

NEW ZEALAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 143

March 2021



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Secretary/Treasurer:	Ewen Cameron
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Subscriptions

The 2021 ordinary and institutional subscriptions are \$25 (reduced to \$18 if paid by the due date on the subscription invoice). The 2021 student subscription, available to full-time students, is \$12 (reduced to \$9 if paid by the due date on the subscription invoice).

Back issues of the *Newsletter* are available at \$7.00 each. Since 1986 the Newsletter has appeared quarterly in March, June, September and December.

New subscriptions are always welcome and these, together with back issue orders, should be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer (address above).

Subscriptions are due by 30 April each year for that calendar year. Existing subscribers are sent an invoice with the March *Newsletter* for the next years subscription which offers a reduction if this is paid by the due date. If you are in arrears with your subscription a reminder notice comes attached to each issue of the *Newsletter*.

Deadline for next issue

The deadline for the June 2021 issue is 25 May 2021.

Please post contributions to:
Lara Shepherd
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
169 Tory St Wellington 6021

Send email contributions to lara.shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz Files are preferably in MS Word, as an open text document (Open Office document with suffix ".odt") or saved as RTF or ASCII. Macintosh files can also be accepted. Graphics can be sent as TIF JPG, or BMP files; please do not embed images into documents. Alternatively photos or line drawings can be posted and will be returned if required. Drawings and photos make an article more readable so please include them if possible.

Cover Illustration

Cladonia sp. by Eleanor Burton.

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NEWSLETTER
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NEWS

New Zealand Botanical Society News

- **From the President: Annual General Meeting – Approval of Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2020**

Below is the Society's Financial Statement for 2020, which has been reviewed by the committee, who recommend it for adoption by the members via postal/email ballot.

Society Name: New Zealand Botanical Society

Society Number: 426877

Financial Statement for year ended: 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
INCOME		
Donations	\$36.00	\$99.00
Interest	\$5.03	\$6.97
Sale of Back issues	-	\$112.00
2019 Subscriptions	-	\$3,156.00
2020 Subscriptions	\$3,402.00	-
2021 Subscriptions	\$43.00	-
Total Income	\$3,486.03	\$3,373.97
EXPENSES		
Postage costs	\$2,092.64	\$1,926.20
Printing costs	\$1,493.29	\$1,518.00
Stationery	-	\$33.94
Calligraphy costs (Allan Mere)	\$126.50	\$97.75
Bank fees	\$25.00	\$18.00
Total Expenses	\$3,737.43	\$3,593.89
Total income	\$3,486.03	\$3,373.97
Less total expenses	(\$3,737.43)	(\$3,593.89)
Net surplus/(deficit)	(\$251.40)	(\$219.92)
ASSETS		
Cash in bank - current account	\$8,018.63	\$8,125.96
Cash in bank - Achiever Savings	\$2,075.61	\$2,074.78
Accounts Receivable	-	-
Total Assets	\$10,094.24	\$10,200.74
LIABILITIES		
Printing costs	\$416.30	\$397.90
Stationery costs	-	
Calligraphy costs	\$126.50	

Postage costs	-	-
Total Liabilities	\$542.80	\$397.90
Total Assets	\$10,094.24	\$10,200.74
Less Total Liabilities	(\$542.80)	(\$397.90)
NET ASSETS	\$9,551.44	\$9,802.84
Represented by		
Retained earnings c/fwd from previous year	\$9,802.84	\$10,022.76
Profit for year	(\$251.40)	(\$219.92)
TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31 DECEMBER	\$9,551.44	\$9,802.84

While a small loss on the year's operations is posted, the Society has an accumulated surplus, which can cover it for the 2021 financial year. Whilst there will be no increase for subscriptions in 2021, the committee propose an increase for 2022 to cover the increasing costs the Society is facing, particularly in relation to postage.

In 2022, proposed subscriptions will be as follows:

- \$28 per individual (\$25 if paid by the early payment date)
- \$38 per family subscription (\$35 if paid by the early payment date)
- \$15 per student (\$10 if paid by the early payment date).

Invoices in 2022 will be issued to reflect these increases.

As President I move, and Ewen Cameron, Secretary/Treasurer, seconds a resolution "That the 2020 Annual Financial Statement published in Newsletter 143 (March 2021), be adopted".

