



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 16. MARCH 2005

Deadline for next issue: Monday 11 April 2005

Message from the President

As the pre eminent organization representing the diversity of individuals and organizations involved in plant conservation in New Zealand one of our roles is to identify and promote those who have given outstanding service or made significant contributions to plant conservation. In doing so we not only publicly recognize those individuals and organizations but emphasize the collective role we all play in conserving our unique flora.

The Network is proud to announce the establishment of several national plant conservation awards. The awards detailed in this newsletter recognize the range of individuals and organizations involved, from community groups and schools through to local authorities and plant nurseries. The first awards will be announced at the Network's AGM and conference in Christchurch this August. For the awards scheme to be a success, however, we rely on you to nominate people and organizations for the range of awards available.

We aim to put plants conservation and plant people on the map. So get nominating and ensure you are there in Christchurch for the awards ceremony. It will be a significant occasion and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate.

Plant of the Month



Myosotis albosericca.
Photo: John Barkla.

Plant of the month for March is the Nationally Critical *Myosotis albosericca* – Yellow forget-me-not. This species of tufted, perennial herb is endemic to the alpine zone of the southern Dunstan Range, Central Otago. Its habitat is amongst schist boulders in shade of rock tors. It is listed as Nationally Critical because it is known from just one site, within an area of <1 ha. The Network fact sheet for the species can be found at the following link:

http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/nz_threatenedplants/detail.asp?PlantID=797

Network Conference 2005

The theme for this year's Network conference is to be '*Restoring our threatened plant life – empowering our community*'.

The conference will be held at the Canterbury Horticultural Society rooms (57 Riccarton Avenue), Christchurch from Friday 12 August – Sunday 14 August. Keynote speakers include Professor Ian Spellerberg, Mike Peters (of New Zealand Ecological Restoration Network), Rick Menzies (of the Banks Peninsula Trust), Nick Head (of the Department of Conservation) and Peter Heenan (of Landcare Research). There will also be a series of plant conservation workshops including a threatened plant propagation workshop. A lecture on the future of the native plant life of Canterbury will be held on the evening of Friday 12 August at the same venue and will be open to the public. The inaugural Network plant conservation awards ceremony will be held on the evening of Saturday 13 August also at the same venue.

Sunday will be a full day field trip to Kaitorete Spit and Motukarara Nursery. The registration form with details of the full programme will be available from the website in the next few weeks. Help with sponsorship, organisation and running of the conference would be very welcome - please contact David Given: david.given@ccc.govt.nz

Network Plant Conservation Awards 2005

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network is launching an awards scheme at their 2005 Annual Conference, to acknowledge outstanding contributions to native plant conservation. A nomination form can be found at the end of this newsletter and more copies are available on the Network website. We look forward to receiving your nominations for the various categories. Please bring this awards scheme to the attention of your colleagues and friends. The prize giving will be at the Network conference on the evening of Saturday 13 August 2005.

Web site Username and Password

By now all members should have received their web site username and password. Please email the Network (info@nzpcn.org.nz) if you have not. This will give you access to the 'Members Area' of the website and will enable you to download publications from the site.

Network website receives two million hits

After taking 14 months to receive its first one million hits the Network website has taken only four months to reach the two million hit milestone. More and more people are seeking information about New Zealand native plant life and are turning to the Network. Please forward the web site address to your friends and colleagues so that more people can learn about New Zealand's unique flora.



Koekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*).
Photo: Department of Conservation.

Fact sheets for 60 of the most common plants now complete

Fact sheets for over 60 of the most common species are now completed including pohutukawa, kauri, totara, kohekohe and toetoe. Peter de Lange, Network Vice President and Department of Conservation Plant Conservation Scientist has been working for the past few months on descriptions for these fact sheets. Please tell us if you have a particular favourite species that you would like us to complete the fact sheet for, so we can add it to our work programme.

