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NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

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

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

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President's message

At the AGM last week in Wellington, Philippa Crisp stepped down as President after three years in the role, during which she has worked very hard on behalf of our members to further the important roles the network performs promoting plant conservation in New Zealand. It is great that Philippa is staying on as a council member, as is our Secretary, Rewi Elliott, our Treasurer, Nicky Oliver-Smith, and our inimitable web-master, John Sawyer, and valued council members Jesse Bythell and Susan Wisser, valued co-opted members Astrid van Meeuwen-Dijkgraaf and Shannel Courtney, all of whom work hard on behalf of the network. I would also like to welcome two new members to the Council: Matt Ward and Melissa Hutchison, along with Alex Fergus, a new co-opted member. These three replace Owen Spearpoint and Kerry Gillbanks (Council members) and Erik van Eyndhoven who is standing down after several years as a co-opted member. I am looking forward to working with them this year to continue to nourish and grow the Network. Our conference is coming up in May, in Auckland, and the programme is very topical and relevant to issues we are all grappling with, such as "Naturalising Natives". I look forward to seeing you there.

Sarah Beadel, President

PLANT OF THE MONTH – *OLEARIA SOLANDRI*



Olearia solandri. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

Plant of the month for February is the coastal tree daisy, *Olearia solandri*. This hardy coastal shrub is endemic to the North Island and the northern South Island. It can grow to heights of 4 m, though is often shorter when exposed to salt-laden coastal winds. Over summer, hundreds of small, scented, white flowers can smother the plant, followed by fruits with a pale brown pappus (the feathery structure that helps carry the fruit on wind currents). The leaves are small and linear, coloured light green to deep green with yellowish hairs underneath. The younger stems and branchlets are often also covered in yellow hairs and are sometimes sticky when crushed.

Olearia solandri is very easily cultivated and would make a nice addition to any well drained, sunny coastal garden. It responds well to pruning and propagates easily from seed. The species is named after Daniel Solander, who was a Swedish naturalist, an apostle of Carolus Linnaeus, and accompanied Joseph Banks on James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific aboard the *Endeavour*.

You can see the Network fact sheet for *Olearia solandri* at:

www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=1061

Call for Papers – Network Conference 2013

“*Are we there yet? 10 years of the Plant Conservation Network*” is the theme for the NZPCN conference for 2013 which will be held in Parnell, Auckland from Thursday 23 – Sunday 26 May 2013 (see other articles in the newsletter about the programme and timetable). Keynote speakers will kick off each of the six symposia:

- ***Back from the brink – threatened plant recovery*** on islands, on private land, in sanctuaries and in the city. Recovery, monitoring and adaptive management of threatened plant populations by government, communities and landowners
- ***Defining, understanding and banking our biota***. Understanding our biota through systematics, biogeography and research on seed banks, plant diseases and autecology
- ***Naturalising natives – friend or foe?*** The biogeography and impact of native weeds such as karaka, pohutukawa, mangrove and pohuehue amongst others
- ***Beyond the converted – plant conservation advocacy***. Promotion of the indigenous flora—engaging with business, farmers, communities, gardeners and the public to use and protect native plants
- ***The urban native plant oasis*** – the importance of trees and urban habitats. The importance of parks, road corridors, natural fragments, trees and the urban forest and novel, human induced ecosystems in the urban matrix
- ***What price conservation?*** Offsets, natural capital, nature’s services and the economic importance of native plants

Oral and poster presentations for each symposium are welcome and these should be submitted following the guidelines below. You may choose whether to make an oral and/or poster presentation but review committees for each symposium will decide what is included in the final conference programme. Abstracts should be submitted for both forms of presentation. Presentations covering other aspects of plant conservation are welcome but preference will be given to those that fit with the conference symposia.

Guidelines for submitting papers and the timetable

- Abstract(s) of no more than 300 words should be sent on or before 22 April by e-mail to the Network (info@nzpcn.org.nz).
- Oral presentations of contributed papers are limited to 20 minutes including discussion.
- Abstracts should include the:
 - Author name(s) (please indicate who will be presenting)
 - Preferred symposium for your talk
 - Name of your organisation (if applicable)
 - Oral presentation or poster
 - Contact details including e-mail address
- Authors of accepted papers notified by Monday 29 April.
- Final abstracts for accepted papers due by Monday 6 May for inclusion in conference booklet.

THE 2013 TANE NGAHERE LECTURE

Discovery and description of the New Zealand flora ... more than just a name

The Network's Tane Ngahere lecture for 2013 will be given by Dr Peter Heenan (Landcare Research). This will be on Friday 24 May as part of the opening symposium of the Network's conference (Defining, understanding and banking our biota).