Voting in the Annual General Meeting is by means of Ballot by either email or post. There is a Ballot Paper included with this issue of the Newsletter. The ballot will close at 5 pm on Friday 23 April 2021. Scanned ballot papers can be emailed to hbenson@canterburymuseum.com prior to this time.

Voting papers being posted should reach the Secretary/Treasurer, New Zealand Botanical Society, C/- Canterbury Museum, 11 Rolleston Avenue, Christchurch, 8013 no later than this closing time. An addressed envelope has been included to assist you.

The results of the AGM ballot voting will be notified in Newsletter 144, June 2021. Thank you for your continued support for the New Zealand Botanical Society.

Anthony Wright, President, New Zealand Botanical Society

■ From the Treasurer: Subscriptions 2021

Enclosed are the subscription invoices for 2021. Please pay via direct credit following the instructions on the invoice, or alternatively post your remittance back to us using the self-addressed envelope enclosed along with your Ballot Paper.

Regional Botanical Society News

■ Auckland Botanical Society

December Trip

The December walk and potluck Christmas picnic took place at Whatipu, on the west coast of the Waitakere Ranges. Our base, Whatipu Lodge, had that nice, comfortable bachy atmosphere where Bot Soccers felt quite at home. After depositing our luncheon offerings we meandered slowly down to the coast, discussing the trackside wild flowers until we reached, first the stream, where yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) was impersonating raupo (*Typha orientalis*), then the dune slacks where the minute plants that favour such habitats live. *Myriophyllum votschii* was so small as to be almost invisible, and tiny *Lilaeopsis novae-zelandiae* leaves showed the divisions that give it the common name of tape measure plant. Socialising with old friends over lunch was a pleasure after this stressful year.

Taranaki Weekend Camp

For Auckland Anniversary Weekend a good-sized party travelled to Taranaki where we stayed at TOPEC (Taranaki Outdoor Pursuits & Education Centre). The particular aim of the trip was to visit the new Native Forest Restoration Trust's reserve named Taranaki Mahood-Lowe Reserve, situated on the flanks of Mt Taranaki. Another day and a half were spent walking on the mountain in perfect summer weather. It was a pleasure for us Northerners to be reacquainted with the mountain flora. Of particular interest to fern enthusiasts was the finding, after much checking of healthy trees of *Libocedrus bidwillii*, of the strange filmy fern, *Hymenophyllum malingii*. As usual, it was found not on the living trees, but on a dead trunk. An added, and unexpected treat, was visiting the light show at Pukekura Park on Saturday evening.

February Trip

Masks were mandatory when travelling on the Waiheke ferry, and our esteemed leader "flew the flag" for Bot Soc by wearing a mask decorated with kowhai flowers. A bus took us to our destination on the island – the Arthur Leigh Titchener Memorial Covenant. Chris Floyd, the QE II representative, and a member of the Titchener family, outlined the history of the reserve. Apart from a wooded gully, the land was in pasture when purchased nearly 40 years previously, and it has been left to regenerate naturally, with only pest control of plants and animals taking place. It was interesting to see what nature can do when left to its own devices. A walk down a dry streambed led through the older vegetation – mainly under taraire forest, with a large raupo swamp on the coastline at Te Warau Bay. The America's Cup race hardly delayed our ferry trip home.

Forthcoming Activities

3 March 2021	AGM & Lucy Cranwell Grant recipient, Jarden Howard.
20 March 2021	Mahurangi East extension.
7 April 2021	Nicola Day
17 April 2021	Lake Tomorata/Te Arai

Auckland Botanical Society, PO Box 26391, Epsom, Auckland 1344

President: Ewen Cameron

Secretary: Stephanie Angove-Emery

aucklandbotanicalsociety@gmail.com

■ Rotorua Botanical Society

December Field Trip – McLaren Falls

A fine hot day brought out a large group for a lazy day by the very birdy lakes. The park is largely planted as an arboretum of widely spaced exotic species in pasture with the grass maintained by grazing but there are two gully walks in indigenous forest.

