Wellington Botanical Society
Te Rōpū Manāki i Ngā Tamariki a Tāne, o Te Whanganui a Tara

NEWSLETTER September 2025

Previous issue: April 2025

ISSN 1171-9982 (Print) ISSN 2815-9896 (Online)

Chairperson's message

Kate Jordan

Thank you for re-electing me as your President for another year! Although, under our new constitution, my title is now Chairperson.

Speaking of the constitution, I would like to thank Richard Herbert for his work on it. The new requirements for constitutions under the Incorporated Societies Act are onerous and Richard did the hard yards taking our constitution from four pages to 22 pages with all the required detail.

The committee did a lot of hard work in the past year and you can find the details of that in the President's report in this newsletter. And if there's something you think the committee should be doing—please get in touch with me!

Have a great summer!

New members

We welcome new members who have joined since April this year: Peter Alexander, Jan Allen, Hamish Carson, Juanfra Guisado Chavez, Finn Harvey, Tom Hitchon, Shona McCohan, Emily Smith, Rob Smith, Fleur Speedy, Eleanor Thorpe, Janelle Veenendaal and Atom Zonnevylle.

We are keen to welcome more people to the delights of botany via BotSoc. If you know someone who might enjoy our field trips, newsletters, bulletin and informative meetings, please encourage them to join. New members can fill in the form at https://forms.gle/xTZJtENCV6qsyMLQ7, or print the form at the end of this newsletter or they can go to the website: https://www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz/membership.html.

Articles for web site

We welcome articles for consideration for inclusion on our web site:

www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz

Please send your article to:

Richard Herbert

e-mail herbert.r@xtra.co.nz

Writing for the Bulletin

Do you have a botanical observation, anecdote, or insight that you could share with others in BotSoc? If so, please consider contributing it to the Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin. There is still plenty of space in the next issue. For more details and assistance, contact Eleanor Burton at: trogs@duck.com or 479 0497.

BotSoc on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/groups/322939557873243/

This is the unofficial page for Wellington Botanical Society.

What on earth?

Do you know what this photo depicts? You can find the answer at the bottom of page 3. Give yourself an extra pat on the back if you could identify both the feature and the species. It will likely be easier for people viewing it in colour—perhaps this is an extra incentive to subscribe to the digital PDF version of the newsletter instead of the printed version.

Meetings

BotSoc meetings are usually held at 7.30 p.m., third Monday each month at Victoria University, WN – Lecture Theatre MYLT101, ground floor, Murphy Building, west side Kelburn Parade. Enter building 20 m down Kelburn Pde from pedestrian overbridge. No meetings December and January.

Meetings are in person and usually available on Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89547154619?pwd=bE0zRXRWSXBBUkVoUjdPcElJNXlJUT09.

Field trips

Day trips to locations in the Wellington region are usually held on the first Saturday of each month.

Extended excursions are usually held at New Year, and sometimes Easter and the first weekend in December.

DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR NEXT ISSUE – 20 NOVEMBER 2025

Articles may be edited for clarity and length

Wellington Botanical Society

Address:	PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140	
Web site:	www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz	
Chairperson:	Kate Jordan	wellingtonbotsocpresident@gmail.com
Deputy-Chairperson:	Dr Lara Shepherd	lara.shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz
Deputy-Chairperson:	Eleanor Burton	
Secretary:	Laura Girvan West	wellingtonbotsocsecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Paul Bell-Butler	wellingtonbotsoctreasurer@gmail.com
Membership Secretary:	Karen & Stephen Whitton	wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com
Auditor/Reviewer:	To be advised	
Submissions coordinator:	Vacant—volunteer sought—please contact Secretary	
Bulletin editor:	Eleanor Burton	04 479 0497
Newsletter editor:	Chris Horne	04 475 7025
Annual subscription:	ordinary $35; country $30; student $10; joint / group / family $40.	

Send your subscription to our bank account 020536 0017812 00.
Particulars: Name
Code: Membership type
Reference: amount of included donation
New subscribers: Please complete form at the back of this newsletter.

NOTICES

Events

2nd Saturday each month, except January. Ōtari-Wilton's Bush – Plant Care. Meet: Te Marae ō Tāne Visitor Centre, 160 Wilton Rd, Wilton at 9:00 a.m. Bus: No. 14 Wilton bus, Ct Pl 8.28, Molesworth St 8.36, alight Warwick St. Planting: winter months: weed clearance other months.