Abstract: New Zealand botany has a rich legacy that dates back to the discovery of the islands by both Maori and European explorers. From the time of the first formal naming of the indigenous flora there has always been a strong interest in its "discovery and description", along with understanding relationships, origins, evolutionary history, and historical and present distributions. The myriad of DNA data now available and new methods of analysis are revolutionising our understanding of the origins, evolution, and composition of the flora. This presentation provides a contemporary synthesis of our endeavours at "discovery and description" of the New Zealand flora.

Are we there yet? 10 years of the Plant Conservation Network—Network Conference 2013

Several of New Zealand's leaders in plant conservation and research have agreed to speak at the Network conference to be held in Parnell, Auckland.

Dame Anne Salmond (University of Auckland)

Symposium: Beyond the converted – plant conservation advocacy

Renowned New Zealand author and Distinguished Professor of Māori Studies and Anthropology, Dame Anne Salmond from The University of Auckland's Faculty of Arts.

Dr Peter Heenan (Landcare Research)

Symposium: Defining, understanding and banking our biota

Peter is a plant taxonomist who has worked for Botany Division, DSIR and Landcare Research where he currently leads the Allan Herbarium plant systematics research programme. He has research interests in the biology and taxonomy of indigenous and naturalised flowering plants and the phylogenetic and biogeographic history of the New Zealand flora. He has published over 140 papers on New Zealand botany as well as being co-author of the book *Threatened Plants of New Zealand* (2010).

Professor Dave Kelly (Canterbury University)

Symposium: Back from the brink – threatened plant recovery

Dave Kelly grew up in Wellington, graduated with a BSc(Hons) from Massey University in 1977 and a PhD from Cambridge University in 1982, and has been at the University of Canterbury since 1985. His main research interests are in plant-animal interactions, particularly mast seeding, bird pollination, fruit dispersal, and weed biological control. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ, and the NZ Ecological Society gave him the Te Taio Tohu award in 2000 and honorary life membership in 2006. For many years, through the New Zealand Ecological Society he has published advice on how to give a good conference talk, which opens up his talks for close examination to see if he follows his own rules.

Dr Leon Perrie (Te Papa Tongarewa)

Symposium: Naturalising natives – friend or foe?

Leon is a botanist based at Te Papa museum and works with its collection of plant specimens. He specialises in the evolutionary history and taxonomy of ferns. He is interested in the distribution of New Zealand's plants, in terms of both documenting them and understanding the causes. This includes study of the geographic distribution of genetic variation within species.

Dr Mike Wilcox (Auckland)

Symposium: The urban native plant oasis

Mike is a retired forestry consultant and research director, living in Mangere Bridge. He is President of the Auckland Botanical Society, Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry, and member of the International Dendrology Society, Forest & Bird Protection Society and the Auckland Tree Council, and takes a keen interest in the trees of Auckland. He is also an Honorary Research Associate at the Auckland Museum, engaged in documenting the seaweed flora of Auckland's diverse coasts.

Draft NZPCN conference programme 2013

The conference is to be held in Auckland at the Quality Hotel, Parnell, <http://www.theparnell.co.nz/> (20 Gladstone Road Parnell, Auckland 1052). The draft programme is as follows (but may be subject to minor changes). Please check the Network website (www.nzpcn.org.nz) for updates.

Thursday 23 May

Training day (9.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Training day at the Auckland Botanic gardens (sponsored by the gardens):

1. Plant identification course run by the Department of Conservation
2. Seed collection course run by the Millennium Seed Bank (UK)
3. Plant propagation course run by native plant nursery managers

Welcome event (6.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.)

Conference welcome event to be held at a venue in central Auckland

Friday 24 May

Tane Ngahere Lecture

Presented by Dr Peter Heenan (Landcare Research)

Symposium papers (9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.)

- ***Defining, understanding and banking our biota.*** Understanding our biota through systematics, biogeography and research on seed banks, plant diseases and autecology.
- ***Naturalising natives – friend or foe?*** The biogeography and impact of native weeds such as karaka, pohutukawa, mangrove and pohuehue amongst others.
- ***What price conservation?*** Offsets, natural capital, nature's services and the economic importance of native plants.
- ***Back from the brink – threatened plant recovery*** on islands, on private land, in sanctuaries and in the city. Recovery, monitoring and adaptive management of threatened plant populations by government, communities and landowners.

Saturday 25 May

Symposium papers (9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.)

- ***Beyond the converted – plant conservation advocacy.*** Promotion of the indigenous flora—engaging with business, farmers, communities, gardeners and the public to use and protect native plants.
- ***Back from the brink – threatened plant recovery*** on islands, on private land, in sanctuaries and in the city. Recovery, monitoring and adaptive management of threatened plant populations by government, communities and landowners.
- ***The urban native plant oasis*** – the importance of trees and urban habitats. The importance of parks, road corridors, natural fragments, trees and the urban forest and novel, human induced ecosystems in the urban matrix.

Conference dinner

This will be held at the conference venue in Parnell from 7.00 p.m.