First up was the essential pilgrimage to two small stands of swamp maire and pukatea by the lake. Then followed the waterfall loop, a 10 minute walk but with lunch by a waterfall half way around. There was some debate about the naturalness of black maire at the track start (it was planted) but

most of the gully was typical tawa forest with emergent pukatea, rewarewa and odd rimu with an understorey of mahoe, pigeonwood and heketara with a good diversity of ferns that attracted attention.

After completing the loop we drove to the start of the Totara-Rimu Track, which was another loop track this time through red beech forest to a nice stand of tanekaha on a spur. En route we noted some large *Cordyline pumilio* to 1m, rather uncommon in the Tauranga area. Then it was down through more tawa forest to a couple of large rimu and totara. Here we took a sidetrack to another lake to see *Leionema nudum* in flower and swamp maire in fruit. The return to the vehicles was along a road where the locally common *Miscanthus nepalensis*, like a miniature toitoi, was abundant along with *Morelotia affinis* both of which seemed new to those visitors from the Waikato.

March Field Trip - Greyhound wetland

A very elite group of four had the pleasure of thrashing around, going in spirals and circles, checking out different patches of vegetation with aid of a cell phone map. We covered most of the southern arm from the upstream end to the ponded area through areas of blackberry, manuka, flax, *Coprosma tenuicaulis*, grey willow and finally Himalyan honeysuckle, though we did find a nice open patch of tree ferns for lunch. The areas towards the margins were especially weedy with blackberry and patches of regenerating pine up to 15 m tall or grey willow. The central wetland was dominated by tall flax. But the weeds decreased in frequency down the wetland and by lunchtime *Nertera scapaniodes*, *Hydrocotyle pterocarpa* and *Lobelia angulata* were quite common.

From there, patches of sedgeland dominated by *Baumea rubiginosa*, the odd *B. tenax*, *Lepidosperma australe* and *Tetraria capillaris* became more common. Other interesting records here were *Dianella haemata* and the tall, wetland form of *Deyeuxia quadriseta*. At one point the presence of *Epacris pauciflora* and *Dracophyllum subulatum* tended to confirm that the wetland had persisted in spite of previous surrounding pine forest, now farmland and the odd fire. Around the ponded area, the ephemeral part of the wetland was dominated by grey willow and *Lycopus europaeus*. Here open water areas contained *Myriophyllum triphyllum* and *Potamogeton suboblongus* along with much *Ludwigia palustris*. Back at the car by 3 pm we were just in time to miss the cows going to milking.

FUTURE EVENTS

March 6-7	Makatiti Dome Scenic Reserve
March 20	Mt Tarawera with Forest and Bird Waikato
March 29	Mt Edgecumbe
April 11	Hormunga Bay
May 15	Utahina WW
June 13	Whakarewarewa wetlands

President: Sarah Beadel 021 924476 Sarah.Beadel@wildlands.co.nz

Secretary: Elizabeth Miller (07) 343 5613 rotorua-botanical-society@gmail.com

Web Page: www.wildland.co.nz/botanical.htm

■ **Whanganui Museum Botanical Group**

For monthly meetings the Whanganui Botanical Group has merged with Birding Whanganui (local branch of OSNZ) and the Whanganui branch of Forest and Bird, under an umbrella name of 'Nature Talks'. Each group will arrange a speaker for about 4 meetings per year. Meetings will normally be on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. It is intended to continue with monthly botanical field trips to which members of the other two groups are invited.

President: Clive Higgie (06) 342 7857 clive.nicki@xtra.co.nz

Secretary: Robyn Ogle (06) 347 8547 robcol.ogle@xtra.co.nz

■ Nelson Botanical Society

FUTURE EVENTS

March 21 Field trip to Pelorus

President: David Grinsted (03) 5424384, davidgrinsted@gmail.com; **Secretary:** Don Pittham (03) 5451985, pitthamd@xtra.co.nz; **Treasurer:** Uta Purcell (03) 5450280, mupurcell@xtra.co.nz

■ Canterbury Botanical Society

The Canterbury Branch has been enjoying the freedoms of post lockdown.

