TRILEPIDEA

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

E-NEWSLETTER: NO 13. DECEMBER 2004 Deadline for next issue: Monday 17 January 2005

Message from the President

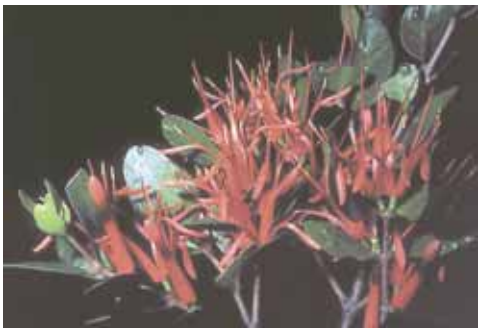
During the establishment of the Network many members, including myself, saw vascular plants as the focus of our work. However, at the first workshop at Te Papa last year Peter Buchanan from Landcare Research urged us to also include fungi and other cryptograms, organisms that were often ignored and poorly understood by many. We agreed, and since that time we have worked with Peter (now a Council member) and Landcare Research on the development of an Internet-based Fungal Conservation Information System. The development of this system will address the inaccessibility of existing conservation information about fungi, such as what the 50 critically threatened species look like, what their habitats are, and what their life cycle is.

In September our application to TFBIS (Terrestrial & Freshwater Biodiversity Information System) for funds to carry out this project was successful and since then Peter has started work on the description of the 50 threatened fungi species. Fact sheets are now available on-line and the text will be loaded onto the web site along with photographs by early 2005. It is also now possible to download a list of threatened fungi from the website.

We have not ignored mosses, lichens and liverworts either—making an application to TFBIS in November round for funding to carry out a similar project for threatened species in those groups. These exciting developments indicate the commitment of the Network to conserving our unique biodiversity, especially those parts of it which are still poorly understood.

Plant of the Month

Peraxilla colensoi.
Photo: David Norton.



Peraxilla tetrapetala.
Photo: John Smith-Dodsworth.

Two of the New Zealand Loranthaceous mistletoes are our plants of the month for December. These are *Peraxilla colensoi* (scarlet mistletoe) and *Peraxilla tetrapetala* (red mistletoe). They were chosen because at Christmas time in some parts of the world it is the tradition for people to kiss under mistletoe. However, both species are listed as Gradual Decline in the New Zealand threatened and uncommon species list published in March 2004—so kissing under mistletoe will be more of a challenge here! These species should be flowering or about to flower somewhere near you provided you live near beach forest in South Island. Both these species are hemi-parasitic shrubs that grow on beech trees and occasionally other host trees. The Network fact sheets for these species can be found at the following links:

Peraxilla colensoi: http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/detail.asp?PlantID=197
Peraxilla tetrapetala: http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/detail.asp?PlantID=198

Network seeking contractor to act as Administration Officer

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's National Council last week approved the appointment of a contractor to act as Administration Officer. We are now seeking tenders from people interested in carrying out this work for the Network during 2005. The contract is for 420 hours work to be spread over 1 year (approximately 8 hours/week).

Key outputs

- Maintain Network membership database as required (50 hours)
- Process new membership applications (50 hours)
- Run annual subscription process (20 hours)
- Compile 12 issues of Trilepidea - the Network's monthly newsletter (120 hours)
- Source and add information (including plant images) to Network website (www.nzpcn.org.nz) (150 hours)
- Respond to, or process queries, sent to the Network email address (30 hours)

Contractors must be able to demonstrate

- Computer literacy (Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Photoshop)
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Good organisational skills
- Self motivated
- Interest and active involvement in conservation of New Zealand native flora
- Knowledge of basic botany would be an advantage

Please send your tender for this contract along with your CV (including the names of 2 referees) to the Network at P.O. Box 16-102, Wellington. The closing date is 10 January 2005. For more information please contact the Network (e-mail: info@nzpcn.org.nz or see the Network website at www.nzpcn.org.nz).

Project Crimson – annual funding round

In March each year Project Crimson considers funding applications for pohutukawa and rata restoration and protection projects. Applications come from community groups, iwi, schools, environmental groups, councils, the Department of Conservation, individuals and land care groups.

The work can be on public or private land provided applicants can demonstrate there will be a value to the broader public from their work. The focus must be on pohutukawa and rata. After applications close, Project Crimson Trustees meet to determine which applications fit the goals of the Trust, and then allocate funds and resources accordingly. Successful and unsuccessful applicants are advised by mail as soon as possible. In return for their support, the Trust asks that signage supplied by them is displayed at the project site, and that they are kept advised of planting/workshop days and general progress of the project. Interested applicants should be considering their applications NOW for the 2005 funding round.