Sunday 26 May

Field trips

Three field trips from 8.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m:

- Mataia Private Restoration, Kaipara Harbour
- Rotoroa Island Restoration, Hauraki Gulf
- Auckland's Urban Forest

Summer camp report 2013

Alastair Macdonald, Canterbury Botanical Society (alastairmac22@xtra.co.nz)

Sixteen people arrived in Tekapo and settled into the well-appointed military camp facility with eight-bunk, two-room huts and a large kitchen/dining room. On our way to Tekapo we were disappointed to see wallaby road kill at Burks Pass; they have come a long way north and west.

On the first day, Saturday, we explored the Lake Tekapo shore and a good thing we did it on the first day because by the following Thursday that flat was flooded by the rise of the lake. We also explored the Tekapo Scientific Reserve on Cowans Hill. Some of the plants we saw were the native *Convolvulus verecundus*, *Montia angustifolia*, and *Raoulia monroi* and we also saw three rare black stilts feeding on a small pond.

Sunday came in fine but with low cloud coming through Burks Pass. Anyway, we headed for Mount Dobson and drove up the 15 km ski field road in thick cloud and misty rain. To everyone's delight, we popped up above the cloud just a couple of hundred metres before the ski field car park and a wonderful day was had botanising in the sun. Among other things, we saw *Aciphylla dobsonii* in flower as well as *Veronica haastii*, *Carmichaelia vexillata*, *Leptinella atrata* and *Ranunculus crithmifolius*.



Convolvulus verecundus.



Aciphylla dobsonii (far left) and *Leptinella atrata*.

On Monday, we were very privileged to be escorted out on the military range country by range warden Sam Staley. He took us on a long and rough 4WD track to Freds Tarn, one of only two saline string fen tarns in the country. There we saw an abundance of *Drosera acturi* and *Utricularia dichotoma*. We then drove to a huge boulder field known as the moonscape where we saw *Veronica cupressoides* and a range of other shrubs. The army has a comprehensive conservation programme that includes animal and plant pest control, damage mitigation and a 5 yearly plant survey. That night we had a grand shared tea.

The following day, Tuesday, we travelled to the Round Hill Ski Field, which was botanically very interesting and well worth a visit if you are in the area, especially the scree to the east of the ski run. There at about 1600 m we saw *Notothlaspi rosulatum* in full flower. We also saw *Ranunculus crithmifolius* and *R. haastii* in full seed, *Leptinella atrata* in full flower, *Haastia sinclairii*, *Raoulia eximia*, *Aciphylla montana* var. *montana*, both male and female, in full flower, *Myosotis pygmaea* in flower and *Veronica epacridea* and *V. haastii*. We had no plant list for Round Hill so we started one of our own with a copy enclosed with this report.



On Wednesday, we had a rest day because the weather changed to rain from the north-west, but that didn't stop people going out in the rain and exploring the local area with a sighting of the rare *Lepidium solandri* on the creek banks near the camp. That night, we were treated to a howling Norwester, with hut shaking, thunder, lightning and torrential rain.



Notothlaspi rosulatum (top) and *Myosotis pygmaea*.

The next day dawned with sunshine, blue skies and strong breezes. The rain stayed away but the breezes rose to a very stiff wind and the Godley River was bank to bank in full flood from the overnight deluge.

So, on the last day trip, we decided to go back to Round Hill and explore Coal Creek at the bottom of the ski area road. The creek was too full to cross so we meandered up the right bank and then climbed up the terrace to the ski field road and back to the cars. Some of the things we saw were *Helichrysum depressum*, *Veronica subalpina*, *V. rakiaensis*, *V. pimeleoides* and *Carmichaelia crassicaulis*.

The camp wound up with a wonderful shared meal for tea on the last night.

Illustrated glossary available as website pop-up

All illustrated glossary terms are now available as a pop-up and can be accessed by rolling your cursor over any term on the Network website that is highlighted with a faint underline. Several months ago the Network added over 300 photographs to illustrate technical and botanical terms on the Network's online glossary.

Thanks go to Network members Tony Foster and Sue Wickison who provided the fabulous photographs and drawings to illustrate each glossary term. For example, see the stipule on [Coprosma grandifolia](#) (right) taken by Tony Foster.



See also the Network's glossary pages for all glossary terms:

- [Glossary](#)

Please send any images, to add to this database, to the Network at: info@nzpcn.org.nz

The cat controversy

John Sawyer posted a question to the Plant Network forum about whether killing cats was a sensible approach to protecting indigenous ecosystems. One reply highlighted this science blog by Wayne Linklater that is worth a read. Feel free to circulate to anyone who loves cats or loves wildlife.

http://sciblogs.co.nz/politecol/?p=509&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciblogsnz+%28SciBlogs.co.nz%29

Number of plant images passes 24,000!