November field trip: Cranky Tom Conservation Area. This is a rarely visited site partly because it is located in the middle of private land. Luckily we had an extensive report and species list compiled by Brian Molloy back in the early 1980s to go on. That report noted several regionally unusual ferns occupying habitat offered by the deeply incised gorge landform and moisture retentive sandstone – especially a number of filmy ferns. Our descent to the gorge bottom (following a farm track) revealed a pair of young sheik ponga (*Dicksonia fibrosa*), certainly not a common species in coastal North Canterbury. In the narrow canyon the two filmy ferns *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme* and *H. minimum* frequently formed broad swathes of cover over steep walls. Patches of creeping filmy fern turned out to be either *H. multifidum* (with characteristic up-turned indusia) or *H. demissum* (albeit mostly without indusia). Checking other such patches eventually revealed another surprise – *Hymenophyllum bivalve*, again well away from its usual haunts. The strap ferns also provided somewhat of a challenge, we ended up recording four taxa, *Notogrammitis heterophylla* (the old and distinctively pinnate *Ctenopteris heterophylla*), *Notogrammitis billardiarei* (tufted, slightly hairy at the base of the stipe only), *N. patagonica* (creeping, with abundant red-brown hairs), and another colonial, tufted, glabrous entity which can key out to *N. angustifolia* ssp. *angustifolia*, but not in all characters. We understand this may be an undescribed entity, albeit often encountered in North Canterbury at least.

December meeting: John Hunt from Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research talked on land use and ecosystems. The big issues - trees, carbon and climate.

December field trip: We returned to the rarely visited Waipara Gorge Conservation Area. This 20 hectare beech forest was accessed from Ram Paddock Road, through a ford on the Waipara River, and along a 4WD drive track through the NZ Carbon Farming permanent pine forest (as a step towards natural regeneration of indigenous forest).

February meeting: Was an open mic session with topics including; invasive succulent control on the Port Hills, rare endemic species on Stewart Island, Copper moth habitat, regeneration of *Aciphylla* post fire damage on the Mackenzie Country and a lesson on the variable morphology of South Island *Leptinella* species with a number of potted specimens being handed around the audience to inspect.

February field trip: Rotopapa Wildlife Management Reserve. This 115 hectares on the true right of the Selwyn River on the eastern shore of Waihora Lake Ellesmere is now conservation land. The former grazed land contains a wide range of vegetation types – from toetoe wetlands, marsh ribbonwood shrubland, spring wetlands, dry grassland, mudflats, and saline vegetation.

FUTURE EVENTS

March meeting: Early Mayens will be talking on the largest private conservation area in the United States.

■ Other Botanical Society Contacts

Waikato Botanical Society

President: Kerry Jones

Secretary: Wyne Johns

General contact: secretary@waikatobotsoc.org.nz

Website: <http://waikatobotsoc.org.nz>

Taranaki Botanical Society

Contacts: Barbara Hammonds 06 7597077; Email: barbara_ha@outlook.com
Janica Amore 06 7520830. Email: waiongona@clear.co.nz

Hawke's Bay Botanical Group

<https://www.facebook.com/Hawkes-Bay-Botanical-Group-590670161140095/>

Manawatu Botanical Society

Jill Rapson: Massey University. Ph (06) 350 5799 Ext 7963; [G. Rapson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:G.Rapson@massey.ac.nz)

Wellington Botanical Society

President: Jon Terry

Secretary: Kate Jordan KateLJordan@gmail.com <http://wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz/>

Wakatipu Botanical Group

Chair: Neill Simpson (03) 442 2035

Secretary: Rebecca Teele 027 314 2610

Botanical Society of Otago

Chair: Gretchen Brownstein, BrownsteinG@landcareresearch.co.nz www.bso.org.nz

Secretary: Angela Brandt, P O Box 6214, Dunedin North. bsotago@otago.ac.nz

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ **2021 New Years Honours to Colin Meurk**

Congratulations to Colin Meurk for being made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZOM) for services to ecological restoration.

His citation reads:

Dr Colin Meurk has supported native ecosystem restoration, in theory and practice, throughout New Zealand.