- *Wilbur Dovey. Landline 499 1044. Mobile 027 499 1044.*

Letters to the editor

We would welcome your comments on any aspect of BotSoc's activities:

- places you would like to visit on field trips
- topics you would like to have covered in evening meetings
- topics you would like covered in BotSoc's Bulletin and Newsletter
- other matters of concern or interest to you.

Thank you, The committee

Pat Enright

Long-time BotSoccer Pat Enright died on 8 August 2025. Go to: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DPT35HH6d/ to read a post about Pat by Robyn Smith with additional comments from friends and botanical colleagues.

Ngā mihi,
Kate, President

Awards and grants

We thank Jessica for her donation of $5000 which has allowed us to add a runner-up prize to the Tom Moss Award.

Paul Bell-Butler, Treasurer

New book

***He Puāwai, a natural history of New Zealand flowers* by Prof. Phil Garnock-Jones**

Prof. Garnock-Jones writes:

Dear Laura and all members,

I'm writing to thank you once again for the grant you made towards my book project on New Zealand flowers and to let you know the book is in press and will be launched on 10 October 2025, 6 pm at Unity Books, Willis St, Wellington. AUP will shortly be sending an invitation and all members are very welcome to come.

The title is ***He Puāwai, a natural history of New Zealand flowers***; details are available at https://aucklanduniversitypress.co.nz/he-puawai/

Your organisation's generosity has helped make this publication possible at an affordable price and this is acknowledged in the book. Specifically, your grant funded some of the editing and production costs at Auckland University Press.

Thank you so much for your support.

Kind regards

Phil

Information about attending meetings and field trips has been moved to the end of the newsletter.

Membership for the year 2025–26 is now due

Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership. For those still to renew, please make payment to the account below and email details to wellington-botsocmembership@gmail.com. Please make sure you have your name in the reference of your payment. Not all bank accounts show the full name on our statement.

Account name: **Wellington Botanical Society Inc**
Account #: **02-0536-017812-00**
Reference: **Name** – **Membership type** – Donation (optional)

Membership types and fees:

- Ordinary $35
- Country $30
- Joint/family $40
- Student $10

Donations are optional and go towards the Society's Jubilee Fund. Donations are also tax deductible. If you would like a receipt please ask.

Any questions about your membership status, please contact the membership secretarial team.

Thank you.

Karen & Stephen Whitton, Membership Secretarial team
wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com

PUBLICATIONS

1. Trilepidea NZPCN e-newsletter: Please tell us of any plant conservation news and events (Have you found a threatened plant? Are you undertaking a restoration project? Do you have plant stories, talks, planting days, field trips, etc.?) which you would like promoted nationwide. Email details to: info@nzpcn.org.nz.

1a. Trilepidea: No. 253 (July 2025). File size: 4.96 MB.

- *https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/83/631/trilepidea_july_2025_final.pdf*

1b. Trilepidea: No. 254 (August 2025). File size: 2.2 MB.

- *https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/83/923/trilepidea_august_2025_final.pdf*

2. Auckland Botanical Society Newssheet

- *akbotsocnewsletter@gmail.com*

3. Auckland Botanical Society Journal 80(1) 2025

- *https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a1fs1sXbDtYEiD3obvhTGZwFSouWo9rP?usp=sharing*

4. Canterbury Botanical Society August 2025 newsletter

- *newsletter@canterburybotanicalsociety.org.nz*

4. Capital Trees: Susette Goldsmith.

- *Te Papa Press. https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/capital-trees-the-arboreal-legacy-of-te-upoko-o-te-ika-the-wellington-region*.

5. 'Save Denniston' Webinar recording

- *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD7eT4iZPMA*

6. Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust: June 2025 newsletter.

- *https://www.owbt.nz/about-the-trust/newsletters/*

'What on earth?' revealed

A synangium (spore-bearing strucure) of *Tmesipteris tannensis*. In this species, the ends of the synangia are pointed and upturned away from the underlying leaf surface. In the other common, widespread species, *Tmesipteris elongata*, the ends of the synangia are rounded and lie flat on the surface of the underlying leaf.

Right: habit of *Tmesipteris* tannensis; Below left: synangia of *T.* tannensis; below right: synangia of *T. elongata*.
Photos: Jeremy Rolfe.

Help raise funds for BotSoc's Jubilee Award Fund – bring named seedlings/cuttings for sale at each evening meeting

FIELD TRIPS & EVENING MEETINGS

The following programme IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If you wish to go on a field trip, PLEASE help with planning by giving the leader 2 days' notice before a day trip, MORE notice before weekend trips, and SEVERAL WEEKS' notice before the New Year's trip.

Non-members are welcome to come to our meetings and to join us on our field trips.

OCTOBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026

Saturday 4 October: Field trip — Puffer Track, Kaitoke

Last visited by Wgtn Botanical Society in 2011, the Puffer track passes through a variety of habitats from scrub to beech forest. We should see some orchids in flower, sundews and maybe Kirk's daisy and *Alseuosmia* in flower. Initially, the track from the car park has some large steps until the old puffer ridge and good benched track is reached, but botanists travel slowly. We'll go as far as we feel like and return. **Meet:** 8.50 a.m. at the Upper Hutt Railway station car park. **Or** Meet: 9.30 at the car park for the Dobson Loop Track. Turn off State Highway 2 onto Marchant Road (signposted just beyond the Pakuratahi River Bridge) at the YMCA Camp Kaitoke turnoff. Near the end of Marchant Road, turn right into Kiwi Ranch Road. The carpark is located on the left, approximately 500 m along Kiwi Ranch Road. **Train:** 8.05 a.m. Hutt Line train Wgtn Station to Upper Hutt Station, —contact the leader to advise your transport. Map: NZTopo50-BP32 Paraparaumu.

- **Leaders:** Michele Dickson 022 635 0193 / micheledickson21@gamil.com; Mick Parsons 027 249 9663 / parsonsroad@gmail.com.

Monday 20 October: Evening meeting — Students' presentations

Speakers: Benjamin Wright: My thesis will focus on two main aspects, firstly the propagation of mistletoes. I plan to build upon the limited published work by quantifying the importance of host branch size and "planting" on the same host species as the mother plant. I may look at other variables if I can source enough seed. I will also be surveying populations of these species in the greater Wellington region, noting the size and health of these populations and how they compare to past records.

Charlie Tustin: My research is centred on understanding practices around wetland restoration, including methods for vegetation monitoring. My site is in Wairio Wetlands, adjacent to Lake Wairarapa. I will look at how different treatments and environmental conditions impact the growth and survival of 8 plant species that were planted up to 15 years ago. I will then use remote sensing to gather measurements of the plants, which I will then compare with field measurements to determine the interchangeability of field and remote sensing methods. This research ultimately aims to better understand restoration and monitoring techniques in New Zealand wetland ecosystems.

Lisa Wolf: Mutualistic nutritional symbioses constitute a widespread phenomenon in marine ecosystems and are frequently defined as relationships in which all partners mutually benefit. In New Zealand, the sea anemone *Handactis nutrix* (Stuckey, 1909) lives in ectosymbiosis with different brown macroalgae such as species of *Carpophyllum* and *Cystophora*. *H. nutrix* is not reported to occur without the seaweed, suggesting that there may be benefits for both partners. This study, undertaken around Wellington's south coast, found compelling evidence for a nutritional symbiosis between the sea anemone *Handactis nutrix* and one of its seaweed hosts, *Cystophora scalaris,* using stable isotope analysis to trace carbon and nitrogen transfer between the symbiotic partners. While no transfer of carbon could be detected between the partners, there was strong evidence for the transfer of nitrogen in the form of ammonium from the sea anemone to the seaweed. Additionally, the natural abundance of the nitrogen isotope 15N differed between seaweeds associated with *H. nutrix* and those without, further supporting the notion of a nutritional symbiosis. These findings, coupled with the observed host specificity towards species of *Cystophora* compared to *Carpophyllum* and specific assemblage patterns of the sea anemone, strongly suggest a mutually beneficial relationship. This nutritional symbiosis therefore likely has significant implications for the survival, growth, and overall health of both the sea anemone and its seaweed host, which I am currently investigating through a 16-week experimental study.

Sarah Goldberg: Investigating the seed physiology of Podocarpaceae species in Aotearoa New Zealand: Viability, germination, and storage behaviour of *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides* (kahikatea), *Podocarpus totara* (tōtara), *Prumnopitys taxifolia* (matai) and *Pectinopitys ferruginea* (miro). Knowing seed viability, storage behaviour, and germination requirements are beneficial to restoration success as they directly impact the germinability of seeds. Information about the viability of fresh seeds, optimal storage conditions, and dormancy-breaking strategies are not known for many NZ native species, including iconic forest giants, such as the podocarps. In this research, I assessed seed viability using cut tests, stain, and germination trials, then measured how various storage conditions impact viability over time. Additionally, I investigated dormancy factors which postpone germination, examined seeds for desiccation sensitivity, and tested how long seeds persist in the soil seed bank.

Saturday 1 – Sunday 2 November: Field trip — Hiwinui Forest Park

Hiwinui Forest Park is owned by Greater Wellington and is predominantly plantation forest. However, there are also a number of areas of remnant native forest. These range from 10s of square metres to several hectares. The Park backs onto the Aorangi Forest Park at its north-western limit, and ranges in altitude from ngaio-tītoki forest in the valley floor (250 metres) to silver – red beech forest at 600m. There are fantastic views of the lower Ruamahanga valley, Wairarapa moana, and Remutaka Range so bring your camera.

There are forestry roads throughout the park, and logging may dictate what parts of the forest we can access. However, two-thirds of the plantation have been harvested so there will be plenty to explore. Bring your hand lens.

Camping Saturday night

There is a large flat grassy paddock in the valley floor with isolated trees where we can camp and a portaloo will be available. There is a stream adjacent, but please bring water for drinking and cooking. Bring one breakfast meal, one dinner meal, two lunches, snacks, and hot drinks. It could be cool so a thermos could be a good idea.

What to bring

Footwear needs to provide ankle support and sturdy enough to cope with stream walking and rough terrain. Bring clothing for all conditions from wet and cold to hot and sunny. A thermal layer, gloves and beanie. Waterproof parka and windproof leggings, sunhat, and sun cream.

- **Depart:** Martinborough toilets in the square 9.30 a.m. Drive in convoy south toward Lake Ferry, then turn left onto Dry River Road. Return: The same way 3pm Sunday. This trip is limited to 30 attendees.
- **Leaders:** Owen Spearpoint. Mob 027 285 8083 Email owen.spearpoint@gw.govt.nz ; Laura Girvan West, laura.west@gw.govt.nz, 027 583 934

Monday 17 November: Evening meeting — Wellington's seaweed forests

Towering seaweed forests and colourful sponge gardens lie just beneath the surface of Wellington's coastline. Like forests on land, these underwater habitats support a remarkable diversity of life, including treasured kaimoana species. Yet they face growing pressure from human activity and environmental change. Dr Nicole Miller will take us on a visual journey through Wellington's Blue Belt, exploring current conservation successes and challenges. Drawing on years of diving, photography and local restoration work, Nicole will highlight the beauty and fragility of these ecosystems and why it's more important than ever to bring changes to the surface.

Nicole's seaweed artworks will be available to view and purchase after the talk, with all profits supporting marine conservation and outreach initiatives through Explore Your Coast.

Thursday 4 December (evening) and Saturday 6 Dec (morning): Field trips Rātā walk, Lower Hutt

A casual 3.5-km 2-hour stroll through suburban Lower Hutt to see flowering rātā and other native trees in the streets and gardens. The walk will begin and end at Woburn Station, so we encourage public transport use. **Meet:** Car park on east side of Woburn Station. The walk will be held as an after-work event on Thursday 4 December and morning walk on Saturday 6 December. **Thursday: 6 p.m. Train:** Hutt Valley line – 5.35 p.m. from Wellington to Woburn. **Saturday: 9.30 a.m. Train:** 9.05 a.m. Hutt Valley line Wellington to Woburn.

- **Leader:** John Barnett 021 063 1590 johnbarnett@inspire.net.nz.