Thanks to a growing team of photographers nationwide, the Network's online image library has passed the 24,000 images mark! Images provided in the last month plugged gaps in our collection for several species. Images have been provided this month by Sue Lake, Colin Ogle, Graeme Jane, Alastair Macdonald, Jesse Bythell, Jeremy Rolfe, Rob Cole, Tony Foster, Bill Clarkson, Dave Toole, Simon Walls and John Sawyer. Can you add to or improve on what we already have? Do you have habitat shots, flowers, bark, seed, fruit or leaves? Please look through your image collections and search out your best shots. Please send named images to the Network as jpeg files on a CD to PO Box 16-102, Wellington or by email to info@nzpcn.org.nz.



A photo of *Pimelea gnidia* by Simon Walls, recently added to the network website.

It's all Latin to me!

Jesse Bythell (jesse.bythell@orcon.net.nz)

Recently, I have been helping to populate the new etymology section of the website which explains the derivations of botanical names. I am finding this project immense fun, and not just because I finally have a use for all my years of studying Latin!

As many people will already know, the naming convention used today is based on the system developed by the 18th century Swedish naturalist Karl von Linne, best known by his Latinised name Carolus Linnaeus. Linnaeus's nested hierarchical taxonomic classification and binomial naming system is regarded by many people as his biggest contribution to the natural sciences. Latin was the international language of science and scholarly inquiry from around 1500 to 1900 and much of Linnaeus's work is written in Latin. The need for a precise and economical way to describe the natural world drove the development of scientific Latin, which is quite different from classical and ecclesiastical Latin, and has become an invaluable scientific tool. The English botanist, Edred Corner (1906–1996) remarked:

“We botanists keep Latin alive. We read it, write it, type it, speak it when our mother tongues fail, and succeed in putting things such as orchid flowers and microscopic fungi into universal understanding through Latin.”

Botanical Latin incorporates a large number of Greek words and as well as words originating from other languages, which are given Latin suffixes in order to be treated correctly. Latin is a highly inflected language, meaning much of the information about the roles words perform within sentences is indicated by suffixes (endings). Each species' name is made of up of two parts: a noun denoting the genus and an adjective or noun denoting the species. The species epithet must agree with the genus epithet in number, gender and case and this is why recurring species epithets have different endings, e.g., *Colobathus strictus*, *Dracophyllum strictum* and *Hebe stricta*. Plants named for their geographic location or in honour of a person are exceptions this rule. Here the species epithet is in the genitive case, which indicates possession or origin, e.g., *Anisotome haastii* (Haast's carrot) or *Cyathea kermadecensis* (Kermadecs tree fern).

Becoming familiar with the meanings of botanical names is not only useful, it is also fun. Some interesting words I've come across recently include: *calliblepharoides* 'resembling beautiful eyelashes', *Clianthus* 'glory flower' and *Ranunculus* 'inhabiting marshy places where frogs live'.

If you would like to contribute to or correct etymological entries on the website, please contact us at: info@nzpcn.org.nz

Why have scientific names?

A question that is often asked is why do we have to have Latin scientific names (or else, why not just use common names)? Hopefully, the following example about the common name sycamore will help to answer that question.

- Greece: *Ficus sycomorus* (Family Moraceae)
- New Zealand, Britain: *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Family Sapindaceae)
- USA: *Platanus occidentalis* (Family Platanaceae)

One common name: three species from three different families!

(Note: sycamore is the English spelling of the Greek name meaning a fig that looks like a mulberry.)

Phenology recording takes off as thousands of plant observations are made

In January 2013, thousands of observations have been made on the Network's phenology recording system as people record flowering and fruiting of plants throughout the country. All these observations will help those involved in research and restoration and will improve our understanding of the status of native and exotic species alike. You can use the recording system to monitor changes in the flowering and fruiting times of plants in your garden or a local reserve. Or you can record fruiting times and so help those collecting seed for ecological restoration projects. The Network would like to thank those who have recorded observations in the last month and encourages others to get online and start registering their observations.

Update your Members Profile

The Members Profile on the Network website has been updated to allow members to provide more information about themselves and so improve networking via the website. The Members Profile allows you to provide contact details, information about yourself, upload a photo of yourself or a favourite plant, select up to three of your favourite plants, describe a few places that are your favourites for looking at plants. This profile also harvests data about you from the website such as which books you have made, how many phenology observations you have recorded on the site and what forum questions you have asked. We encourage you to log on to the site and update your profile. Note that Members Profile pages are visible only to other Network members and you can control what information is made visible to them by ticking permission boxes.

The screenshot displays the Plant Network website interface. At the top, there is a search form titled "SEARCH PHENOLOGY OBSERVATIONS" with fields for Species (Melicytus ramiflorus), Event, Year, Status (Native), and District. Below the search form is a map of New Zealand showing several observation points marked with colored pins. The user profile for John Sawyer is visible, including his contact information, a photo, and a list of his favorite plants: Metrosideros robusta, Rhoicarpus alatus, and Quercus macrocarpa. The profile also shows forum posts, books made, and observation statistics.