Metrosideros robusta / Northern rata.
Photo: John Braggins.

Application forms can be obtained from our website www.projectcrimson.org.nz or by contacting the Project Crimson office on 09 414 0466 or info@projectcrimson.org.nz.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON 1 MARCH 2005.

New book – 'Going Native: Making Use of New Zealand plants'

A new book was launched last week in Christchurch by Canterbury University Press. The book entitled 'Going Native – Making Use of New Zealand plants' was edited by Ian Spellerberg and David Given and has chapters written by many contributors including Colin Meurk, Martin Conway, Mark Dean, Sue Scheele, Peter de Lange, and Philip Simpson many of whom are Network members. The subject of the chapters includes traditional plant use by maori, native plants for shelter, restoration planting in schools and there is also a chapter providing advice on suitable native plants for the garden. Order forms for the book can be downloaded from the publications area of the Network website or by contacting Kaye Godfrey at Canterbury University Press (e-mail: kaye.godfrey@canterbury.ac.nz, Tel: + 64 3 364-2914).

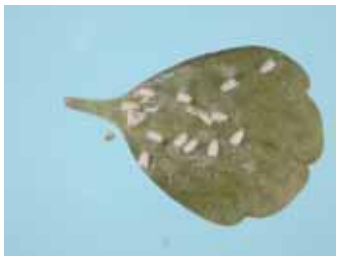
Keep Watch for new whitefly

It's Biosecurity New Zealand's mission to reduce the risk to New Zealand from introduced unwanted pests and diseases. But it is not always obvious whether an organism is actually new to New Zealand, as many of our unique organisms are not known to many people, including scientists.

Potentially, one such insect is a recently-discovered, unnamed whitefly found infesting some species of *Melicytus* in Christchurch. Biosecurity New Zealand is now investigating other regions to see how widely distributed this whitefly may be, and is particularly interested in the Wellington/Wairarapa and Marlborough/Nelson districts.

If you are out and about, or if you have *Melicytus* in your garden, have a close look to see if whitefly is present. Another clue may be the presence of black sooty mould which grows on sugary secretions excreted by immature whiteflies. It is the nymphs or pupae stuck to the underside of the leaf that are required for identification. If what you see looks similar to the pictures below or at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/whitefly, please collect a leaf sample into a plastic bag, place in a non-breakable container and send to:

Freepost 120201
Whitefly Survey
MAF Laboratory,
PO Box 24,
Lincoln, Canterbury 8152.



Whitefly adults on *Melicytus obovatus*. Photo: MAF

Whitefly on *Melicytus lanceolatus*. Photo: MAF.

Damaged *Melicytus* leaves. Photo: MAF.

Please include your contact details, the date and location of collection, and the species of *Melicytus*. Keep Watch and we can all protect New Zealand.

David Given awarded Sir Peter Scott medal

Network Council member David Given (Curator of Christchurch Botanic gardens) was last week awarded the Sir Peter Scott Medal for his services to global plant conservation with the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission. The award (one of the world's top awards for species conservation) was made at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok (Thailand).

New Zealand indigenous plant checklist now on-line

The Network has now added two New Zealand indigenous plant checklists to the website. One list is ordered alphabetically, and the second is ordered by plant group (grass, orchid, fern etc). Both list include the 2341 vascular plant taxa considered indigenous to the New Zealand botanic region. These lists can be downloaded from the New Zealand Native Flora section of the website at the following link: http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/vascular_plants/nz_vascular_plant_list.asp

Threatened plant poster in production

The Network has started work on a threatened plant poster to promote the conservation of New Zealand's threatened plants and the information available on its website. The poster will be completed early in the New Year and will include photos of many of New Zealand threatened plants.

"Restoring Kapiti - Nature's Second Chance" New book edited by Kerry Brown

Kapiti Island is one of New Zealand's longest and most exciting conservation stories. After 100 years of hard work animal pests are eradicated, weeds controlled. The bird life is thriving and its forests are returning. In the surrounding marine reserve, established in 1992, sea life is flourishing. People who have contributed to this restoration tell the island's story in Restoring Kapiti: Nature's Second Chance, edited by Kerry Brown and published by University of Otago Press.

Kapiti Island became a nature reserve in 1897 and is an ongoing story of outstanding restoration accomplishment. By 1900, it was home to eleven pest species including kiore, pigs, goats, deer, cattle, the Norway rat, sheep and cats. Possums were released in 1893 and were only eradicated in 1987, after an intensive programme began in 1980.