From 1985 to 2015 Dr Meurk worked as a landscape ecologist for what is now Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research. During this time, he helped design, plan and implement 'Greening Waipara' integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into a wine-growing cultural landscape. He also co-developed the landscape model that drives many catchment scale restoration plans by New Zealand cities and districts. He was an instrumental partner from the late 1980s in obtaining reserve status for Travis Wetland in Christchurch, the largest urban wetland in New Zealand, and has been President of Travis Wetland Trust since 1999. He is founding Chair of iNaturalist New Zealand, Mātaki Taiao, the largest citizen bioscience platform in the country. For the past decade he has been a member of all environmentally-based Ōtākaro (Avon river) and Ōpāwaho (Heathcote river) committees. He conceived, and with support from Forest and Bird, implemented the first Urban Great Walk, the Christchurch 360 Trail. He serves on the Otamahua-Quail island Restoration Trust, Canterbury WEA Council, Environment Canterbury Biosecurity Advisory Group, and been advisor to Kaiapoi Pa, Te Ara Kākāriki, Orakei Marae restoration projects, and many others. Dr Meurk founded the Centre for Creative Transitions to Sustainable Futures.

NOTES AND REPORTS

■ ***Itoa orientalis* (Salicaceae) in New Zealand, and a thought about 'new trees'.**

Rhys Gardner, rhysogardner@hotmail.com

During a recent 'bioblitz' in Northland the Auckland War Memorial Museum team was shown an

unidentified tree at Kerikeri. It was said to be a south-east Asian or Chinese species and to have originated twenty or so years ago from material brought into New Zealand by inveterate importer of novelties Oswald Blumhardt (Note 1).

The piece collected for identification (Wharepuke Sculpture Park, AK 379238, coll. 9 Dec 2019) bore male flowers only, which made it difficult to reach a family-level identification using 'Thonnerson's Key' (Geesink et al. 1981). But two pieces of luck helped. Firstly, in the same pile waiting at AK for identification was *Idesia polycarpa*, and the resemblance between the two, particularly in the gland-tipped crenations of their large, pinnately veined leaves, was striking. Secondly, the unknown tree was said to have yellowish ovoid fruit and numerous winged seeds. I remembered reading something similar and eventually found two references to *Itoa orientalis* (Geesink et al. 1981: 39; Grimshaw and Bayton 2009), the former with its description of the fruit as "a capsule, opening from the base and from the apex, fruitwall zigzag and intact".

The genus *Itoa* was named primarily to honour Japanese physician, naturalist and benefactor to science Baron Keisuke Ito (1803–1901). It contains two species: *I. orientalis* Hemsl. of montane China and Indochina (Fang et al. 2007), and remarkably, the very similar *I. stapfii* (Koord.) Sleumer, restricted to a small area in West New Guinea (Sleumer 1954). *Itoa orientalis* seems to be one of those taxa that are generally dioecious but occasionally monoecious. Its protologue contains illustrations of a flowering shoot and an unopened fruit (*Hooker's Icon. Pl.* 27: t. 2688. 1901). Apparently there is no common English name for it yet. (Google Translate glosses the Chinese name as "Gardenia").

'New trees'

Itoa orientalis has only recently entered British horticulture (Grimshaw & Bayton 2009) and there is no herbarium material here in New Zealand other than the above-cited AK specimen. The species is currently being offered by our country's Peter Cave Nursery, at Raglan, and possibly by others who specialize in subtropics. I consider this a bit incautious: a monoecious, self-pollinating foreign tree with many-seeded fruit could be regarded as the classic profile of an invader.

In his nursery's website Peter Cave says: "When I started, importing plants was reasonable and cheap. Expecting things to change I imported many plants and lots of seed, especially from Asian countries. I also collected by travelling to China, Korea, Japan and especially Vietnam. The Biosecurity Amendment Act of 2003 completely changed that. Importing a new species now required a \$65,000 risk assessment! Slight changes since have meant that in the last 13 years about 5 new plants have come into NZ. Fines are horrendous so don't try to smuggle! Our job [now] is to locate earlier imports and grow these so we have 'new' plants."

His catalogue of c. 170 items contains quite a few unfamiliar names. Some are of plants very unlikely to naturalise in New Zealand (e.g., *Ficus* species), and for most of the others that I have researched there is no indication in the literature of their being invasive anywhere in the world. Still, I wonder about some of them, say, if material of a second sex is introduced alongside the other. In my opinion, if the nursery trade wants to indulge novelty-demanding customers it should be required to carry insurance sufficient to fund suitable biocontrol projects (typical cost for each: several hundred thousand dollars) for when their latest darling breaks bad.

Note 1 See Ballard (2006) for a biography of plantsman O. Blumhardt (1931–2004).

