefore, the fruit overtop the leaves of *L. grandiflora*, which sets this species apart from the other members of the genus *Libertia*. Photos: Jeremy Rolfe.

Wellington Botanical Society

Te Rōpū Manaki i Ngā Tamariki a Tāne, o Te Whanganui a Tara

New Membership application

I hereby make application for membership of the Wellington Botanical Society Inc., an incorporated society under the Incorporated Societies Act 2020.

I wish to join the Wellington Botanical Society ☐

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

The membership year is from 1 July to 30 June. Dues received after 1 May will be credited to the following year.

☐ Ordinary membership	$35.00	
☐ Country (out of Wellington area)	$30.00	
☐ Group/family	$40.00	
☐ Student	$10.00	$ _____
☐ Donation to the Jubilee Award Fund (optional)		$ _____
(Donations are tax deductible. Please request a receipt to be emailed to you if you require one.)	Total paid	$ _____

Please make payment to: **Wellington Botanical Society Inc.**

Bank Account: **02 0536 0017812 00**
Particulars: *Name*
Code: *Membership type*
Reference: A*mount of any included donation*

Authority to hold your name, address and phone number with the Society

I understand that if approved, my name, address and contact details will be added to the register of members, as required under the Act, and that I may resign my membership at any time. Contact information may also be used by the Society for communication, and mailing of bulletins etc. Under the Privacy Act the circulation of names on such lists requires the approval of the individual members. The list will not be used for marketing, soliciting or political purposes.

☐ I approve Signature: _____ Date: _____

Members' obligations

I agree to abide by the Members' Obligations as noted in the constitution (see excerpt below)·

Every Member shall provide the Society in writing with that Member's name and contact details (namely, physical address, email address and a telephone number) and promptly advise the Society in writing of any changes to those details.·

All Members shall promote the interests and purposes of the Society and shall do nothing to bring the Society into disrepute.

☐ I agree Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please **e-mail** this completed form to the Memberships Secretariat at wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com or post to Wellington Botanical Society Inc:

Memberships Secretary c/o Wellington Botanical Society Inc., PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140

www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz