

2005: Dr Peter Heenan – “Biosystematics – more than providing a name”

2006 & 2007: Ewen Cameron – “Thomas Frederick Cheeseman (1845-1923)” \*

2008: Dr George Gibbs – “The origin of New Zealand’s flora: how much do we really know?”\*

2009: Dr John Ogden – “Lessons from the coastal wetlands of Great Barrier Island”\*

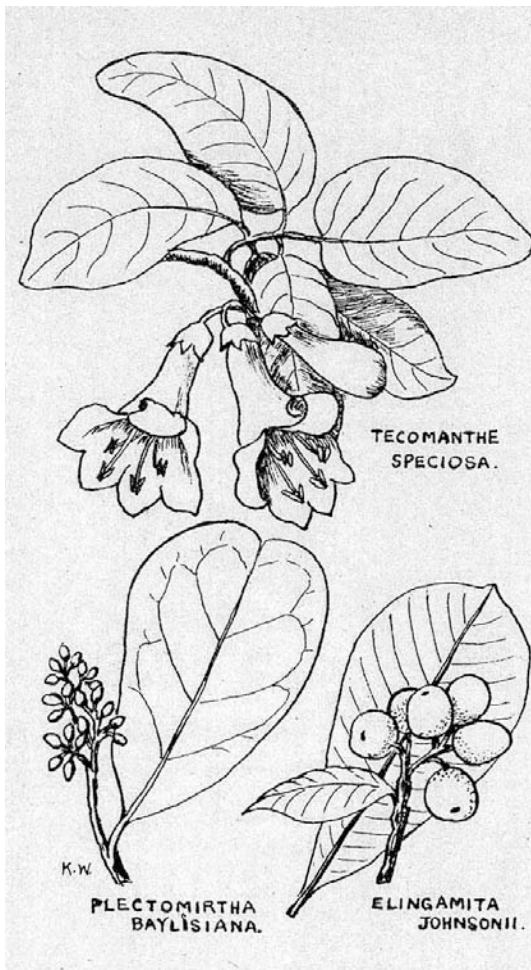
\* As yet unpublished.

## Historical Reprint

This article appeared in the 6 April 1966 issue of the *NZ Weekly News*. Article sourced by Maureen Young.

## Plant discoveries

by Kathleen Wood



The Three Kings Island group have yielded some remarkable botanical discoveries in recent years, two of them so rare that only single plants were found.

The first of these, *Plectomirtha* [*Pennantia*] *baylisiana*, is a tree with resinous bark, large, dark green glossy leaves and small flowers which form a drupe or nut. It was named after its discoverer Dr G.T.S. Baylis, of Otago University, who found only the one tree on Great Island in 1945. There also he found only one plant of a beautiful climber, a member of the Bignonia family. A year later Dr E.G. Turbott visited the island and gathered flowers and cuttings. Specimens were sent to Kew for identification and the plant was named *Tecomanthe speciosa*.

The next discovery was at West Island in 1951 when Major M.E. Johnson found a tree that was new to our flora [actually discovered by Major Johnson in Jan 1950 and described in 1951 by Geoff Baylis]. This grew on cliffs

above the scene of the tragic wreck in 1902 of the passenger steamer Elingamite and it was decided to name the new tree *Elingamita johnsonii* to commemorate this event. *Elingamita* is described as a glabrous tree with smooth bark. It has obovate laves about four to seven inches long, yellowish flowers and bright red fruit.

All these discoveries give the off-shore islands a tremendous value as sanctuaries for some of the rarest plants in the world; indeed, they are unique in this respect.

It is pleasant to note that the climber *Tecomanthe speciosa* has been successfully propagated from cuttings brought back from the original plant. First grown at the Plant Diseases Division at Mt Albert, rooted cuttings have been distributed and grow well in frost-free places. The rich, waxy cream flowers are beautiful and when in season can be seen in all their glory at the Auckland University where there is a fine specimen in cultivation.

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