Notes RBG Edinb. 40(2):299 (1982)

BOOK REVIEW

The Botany of Auckland, originally published in 1936, has now appeared in a much enlarged and revised 3rd edition.* It is a fund of information for the Auckland naturalist and rambler, covering the native species, historical information and personal observation in an easy anecdotal style.

The first chapter gives a brief description of the changes to the landscape wrought by early European settlers. The second, entitled 'Auckland Roundabout', mentions the reserves and parks of the city area. The subsequent ten chapters gradually build up a picture of the native flora in various habitats from coastal areas, swamps and rain forest to the islands in Hauraki Gulf. Interspersed with these localities are discussions on specific plant groups, for example the grasses, ferns and mosses, although the last, so striking a feature of the New Zealand flora, are scarcely done justice to in this handbook.

Chapter 13 deals with some useful and some poisonous plants and the book ends with a list of Latin and native names (families in alphabetical order within major plant groups) and a list of illustrated species. The book is amply illustrated with maps, line drawings and photographs, some in colour, and reproduction is good despite the rather soft-textured paper.

The author's intimate knowledge of the flora of Auckland over many years is apparent and her interesting asides add flavour throughout the text making most enjoyable reading. On Drummond's *Phylloglossum*, for example, 'Because of its fame . . . the little plant can draw botanists on hands and knees through the scrub, hunting for it, and some have been known to contemplate it until dusk fell, when matches would be struck for further glimpses.' I did, however, have some difficulty extracting specific botanical information at times, as many plants are referred to in the text by genus only and bryophytes, lichens and fungi are omitted from the list of plant groups at the end. Despite these drawbacks the book has a richness to offer to Aucklanders and visitors—and I shall certainly be packing it for my next visit.

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**The Botany of Auckland* by Lucy M Cranwell.156 pp., paperback, *c.*21 × 19.5cm. Auckland Institute and Museum, 1981 NZ$6.25 (plus 75 cents overseas).