Mt Burnett Update – feedback from members required

One of New Zealand's most important plant areas is currently being mined by OMYA (a Swiss mining company) under license from the Department of Conservation. Mt Burnett is New Zealand's only significant area of dolomite, and dolomitic marble. It was identified in the New Zealand Geopreservation Inventory as being of national importance. The mountain is home to several threatened plants and animals. The mountain is also the sole site for dolomite karst induced vegetation types, which include a well preserved geological and vegetation sequence ranging from dolomite, to dolomite-marble, to coal measures and then back to dolomite marble all within an area of less than 1 km. A recent publication has revealed that southern rata trees (*Metrosideros umbellata*) found on the Mt Burnett coal measures are genetically distinct from all other New Zealand populations sampled. All these values are being destroyed by current dolomite mining. The current mining license is due to expire in 2006 at which time the New Zealand Government can decide to re-issue a new license (if OMYA applies for one) or alternatively add the area to the Kahurangi National Park. The land is currently owned by the Crown.

The Network has written to the New Zealand Government twice on this issue. The first letter was to Minister of Conservation Chris Carter early in 2004. The second was in December 2004 to the Prime Minister Helen Clark (copied to the Department of Conservation, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Environment, Tasman District Council and the Rt. Hon. Nick Smith). We are publishing an abridged version of our second letter below and the response to it. The Council asks that members read these letters and tell us what you feel is the most appropriate action for the Network to take when such an important plant area may be subjected to further development. Opinions should be emailed to the Network at info@nzpcn.org.nz

The Network letter:

"Tuesday 30 November 2004

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Dolomite Mining on Mt Burnett, Golden Bay

Earlier this year we wrote to the Minister of Conservation expressing concerns about the dolomite mining of Mt Burnett, in that letter we pointed out the importance of Mt Burnett... Mt Burnett is geologically unique in the country as it is the only major area of dolomitic marble. Because of that geology and because of the isolated nature of the mountain it has developed a unique flora, and suite of vegetation associations. In particular the mountain is home to two endemic plant species



Myrsine argentea. Photo Simon Walls.

Carex dolomitica (a sedge) and *Myrsine argentea* (a small tree) recognised as new to science... Both taxa are listed as "Acutely Threatened", primarily because their habitat is being destroyed by dolomite mining. To that list we can add the possibility of a further two or three, as yet unnamed endemics, including a type of carrot (*Gingidia* aff. *montana*), a hebe (*Hebe* aff. *albicans*) and a shrub daisy (*Brachyglottis* aff. *laxifolius*)... Thus, for its small size (6 ha) the Mt Burnett dolomite facies supports a remarkable number of endemic or potentially endemic vascular plants.

...the mountain is also the northern South Island limit for an unusual rata (*Metrosideros parkinsonii*), a small peppertree (*Pseudowintera traversii*) and a hebe

(*Hebe townsonii*) – the latter "At Risk/Range Restricted", and preserves a unique, genetically distinct population of southern rata (*Metrosideros umbellata*). Mt Burnett also has the largest known population of another threatened shrub *Coprosma obconica*, and contains unique vegetation types because of the complex geology which includes suites of overlapping dolomitic marble, dolomitic limestone, marble and coal measures occurring within very short distances of each other. Aside from the flora and vegetation associations the mountain is the type locality and home for the largest known population of a large land snail (*Powelliphanta gilliesii* gilliesii). It is suspected that, due to the isolation and presence of endemic plants that the mountain might also have other endemic invertebrates, but as far as we are aware specific field surveys have not been conducted to determine if this is true. All of these values provide ample reason to reinvestigate the current mining of this unique mountain.

At present Mt Burnett is being mined by Omya (NZ) Ltd. Their mining operation has effectively destroyed one half of the unique dolomitic rock exposures, and their roads have facilitated the spread of weeds onto the remaining, as yet undamaged portion of the mountain. While mining directly threatens the mountain's vegetation, the weeds are a serious threat to the vegetation of the small remnant karst left intact by the mining operations. Currently the licence for Omya (NZ) Ltd is due for renewal in 2006. Earlier this year Omya applied for access over conservation land to expand their mine. At the time we congratulated the Minister of Conservation on turning the application down. However we now understand that the Company is preparing to reapply for a licence to continue their operation after 2006.