Elevating the alpine

Shane Gilchrist, *Otago Daily Times*

Eminent and ever-busy New Zealand botanist Sir Alan Mark has completed a definitive guide to our alpine environment, the result of a passion for plants and wild places that has spanned more than half a century. In order to outline a fundamental function of Sir Alan Mark's latest project, *Above the Treeline: A Nature Guide to Alpine New Zealand*, it's not entirely off-topic to discuss the pages of another book.

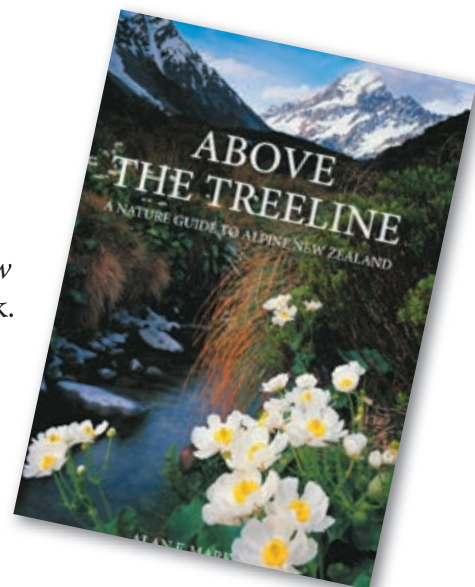
The *Reader's Digest Family Encyclopaedia of Animals* makes a salient point in its foreword: that such tomes are likely to be revised for two reasons, one admirable, the other sad. On one hand, new discoveries of species would bolster pages; on the other, certain types might no longer exist come any updating of the publication.

Knighted in 2009 for his conservation work, Sir Alan agrees the same considerations apply to *Above the Treeline*, which could be regarded as the fourth revision of a series he started in 1973 with botanical artist Nancy Adams (others being published in 1986 and 1995). Approached by Nelson-based Craig Potton Publishing, the 80-year-old emeritus professor of botany at the University of Otago, admits the book required more work than he had expected. "Our plant taxonomists have been busy and there has been a lot of molecular work done since the last book. There has been a hell of a lot of literature since 1995 so it was a major task to catch up on that."

Above the Treeline, the first comprehensive field guide to New Zealand's alpine environment, describes and illustrates more than 850 species of flora and fauna and includes more than 1000 photographs in its almost 500 pages. The flora sections cover conifers, flowering plants, mosses, ferns, lichens and fungi; the sections on fauna are supplied by Rod Morris (birds), Mandy Tocher (lizards) and Brian Patrick (invertebrates).

"I know publishers are always keen for sales and there are a lot of books around that are the '100 most common ...' and so on. But, to me, there is nothing more frustrating than taking such a book into the field. You don't know if your particular interest is going to be covered or not," Sir Alan says. "The publishers were keen to make it comprehensive. I must say, I got a lot of support from botanical colleagues and people in government departments, including Landcare Research and the Department of Conservation. They saw my drafts and would comment, 'You haven't got this or that,' and would tell me where they had found plants." Another key source was the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. Established in 2003, with the vision that 'the rich, diverse and unique plant life of New Zealand will be recognised, cherished and restored', the network's research includes an in-depth website. "That was basically my bible, and I recognise the effort those people have made to keep New Zealand plant literature right up to the minute."

Though Sir Alan is a former president of the Royal Forest and Bird Society (1986–1990), a fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and recipient of that organisation's Hutton Medal in 1997 and its Charles Fleming Environmental Award in 2010, he steers clear of opinion within the pages of *Above the Treeline*. Yet the book does contain a message between the lines. The celebration of what lives in our wild alpine places comes with an unspoken caution about what we stand to lose. "I hope the book will add to the appreciation of what we have and also further efforts to ensure we retain them for their biodiversity value, their genetic value. We have a responsibility to the world at large to protect our unique biota for future generations," Sir Alan says. "It's a shame that we have to defend against some high-impact development on conservation land, areas that have high diversity and threatened species. I've been in conservation long enough to realise it is about reducing the rate of loss; there is little to be gained. So, hopefully, the book will add to the appreciation of what we have to cherish and encourage people to fight for our heritage."



According to the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, 75.4% of New Zealand's alpine vascular plants are considered 'not threatened'. Read another way, that means a quarter are. "I think our alpine plants aren't perhaps as threatened as our lowland forest plants, but there has been a fair bit of habitat modification and depletion in the South Island high country. The threat status of our plants and animals is high by international standards. Bear in mind, they don't occur anywhere else. And it is also very hard to retain those plants in anything other than their natural habitat," says Sir Alan.

Our alpine plants are special for a number of reasons. New Zealand has a greater range of alpine vegetation than occurs in most other parts of the world. Over 700 species of flora—a third of the total number of New Zealand's plant life—exist in alpine conditions, yet mountain ranges comprise just 10% of the country's total land area. And of those 700-odd species, 93% are endemic to the New Zealand Biological Region (which extends to the subantarctic islands).