References

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- **Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola* L.) – additional information from control efforts in Tasmania.**

Lara D Shepherd, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 55 Cable St, Wellington 6011, Lara.Shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz and **Dave Holland**, Papatowai, kiwihunter@gmail.com

Following the publication of our article about spurge laurel in the December 2020 issue of the New Zealand Botanical Society newsletter, Rebecca Johnson (Team Leader, Bushcare, Hobart) has provided more details about the infestation of this plant in Tasmania and their attempts at control.

The infestation covers around 55 private properties in the suburb of Fern Tree in Hobart, therefore a considerable amount of time has been spent on negotiating for volunteer groups to access private land. Some of the landowners have been reluctant to allow access so it is likely that mature plants remain on unvisited properties. Rebecca notes spurge laurel's shade tolerance but that it can also grow in lawn as well as in shady bushland and does not seem to need disturbance to establish.

Since 2017 over 100 volunteer hours per year, plus additional contractor time, have been spent on control. They have had some success with lines of volunteers in the bush searching for plants then removing mature plants, or cutting and painting with glyphosate, stripping flowers and collecting berries. However, there seems to be little reduction in the number of seedlings in the core area of 20 properties. This suggests that the seeds remain viable for a long period of time in the ground, although it is also possible that some of the seeds originate from mature plants on unvisited private properties.

BIOGRAPHY / BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Biographical Sketch – Helen Patricia Ramsay (1928 –)**

Val Smith, 80 Mill Road, New Plymouth 4310.

Why was a Chatham Islands endemic moss named after an Australian botanist? In Canada in the 1970s Dr Helen Patricia Ramsay met Professor Dale Vitt and invited him to help her revise the genus *Macromitrium* in Australia for the *Flora of Australia*. Subsequently, he stayed on in Sydney for several months after the 1981 Botanical Congress to examine types and collections. He had already worked on the New Zealand species and decided to name the Chatham Islands species after her, assuring her it was unlikely to be absorbed into future synonymy.

Helen was born on 2 September 1928 in Sydney, Australia, the daughter of Jack Kelvin Lancaster, an electrical engineer from England, and Wollongong-born Margaret Louise Gray, who was of Scottish descent. Growing up with her parents and siblings in Canberra, the Blue Mountains for a few years and then Sydney, Helen was educated at Sydney Girls High School before studying for her BSc at Sydney University 1946–1949. She stayed on as a teaching fellow and gained her MSc in 1952 with a thesis "Cytological Studies on Proteaceae". In December she married Frances (Frank) Robert Ramsay who, after six years' naval service in the Atlantic and the Pacific, completed an Arts degree and taught English history in several high schools. His declining health stemming from war service conditions forced him to retire in 1961, but as he was able to be home for their three young children, Helen returned to university in 1962 as a fulltime senior tutor at the University of New South Wales. The next year she obtained a teaching fellowship at Sydney University and enrolled for a PhD. Her supervisor was a bryologist working with hepatics, including cytology; she worked on mosses with him, and in November 1966 handed in her thesis, "Cytological Studies of Australian Mosses".

Two weeks later the family left for Britain where a Leverhulme Fellowship enabled Helen to work for a year with specialist bryologists at the University College of North Wales. Back in Sydney as senior tutor in biology at the University of New South Wales in 1968, she mainly lectured but also continued her research, attended conferences, obtained funding for various projects and with overseas specialists as collaborators, revised moss families for the *Flora of Australia* and other publications.



Macromitrium ramsayae. Photo by Jeremy Rolfe.

The establishment of the Australasian Bryological Newsletter as co-editor with Patricia Selkirk at Macquarie University helped to bring attention to bryophyte studies in the wider botanical community, and her influence led to Paddy Dalton's organisation of the first Australasian bryophyte workshop in Hobart in 1983. Both are now institutions!

Officially retiring at sixty, Helen continued her work in an honorary capacity at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and at Macquarie University, and published results in Australian and overseas journals. Frank, who suffered from Parkinsons Syndrome for more than twenty years, was wheelchair bound for eight years before his death in 2003. Helen later moved to a small retirement village unit near Epping, overlooking the school her boys attended. Still living independently, she drives for essentials, works on the computer and microscope, manages some gardening and feeds visiting kookaburras and other birds (current Covid-19 restrictions have halted social activities!) Their three children have university degrees, and Helen's family now includes nine grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. One grandson is a senior lecturer at Auckland University and his two boys attend school in Auckland. In the June 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours list, Dr Helen Ramsay was named a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her significant service to plant science.