The Network urges the Labour Government to consider the many unique values of this mountain, and decline any application to extend the mining. We strongly recommend that Mt Burnett is added to Kahurangi National Park."

The response from Hon Chris Carter MP:

Dear Mr Oates

Thank you for your letter of 30th November 2004 to the Prime Minister, concerning the importance of endemic plants species on Mt Burnett.. I have been asked to reply as the matter falls within my portfolio.

Your letter raises your network's concerns about the threat of weed spread from mining operations on Mt Burnett, and recommends that the mountain be added to Kahurangi National Park.

You will be aware, from my earlier correspondence on the subject, that, in March 2004, I declined OMYZ (NZ) Ltd's request for an access agreement that would have enabled the company to expand the existing quarry on conservation land at Mt Burnett.

In order to continue operating after its mining license expires in 2006, OMYA will need an access arrangement under section 61 of the Crown Minerals Act 1991. The Department of Conservation advises me that it has not yet received an application for such an arrangement.

Given that there is an existing mining license for the area, which is due to expire in 2006, I believe that it makes good sense to wait and explore the whole issue of dolomite quarrying on Mount Burnett if, and when, an application is received. The question of whether or not the mountain should be added to Kahurangi National Park could also be considered at that time. Thank you for writing to raise this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

Chris Carter

Landcare Research Website: Phylogeny of New Zealand Plants

Although there is a wealth of published information on the phylogenetic relationships of the New Zealand flora, much of it is not readily accessible. As a rule the results are published in a variety of scientific journals or are scattered in international databases, so it is not always easy to stay "up with the literature". The Landcare Research "Phylogeny of New Zealand Plants" website attempts to bridge this gap by demystifying phylogenetic information and making it more readily available accessible. The site consists of a set of nested trees that provide an overview of the phylogenetic relationships of the indigenous New Zealand flora. Visitors to the site are treated to images of the New Zealand landscape and flora and can navigate across phylogenetic trees that depict the most ancient lineages of green organisms and land plants to spectacular adaptive radiations that have occurred in recent times. This information is supplemented by links to websites such as the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network and the New Zealand Plant Names database.

To view the site visit He Whanaketanga of Ngā Tipu o Aotearoa - Phylogeny of New Zealand Plants at <http://nzflora.landcareresearch.co.nz/phylogeny>. Financial support for the development of this site received from the Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (TFBIS) Programme (<http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/information/tfbis/>) is gratefully acknowledged.



Peter Wyse Jackson.

Peter Wyse Jackson leaves BGCI

After 18 years with BGCI, Dr Peter Wyse Jackson is standing down as Secretary General of Botanic Gardens Conservation International. Peter joined IUCN-The World Conservation Union in 1987 to help establish IUCN's Botanic Gardens Conservation Secretariat (BGCS). In 1990, BGCS became an independent U.K. charity, a worldwide organisation promoting plant conservation through botanic gardens. BGCS was renamed Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) in 1992 and Peter became Secretary General in 1994.

During his time with BGCI, Peter has worked with and advised on the development of botanic gardens and their plant conservation programmes in

countries across the globe. He was lead author of the worldwide policy framework document, the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation, published in 2000. Under his leadership, BGCI and the world network of botanic gardens it supports, has thrived.

On behalf of the botanic garden community, Peter played a major role in the development and implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), which was adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002. Since 2003 he has assisted in the development of a Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, and he has been its interim Chair since the launch of the Partnership in February 2004. Peter steps down as Secretary General at a time when BGCI is in a very strong position. The achievements of BGCI and its networks over the last two decades have been remarkable and this is in no small part due to Peter's leadership.

Brazil orders Amazon conservation after nun's murder

Brazilian Government has ordered the creation of two vast conservation areas in the Amazon days after Dorothy Stang, a 74 year old American missionary, was assassinated in the Amazon state of Para, Brazil. These areas are regarded as rich in biodiversity and are known as Terra du Meio or "Middle Land". These areas cover more than 4 million hectares.