That level of endemism hints at a long history of alpine evolution. But, in fact, the mountain habitat of New Zealand is, by geological standards, very recent, Sir Alan notes. "It only goes back five million years which, in evolutionary terms, is only yesterday. The extremes in temperature, short summers and high rates of erosion all help make New Zealand's alpine environment challenging, not only for the humans who explore it but also for the plants and animals that inhabit it. There have been a whole range of adaptations to fill all those various habitats or niches. Plants have evolved in interesting ways. For example, our alpine lichens have made three remarkable adaptations: they can become metabolically dormant when the environment dries out; they can photosynthesise at temperatures as low as minus 20°C; and they can colonise nutrient-poor substrata because they obtain their nutrients from the air, rain and snow."

Other 'remarkable' plants he lists include the largest buttercup in the world, *Ranunculus lyallii*, otherwise known as the Mt Cook buttercup. As with many of New Zealand's alpine flowers, it offers a limited palette.

"A lot of people find it disappointing that our alpine plants don't have interesting flowers—they are mostly white or yellow. Some plants (such as the button daisy, *Leptinella atrata* and its subspecies) do have colour. But often there is no evolutionary advantage to them having colour. It seems it is the insects that have let us down. A bit like our plants, insects have been isolated for so long that they are not very specialised. So they bumble about in flowers in which pollination often occurs at night-time."

Though he readily acknowledges many people aren't interested in grasses, Sir Alan has a fondness for tussocks. It's hardly surprising given he is an expert in upland grassland ecosystems. "They have an ability to conserve water. They have an adaptation in their fine, wispy foliage to minimise loss. That same foliage is very well-suited to extract water out of fog. We have shown through experiments on Mount Cargill that a tussock, sitting on its own, can capture half a litre of water an hour when we can't measure any rain; it just strips it from the fog. It thus provides water downstream for whatever use is required, be it conservation, recreation or exploitation."

Officially, Sir Alan retired in 1998. Yet he admits he hasn't slowed down too much. Not required to do university lectures, he's able to set his 'own priorities'. "I've been able to indulge my conservation interests. I've had two Environment Court cases and one Environment Canterbury case recently. I've been involved in the Nevis Valley case in which Pioneer Energy has submitted to flood part of the Nevis Valley. I think we made the case the valley was an outstanding landscape with outstanding values," he says, referring to the unanimous decision last year by parties to agree to the entire Nevis Valley being reclassified from a special natural landscape to outstanding natural landscape. (A decision from the Environment Court is still pending on another Nevis Valley case—whether the water conservation order on the Nevis River should be amended.)

"Recently, I've been involved with the Environment Court in the case regarding the Denniston Plateau, which is of high conservation value: it has very high biodiversity in lizards, invertebrates

and plants. It's conservation land but we now have to defend it against open-cast coal mining. I was asked to look at the international significance of the Denniston Plateau so I took in world heritage values and international wetland values. Then I had a case with Environment Canterbury which involved taking a look at Lake Sumner, which is the only unmodified lake in Canterbury and one of the few left in the South Island. A two-metre dam was proposed but by the time the case was to be heard, the proponents didn't front up."

Closer to home, the man who has dedicated his academic career to the study of plants, ecosystems and associated issues, does actually find time to spend in his own Dunedin garden. "I have a small native forest patch and a small alpine garden patch. I enjoy the outdoors. I took a group of people to the top of the Old Man Range in Central Otago this week. I've been keen to leave a bit of a legacy behind and put some signage up there explaining various aspects to visitors. There is a bit going on, but life is too short to hang your boots up."

This article first appeared in the Otago Daily Times magazine on 3 February, published here with permission

Craig Potton Publishing Offer

Craig Potton Publishing has an offer for Network members that expires on 28 February 2013. As a special offer to the Network, members can get a 20% discount and free delivery within New Zealand on the publications below by going to the publisher's website (www.craigpotton.co.nz) and placing your order for one, two or all three books and quoting PCN123.

- *Above the treeline* by Sir Alan Mark
- *Field Guide to New Zealand's Native Trees* by John Dawson and Rob Lucas
- *New Zealand Native Trees*, standard edition, by John Dawson and Rob Lucas

Indigenous plant conservation in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a country with rich plant diversity, 4000 plant species, of which 800 are endemic. There is a long cultural heritage of over 2500 years of those plants combined with ancient traditional agriculture. In the past, most of these plants were well utilized in building healthy rural communities under the guidance of traditional local healers and other members of the indigenous community.

These indigenous plant species have unique medicinal and nutritional properties useful in solving acute global health problems. They are connected with ethical, cultural, spiritual and social activities recognized from earliest days of human history. We have identified that there is an enormous wealth of important indigenous ecological knowledge associated with native plants and a dramatic loss of this traditional wisdom that could be well utilized for the benefit of mankind through future scientific research yet no proper plans are in place to preserve or use this valuable knowledge.