Kapiti was declared free of rats in 1999, and it is now the largest single area of lowland coast forest that is free from introduced animal herbivores and predators.

Although Kapiti Island is perhaps best known for its wildlife, it also provides an important home for rare plants. Its forests and shrublands preserve types of vegetation once common in coastal and lowland parts of central New Zealand, but which are now fragmented and under threat from pests and weeds.

Lessons learnt on Kapiti provided models to follow in other parts of the country. Kapiti is a stronghold for protected native birds: the little spotted kiwi would probably be extinct if it were not for the island. It is one of the few offshore island strongholds for kaka and, as such, is important for the continued survival of the species. Other birds finding sanctuary there include hihi, takahe, weka, kokako and North Island saddleback. Countless invertebrates, bats and lizards and native freshwater fish also inhabit the reserve.

Further information contact Amanda Smith, Publicist, University of Otago Press

Phone 03 479 9094, e-mail amanda.smith@stonebow.otago.ac.nz. Price $29.95

Success for *Tecomanthe speciosa*

Tecomanthe speciosa is a woody vine endemic to Manawa Tawhi Island of the Three Kings group situated 60 km north west of Cape Reinga. It is the only New Zealand representative in the mainly tropical family Bignoniaceae. It is common in cultivation, popular for its large clusters of creamy trumpet-shaped flowers and lush tropical foliage. Until recently there was only one plant remaining in the wild, although it is widespread in cultivation.

Planted cutting of *Tecomanthe speciosa* growing well at a different site from the original vine on Manawatawhi (Three Kings). Photos: Janeen Collings.

In November 2003 a naturally layered cutting was taken from the wild plant. This was planted away from the parent vine. The site was chosen for having a cool root run, a natural light well and a suitable species composition for the *T. speciosa* to eventually dominate the canopy. Twelve months later the cutting is growing well. This is a first for *T. speciosa* in the wild.

Tecomanthe speciosa in flower.
Photo: Gillian Crowcroft.

T. speciosa requires high light to flower and set seed. Since the removal of goats in 1946 the forest at the *T. speciosa* site has recovered so well it is now shading the vine. Flowering has only been recorded twice in recent times. To encourage reproduction by seed and insure against a major disaster striking the sole survivor the recovery programme is focusing on planting more vines at suitable sites around the island.

Ecologists needed at Wildland Consultants

We require a senior ecologist to organise and oversee our survey and monitoring teams, based in Rotorua. The preferred applicant will have a minimum of five years field experience with either vegetation or fauna surveys, and be prepared to manage staff and logistical arrangements as well as undertake projects when required. Separate vegetation and fauna positions may be available. A post-graduate degree in ecology is preferred. Please apply to: Willie Shaw, Wildland Consultants Ltd, P.O. Box 7137, Te Ngae, Rotorua. Ph: 07-343-9017, E-mail: willie@wildlands.co.nz. *Applications close 10 January 2005.* http://www.wildlands.co.nz/

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):

Otari-Wilton's Bush Guided Walk - Sunday 26 December. Starts at 2 p.m - Visit the kauri plantation, then go to the head of the adjacent valley to see tall original pukateas, gully tree ferns and ancient mahoe. 2–2.5 hours. Stout footwear recommended. Leader: Dr John Dawson. Depart Information Centre, Cost $3. Ph 475 3245.

Wanganui Museum Botanical Group. Field trip to 'Ben Moi' farm, Kawhatau Valley, east of Mangaweka and Utiku. Saturday 29 January 2005: This farm has several forest remnants on terraces of the true right bank of the Kawhatau River. Two years ago, on a short visit, Dr Bruce Clarkson found a lot of other divaricating shrubs here, including *Teucridium*. What else can we find? Meet outside Wanganui Police Station, Bell St at 7.30am or by the bronze sheep dog at Hunterville at 8.15 am. Leader: Colin Ogle.

Project Crimson – annual funding round applications close on 1 March 2005. See article above.

8th Australasian Bryophyte Workshop. Saturday 25 June to Thursday 30 June 2005. The 8th Australasian Bryophyte Workshop is to be held in Palma Village, North Queensland, Saturday 25 June to Thursday 30 June 2005. Expressions of interest are being sought now as numbers will be limited. Enquiries should be made to Andi Cairns, Tropical Biology, James Cook University, Townsville 4811, Australia. E-mail Andi.cairns@jcu.edu.au.