Sister Dorothy was travelling to a sustainable development project in Anapu with some colleagues when she was shot three times by two gunmen. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, US, Sister Dorothy was a small powerful woman and a Brazilian and US citizen. She had worked in the Amazon for the past 37 years, living in Anapú since 1972. For 56 years she had been a member in good standing in the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, an international Catholic religious order of approximately two thousand women who work on five continents. She opposed land grabbers and illegal loggers who use intimidation, violence and guns to force small landowners off their land. She worked in an area that is remote and lawless and she has received many death threats. She received an "Honorary Citizenship of the State" from the state of Para, Brazil earlier this year.

Para State is responsible for approximately one-third of the deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and plays a leading role in both environmental abuse and human rights violations. She became an environmentalist by default. She was threatened regularly because of her work championing the cause of local farmers who were being evicted.

A member of the Brazilian cabinet, Environment Minister Marina Silva, compared Sr. Dorothy's murder to the killing of trade union leader Chico Mendes, a campaigner for the rainforest whose death in 1988 sparked worldwide outrage.

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):

Wellington Botanical Society – evening meeting: Monday 21 March – Lichens. Speaker: Bill Malcolm, photographer and author of plant books. Fungi can't make their own food. They survive only because they've evolved ways of getting food from other creatures. A fifth of them have opted for the imaginative solution of taking on algal and bacterial partners which can make food by trapping sunlight. That lifestyle is called a lichen. To be held at 7.30 pm at Victoria University, Wellington, Lecturer Theatre M101, ground floor Murphy Building, west side of Kelburn Parade. Enter building off Kelburn Parade about 20m below pedestrian overbridge.

Waikato Botanical Society field trip: Saturday 2 April 2005. *Olearia pachyphylla* survey at Lonely Bay/Shakespeare Cliff. On this trip we will retrace Peter de Lange's steps in an attempt to find the population of *Olearia pachyphylla* (classified as Nationally Endangered) which he found here and collected from in 1992. Other rare coastal species that might be here include *Senecio scabularus*, *Carmichaelia willamsii* and *Sicyos australis*. Contact: Andrea Brandon – email: abrandon@doc.govt.nz or ph 07 8581018. Meet: at Cooks Beach (meeting point tba) at 10.30am.

19th New Zealand Fungal Foray at Ohakune: 3–9 April, 2005

The 19th New Zealand Fungal Foray, 3–9 April, will be held at the Ruapehu Ski Lodge, and Wairarapa Ski Lodge, Ohakune, central North Island, New Zealand. Ohakune is close to collecting sites with both podocarp forest and beech forest in the Tongariro National Park, as well as several smaller, less well-known reserves, some of which are known to be botanically and entomologically interesting and diverse. See February newsletter for more details and registration forms. For more information contact Paula Wilkie, Landcare Research, Phone: (09 574 4156), e-mail: wilkiep@LandcareResearch.co.nz

Bioblitz Christchurch - Friday 8 April – Christchurch. Starts at 3 p.m. and finishes 24 hours later. The site will be Hagley Park and the botanic gardens with the event base camp at the botanic gardens depot. A team from Lincoln University, Landcare Research and the City Council is working hard to finalise teams who will inventory everything that moves from bacteria and parasites to birds, bees and flowering plants. More details can be found on the Landcare Research web site at www.landcareresearch.co.nz/news/conferences/index.asp. Contact: David Given: david.given@ccc.govt.nz.

Rotorua Botanical Society – Field Trip - Lake Rerewhaakaitu Margins. Saturday 9 April. **Leader:** Sarah Beadel, sarah@wildlands.co.nz, 07-343-9017 (Wk), 07-362-4315 (Hm). **Meet:** The carpark between the Convention Centre and the Police Station, Fenton Street, Rotorua - 8.30 a.m. **Grade:** Easy. A walk around the lake margins looking at wetland and lake margin species, including *Gratiola sexdentata*, *Carex cirrhosa*, *Glossostigma*, *Limosella*, *Lilaeopsis*, and *Montia*. Another interesting plant species we will be looking for is *Pilularia novae-zelandiae*, which has been recorded from the lake in the past but has not been seen recently.