We are a group of people, who by meeting local healers and the indigenous community have been involved in exploring and documenting indigenous knowledge associated with native plants, the usage and home remedies. For the past couple of years we have collected and conserved disappearing native wild fruits and medicinal plant species.

In this exercise, as a Rare Plant Resource Centre (RPRC), we are establishing an ethno-garden focusing on native wild fruits and rare medicinal plants as an arboretum with over 250 species. We are documenting and transferring indigenous knowledge in fulfilling key academic and educational functions and we are providing a facility where people can learn, exchange information, research with hands-on experience with local traditional knowledge bearers by distributing these plants amongst Sunday schools with a firm commitment to plant conservation.



The Native Forest Foundation arboretum.

Half of the project has been completed by acquiring a land and conserving over 100 varieties of rare plant species and collecting and documenting some ethnobotanical data as well as conducting a number of plant conservation sessions through our established indigenous plant conservation network.

We trust that you would agree with us on the importance of initiating a project of this nature, especially in collecting disappearing native food plants and the documentation of traditional ecological knowledge by getting the younger generation involved in the sustainable utilization of natural resources.

If you would like to assist us please visit www.nativeforestsri Lanka.org Also you can reach us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Native-Forest-Foundation-Gampaha-Sri-Lanka/195936893768796?sk=wall

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):

Dune Restoration Trust conference

Conference: Tuesday 5 March to Thursday 7 March; optional Golden Bay/Farewell Spit field trip 8 -9 March. **Venue:** Tahuna Beach Holiday Park, Nelson. **Early registration date:** 8 February, final registration 28 February.

Further information: www.dunetrust.org.nz/news-and-events/conference-2013/

5th Global Botanic Gardens Congress

Dunedin: Sunday 20 to Friday 25 October, 2013.

Submit online: Proposals for symposia, papers and posters at www.5GBGC.com.

Auckland Botanical Society

Meeting: Wednesday 6 March at 7.30 p.m. for the AGM and a talk on *Lepidium* by the Lucy Cranwell recipient, Esther Dale. **Venue:** Unitec School of Health Sciences, Gate 4, Building 115, Room 2005.

Contact: Kristy Hall, e-mail: Kristy.Hall@boffamiskell.co.nz.

Field trip: Saturday 16 March to Tapapakanga Regional Park.
Leader: Peter Hutton.

Contact: Maureen Young, e-mail: youngmaureen@xtra.co.nz

Kaipatiki Project

Registrations for EcoFest & EcoWest 2013: Community organisations and businesses with an eye for environmental action and sustainable living are invited to take part in two eco-festivals taking place throughout March.

To register an event, contribute a talk or display, or offer sponsorship or donations go to www.ecofest.org.nz

Contact: Louisa Chase, Festival Manager (EcoFest North), e-mail: festival@kaipatiki.org.nz, ph: 09 482 1172 or Leanne Roche or Anna Fomison, Festival Managers (EcoWest), Ecomatters Environment Trust, e-mail: ecowest@ecomatters.org.nz, ph: 09 826 4276.

Community bush blitz: Saturday 2 March. **Meet:** 17 Lauderdale Road, Birkdale, North Shore, Auckland. **Time:** 9.15 a.m. start. Help us remove weeds from Witheford Reserve. Tools and morning tea provided. Groups welcome.

More information: www.kaipatiki.org.nz/volunteer

Nursery bites: FREE native plant propagation workshops on Tuesdays until 2 April. **Venue:** Kaipatiki Project Environment Centre, 17 Lauderdale Road, Birkdale, Auckland. **Time:** 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Weekly topics and bookings:
www.kaipatiki.org.nz/courses

Bush walk and walk – Kauri series: Monday 25 February. Learn to identify NZ native trees and other plants. **Venue:** North Shore, Auckland (location advised on booking). **Time:** 6–8 p.m. **Cost:** \$15/person.

For locations and to book:
www.kaipatiki.org.nz/courses

Waikato Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 9 March to Pureora. Meet: Pureora village 10.30 a.m. (approx. 2 hour drive from Hamilton), carpooling and/ or accomodation in DOC cabins at Pureora village for Friday night can be arranged. Because the trip depends on *Dactylanthus* being in flower, final confirmation of the trip will be by e-mail. Grade: easy.

Enquiries and to register interest: Liz Overdyck, e-mail: eg3@waikato.ac.nz, ph: 07 825 9743, 021 155 3622; Thomas Emmitt, e-mail: temmitt@doc.govt.nz, ph. 07 878 1055 (w), 021 152 3030.

Field trip: Sunday 10 March to Galaxy Road North Wetland (combined with Rotorua Botanical Society).

See below for details.