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- Helen Ramsay - a very special person. *Australasian Bryological Newsletter* 49 (204) 2-8: (accessed online 11 November 2020).
- Macquarie University Honorary Senior Lecturer Helen Ramsay named as a Member of the Order of Australia: <https://www.mq.edu.au/> (accessed 11 November 2020).
- Ramsay, H P 2020. pers. comm.
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PUBLICATIONS

■ Publications Received

Canterbury Botanical Society December 2020: Upcoming meetings and trips, trip report for Cranky Tom Conservation Area.

Canterbury Botanical Society January/February 2021: Upcoming meetings and trips, trip report for Waipara Gorge Conservation Area, New Years Honour for Colin Meurk.

Canterbury Botanical Society January/February 2021: Upcoming meetings and trips, trip report for Rotopapa Reserve, Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

Rotorua Botanical Society 75 December 2020: President's report, trip reports for Matatā sand dunes, Mamakus, Kaimai Range, Moanui Conservation Area, Matarangi Bluff Scenic Reserve, reports on Okareka mistletoe restoration project, rata and pohutukawa early flowering in 2020, app for identifying plants at risk from myrtle rust, upcoming trips.

Nelson Botanical Society February 2021: Upcoming trips, trip report for Castle Hill camp – Cragieburn skifield, Dry Stream, Porters Pass and Otira Valley.

The New Zealand Native Orchid Journal 160 February 2021: *Pterostylis* from South Westland, *Microtis unifolia*, *Corybas* aff. *sulcata*, *Corybas dienemus* and *C. sulcatus*, *Thelymitra concinna*, *T. "fusca"*,

Auckland Botanical Society Journal 75 (2) December 2020: Trip reports for Piggot Wetland, Buckland and Smith's Bush, Otaua, vegetation survey of Kahakaharoa Dunes, Hokianga, Purewa cemetery changes over 33 years, Arch Hill Scenic Reserve, the Marvel of Peru, Titch Place stormwater pond, titoki as a street tree, lichenising during lockdown, Andean wax palm in Auckland, *Davallia tasmanii* subsp. *tasmanii*, Lucy Moore memories, Anne Fraser birthday, obituary for Richmond Newman Afford.

Botanical Society of Otago Newsletter 92 February 2021: Upcoming meetings and trips, articles on weed seed banks, Wānaka lakefront invertebrates, Ontong Java Nui, trip reports for Karitane and Trotters Gorge, talk report on non-native vs native plants.

Waikato Botanical Society Newsletter 47 December 2020: Upcoming meetings and trips, talk reports on the Waikato regional council pest management plan, NZ carnivorous plants, flora of the Sydney region, kiekie, Mangere Island, trip reports for Jim Barnett Reserve, Radius St Joan planting day, Glover Farm (Mamakus), endangered plant garden working bee, WBS bryophyte workshop, Dickies Flat, Driving Creek Railway, Matarangi Bluff Scenic Reserve and Waitoa wetlands.

■ Book review - The secrets of great botanists and what they teach us about gardening.