Rotorua Botanical Society and Forest and Bird Lecture: Thursday 14 April: Jenny Lux "Vegetation patterns after prehistoric burning of kauri forest at Waipoua, Northland, New Zealand". Omaia clearing, in the Waipoua Forest Sanctuary of western Northland, is one of several small patches of kauri forest burnt repeatedly in prehistoric times for the purpose of kiwi hunting, according to oral history of local iwi. Jenny's Masters research covers the vegetation patterns which are present at Omaia today, including a botanical survey of the vascular flora, statistical analysis and description of forest patterns, and dating of the last fires using dendro-ecology (tree-ring analysis). Some of the methodology and results will be explained, accompanied by slides of ecological and scenic interest." **Venue:** Rotorua Womens Club, Hinemaru St. (near Princes Gate Hotel) 7.30 p.m.

Rotorua Botanical Society - Okareka Mistletoe Restoration Project Weed Control Work Day: Saturday 16 April. **Leader:** Paul Cashmore 07 348 4421 (hm), 349 7432 (wk). **Meet:** Ex-Okareka store 8:45am. **Grade:** Medium-Hard – Activities suitable for all ages and abilities will be provided. (see advert in this newsletter). This may include releasing our September plantings and weed control elsewhere in the reserve.

Wellington Botanical Society – evening meeting: Monday 18 April - The Warm Autumn Rain... Mushrooms and Boletes in New Zealand. **Speaker:** Geoff Ridley, Science Manager (New Organisms), Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA). At certain times of the year mushrooms and boletes can be a conspicuous part of most types of vegetation in New Zealand yet most people know little about them. This talk will introduce the ecology, taxonomy and how to begin to identify these fungi. To be held at 7.30 p.m. at Victoria University, Wellington, Lecturer Theatre M101, ground floor Murphy Building, west side of Kelburn Parade. Enter building off Kelburn Parade about 20 m below pedestrian overbridge.

Botanical Society of Otago. Annual General Meeting: Wednesday 20 April, 2005. Start time: 5.20 p.m. The date is still to be finalised, so this could change. The meeting will include a guest speaker to be advised. At the 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 [Ian Radford](#), phone: (03) 479 9065.

Waikato Botanical Society AGM - Wednesday 27th April 2005

Have your say on running of the Waikato Botanical Society. Please forward nominations for 2005 committee members (or nominate yourself) to Andrea Brandon or Shirley Nichols. The short AGM will be followed by a talk by Cilla McCallum who is finishing a PhD on the sustainable harvest and cultural aspects of harakeke (flax). Venue: McMeekan Centre, Agresearch, Ruakura. Contact: Shirley Nichols ph 07 855 5061, Email: shirley.nichols@agresearch.co.nz. Time: 7.00pm

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. Email Andi.cairns@jcu.edu.au



NEW ZEALAND PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

PLANT CONSERVATION AWARDS 2005

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network is launching an awards scheme at their 2005 Annual Conference, to acknowledge outstanding contributions to native plant conservation.

The award categories are:

- Individual involved in plant conservation
- Plant Nursery involved in plant conservation
- School plant conservation project
- Community plant conservation project
- Local Authority protecting native plant life

More information about the awards scheme and additional nomination forms are available on the Network website - see www.nzpcn.org.nz. You can make multiple nominations under different categories. Everyone is eligible to make nominations, not just Network members. The awards will be made at the Network conference on Saturday 13 August 2005. See the website for more information about the conference (Christchurch 12–14 August 2005).

NOMINATION FORM

Category (please circle):

Individual	Plant Nursery	School
Community	Local Authority	Lifetime achievement

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

Contact details for person, school, nursery, community group or local authority:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

REASONS FOR NOMINATION:

Please add more details on separate pages if required.

YOUR NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO NOMINEE: _____

Your contact details:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

PLEASE SEND YOUR NOMINATION FORM BY FRIDAY 1 JULY 2005 TO:

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www.nzpcn.org.nz