Rotorua Botanical Society

Field trip: Sunday 10 March to Galaxy Road North Wetland. **Meet:** the car park Rotorua at 8.30 a.m. or end of SH5 – Galaxy Road junction 9.00 a.m. **Grade:** medium, bring gumboots.

Leader: Paul Cashmore, ph: 07 348 4421 (hm), 07 349 7432 (wk), e-mail: pcashmore@doc.govt.nz.

Wanganui Museum Botanical Group

Field trip: Sunday 3 March to Lake Waikato near Waverley. **Meet:** Police Station at 9.00 a.m.; bring drink, lunch. **Leader:** Jim Campbell.

Contacts: Robyn and Colin Ogle, ph: 06 347 8547, email: robcol.ogle@xtra.co.nz.

Meeting: Tuesday 5 March at 7.30 p.m. for a talk by Josef Beutrais titled 'The distribution of *Senecio glastifolius* (pink ragwort) in New Zealand: past, current and climatic potential'. **Venue: Museum's Davis lecture theatre.**

Contacts: Robyn and Colin Ogle, ph: 06 347 8547, email: robcol.ogle@xtra.co.nz.

Field trip: Sunday 31 March to Waitahinga Track off Rangitatau East Road. **Meet:** Police Station at 9 a.m. Leader: Esther Williams.

Contacts: Robyn and Colin Ogle, ph: 06 347 8547, email: robcol.ogle@xtra.co.nz.

Wellington Botanical Society

Field trip: Saturday 2 March to Cannon Point Walkway, Upper Hutt. **Meet:** 9.30 a.m. at Bridge Road car park, Birchville.

Leader: Sheelagh Leary, ph: 04 527 7380.

Meeting: Monday 18 March at 7.30 for a talk by Barry Dent and Sue Freitag (and possibly Peter Gaze), titled 'Puangiangi Island, Marlborough Sounds'.

Venue: Lecture Theatre M101, Murphy Building ground floor, west side of Kelburn Parade.

Field trip: Easter Friday 29 March to Sunday 31 March to the Rangitikei and Foxton areas, Manawatu. **Accommodation:** to be decided but will be at a Bulls or Sanson motor camp/motel. **Food:** potluck dinner Friday and Saturday; breakfasts and lunches self-catering. **Meet:** 10.30 a.m. Friday at Rosina Road turn-off to Tangimoana from SH1, 20 km north of Foxton (just past big grain silos).

Leader: Mick Parsons,
ph: 04 972 1148,
mobile: 027 249 9663.
Book promptly to receive further information about trip.

Nelson Botanical Society

Field trip: Sunday 17 March to the Whispering Falls and Chrome mine. For trip details please contact the trip leader.

Leader: Susan Cook,
ph. 03 544 6175.

Field trip: Thursday 28 March to Monday 1 April Easter Camp based at the Collingwood Campground. Please book with the leader.

Leader: Shannel Courtney,
ph: 03 546 9922,
e-mail: scourtney@doc.govt.nz.

Canterbury Botanical Society

Meeting: Friday 1 March at . 7.30pm. Jon Sullivan will talk about recent interesting plant discoveries and new features of the Biodiversity Recording Network available through the NatureWatch website – <http://naturewatch.org.nz/>. **Venue:** Room A5 University of Canterbury.

Contact: Gillian Giller,
ph: 03 313 5315,
e-mail: ggillerma1@actrix.gen.nz.

Field trip: Saturday 9 March to Mt Cass ridge. **Meet:** at 8.15 a.m. at the Belfast Tavern, 899 Main North Road, on the right just before the start of the Northern Motorway, or 9.00 a.m. at Amberley toilets, or 9.15 a.m. at the Waipara garage. Because of limited 4WD, *booking a seat is essential*.

Contact: Jason Butt,
ph: 03 355-8869, e-mail: jason@waioralandscapes.co.nz). Please tell him if you can bring a 4WD with clearance.

Otago Botanical Society

Meeting: Wednesday 27 February at 5.20 p.m. for a talk by John Barkla titled 'Tales from the Southern Ocean'. **Venue:** 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: [David Lytle](mailto:David.Lytle@otago.ac.nz),
ph: 03 454 5470.

Meeting: Wednesday 27 March at 5.20 p.m. for a talk by Lorna Little titled 'High Arctic Hijinks; Flora, Fauna and Darkness'. **Venue:** 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: [David Lytle](mailto:David.Lytle@otago.ac.nz),
ph: 03 454 5470.

Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust 25th Anniversary Conference

Conference: 17–18 October for the 25th anniversary conference with the theme Conservation Incorporated will be hosted by the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust in Dunedin. Pre-conference workshops of direct practical relevance to community groups are scheduled for Wednesday 16 October 2013. Proposals for papers, presentations and posters should be emailed to the conference organisers by Thursday 28 March 2013.

Conference organisers:
conference@yeptrust.org.nz.