By Matthew Biggs

Published by Exisle Publishing, Dunedin, New Zealand, October 2019

Hardback, colour illustrations, 224 pages, 230 × 170 mm

ISBN 978-1-925820-25-6

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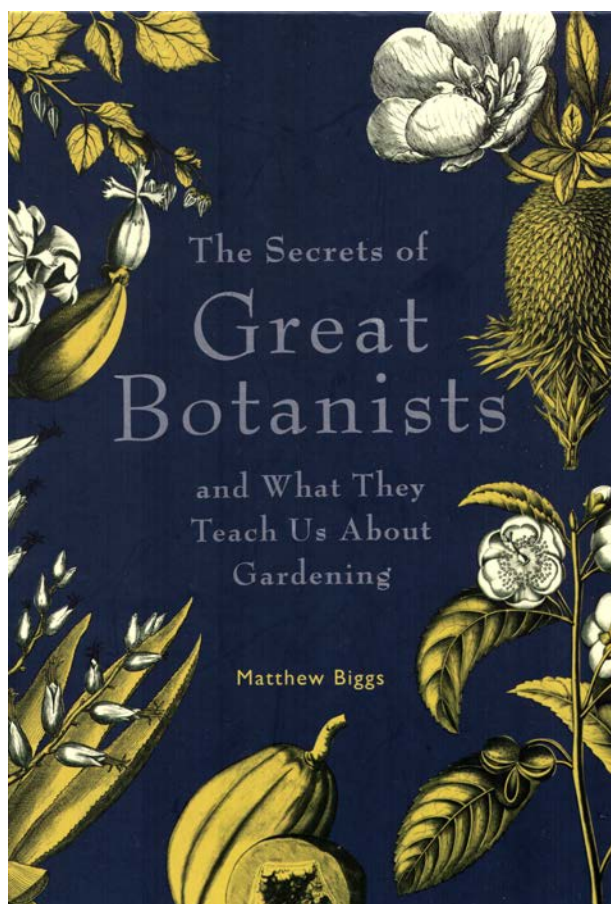
Reviewed by **Murray Dawson**, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research

Botanists have been, and continue to be, the trailblazers who discover, collect, and describe plant species from around the world, unlocking their conservation values and horticultural properties. Plant species we grow in our gardens today trace their origins back to their botanical discovery in the wild.

This attractive and informative book profiles 36 botanists, plant collectors and gardening pioneers of

the past and present, including their life stories, botanical voyages and discoveries, and horticultural legacies.

Following a short introduction, profiles of botanists are presented in chronological order, from ancient times (Pedanius Dioscorides, c. AD 40-90, an herbalist in the Roman Army and the 'Father of Pharmacology') to the present day (Patrick Blanc, born 1953, a French horticulturist and a modern innovator of vertical gardens). Within this range are profiles of iconic botanists familiar to most of us: Carl Linnaeus, Swedish botanist and inventor of the Linnaean binomial system of classification, Gregor Mendel, the Austrian monk who through his sweet-pea breeding became known as the 'Father of Modern Genetics', and an abundance of great English explorers, including Joseph Banks (James Cook's botanist on *The Endeavour*), William Colenso (a missionary to New Zealand, who combined preaching with botany), Joseph Dalton Hooker (botanist, plant hunter, artist), and Francis Kingdon-Ward (an intrepid plant collector). All profiles provide an interesting read, to remind us of the achievements of the most famous, and to learn more about those who may be less familiar.



Following each botanists' biography are pages that reinforce the horticultural connection: 'Inspiration for gardeners' are sections that shift focus to a selection of cultivated plants associated with each botanist. There are many interesting stories and plant snippets to uncover here. For example, we learn that: the genus *Fuchsia* was named to commemorate Leonhart Fuchs of Bavaria, more than 100 years after his death; William Dampier was the first Englishman to collect Australian plants, including the *Swainsona formosa* (Sturt's desert pea); 26 New Zealand plants have been named to honour William Colenso, including *Olearia colensoi* and *Veronica colensoi*.

This book is lavishly illustrated with depictions of each botanist, carefully selected photographs of plants, and period botanical watercolours.

The secrets of great botanists concludes with a useful bibliography, index and acknowledgments.

The edition reviewed here is published in New Zealand and Australia, and there is also a Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) UK version. Author Matthew Biggs was trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and is well known as a presenter in gardening circles. Exisle Publishing has produced another of his titles, *Lessons from great gardeners: forty gardening icons and what they teach us*, which profiles some of the world's great gardeners, including New Zealand's Bev McConnell. The style and presentation of *The secrets of great botanists* is reminiscent of Lorraine Harrison's *Latin for gardeners: Over 3,000 plant names explained and explored*¹, and the three books mentioned above would sit well together as companion titles on the bookshelf.

The secrets of great botanists fully succeeds in its aims to teach readers about the observations, ideas, secrets and discoveries of these ground-breaking botanists. Their influence on gardening and the wider world provides inspiration and practical guidance for budding gardeners of all levels and inspires readers to try these plants and gardening tips at home.

¹ Reviewed in the *New Zealand Garden Journal*, 2013, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 36.