16–23 January 2026: Summer Camp — Pureora Forest, Waikato

This year we are heading to Waikato to visit Pureora Forest Park and the surrounding area. It is known for its outstanding remnants of ancient podocarp forest and is home to the elusive pua ō te rēinga / *Dactylanthus taylorii* and kōkako / *Callaeas wilsoni*.

- **Possible field trips:** Mt Titiraupenga, sections of the Timber Trail, QEII Covenants & more to come.
- **Base camp:** Pureora Forest Lodge
- **Breakfasts and lunches will** be prepared by BotSoccers on a roster system. Dinners and deserts will be catered. Vegetarians, dairy-free and vegan catered for—if you have special dietary needs, please let us know and we may be able to accommodate them.
- **Accommodation:** $20/person/night; bunking / camping
- **Transport:** Transport: Participants to arrange their own transport to and from camp. Transport may be available from bus stop / train station / airport nearest Pureora Forest Lodge—please indicate if you need this on the registration form.
- **Booking:** Booking ESSENTIAL. Book early! Preference will be given to members of Wellington BotSoc. Please either register online at https://forms.gle/QorDg2VoXRGFHsMW7, or print the registration form at the end of this newsletter. and email it to botsocsummercamp@gmail.com by 25 November.
- **Deposit:** $490.00 per person to be paid by internet banking when registration is confirmed. At the end of the trip, depending on the final cost, you will be sent an invoice (or a refund) for the full cost less your original payment.
- **Contact:** Email: botsocsummercamp@gmail.com

Student scholarship

This year BotSoc is supporting three students to attend the Summer Camp.

Full details are:

- WBS to cover the deposit for the camp of $490 of up to three students to attend the 2026 summer camp. If there is an additional payment needed at the end of the camp, the student will need to cover it.
- The first students to apply will be offered the places. Students will be helping with activities, writing trip reports, etc.
- The recipients must cover their own costs (such as travel to, from and during the camp, and snacks), and make their own arrangement for getting to and from Camp.
- The recipients must be (or have been) enrolled in Tertiary Education or be apprentices in 2025 or 2026.
- The recipients must be members of the Society.
- The recipients must be at least 18 years old to attend.

Please book online at https://forms.gle/QorDg2VoXRGFHsMW7 or use the registration form at the end of the newsletter.

President's report

Kate Jordan

We had a good year for the Wellington Botanical Society and I'll go over some of the highlights quickly here.

Membership

We currently have 219 members. We can't do a direct comparison with last year's membership as our membership secretary Karen Whitton did a mammoth job this year of cleaing up the membership list to make sure all our members were active.

Field trips

Date	Location	Attendance
1 Sep 2024	Russell and Wi Parata Reserves, Waikanae	16
5 Oct 2024	Huntleigh Park, Crofton Downs and Korimako Track, Outer Green Belt	18
2 Nov 2024	Khandallah Park	25
16 Nov 2024	Working bee, Te Mārua Bush	7
5 & 7 Dec 2024	Rātā Walk, Lower Hutt	13 & 12
1 Feb 2025	Kaiwaru Wetlands, Waikanae	22
1 Mar 2025	Johnston Hill Scenic Reserve, Karori	22
5–6 Apr 2025	Western Lake Road and Te Rātā, Pirinoa, Wairarapa	11
3 May 2025	Lake Papaitonga	
7 Jun 2025	Redwood Bush, Tawa	19
5 Jul 2025	Porirua Scenic Reserve: Te Ara Utiwai	
2 Aug 2025	Centennial Park, Miramar	27

You can see the attendance numbers above we had reasonably good turn outs at field trips this year.

Thirteen people attended the summer camp at St Arnaud. They botanised an interesting range of ecosystems, including scree, peat bogs and herb fields. There were delays in settling the accounts of attendees, which we intend to avoid next year. Thank you to Tom Mayo who organised and led the summer camp.

The summer camp next year will be at Pureora, on the dates 16–22 January 2026.

The July working bee at Te Mārua Bush was postponed because the area now requires less work than previously. Volunteer efforts will be moved to another area.

Thank you to everyone who led a trip, who took the beginners' groups or who attended.

Meetings

As you can see from the table below, we had good attendance at our evening meetings, both in-person and on Zoom. Apologies, we don't have the figures for the end of last year.

Two talks that were particularly well-received were Phil Garnock-Jones and Avi Holzapfel. Phil opened up a whole new world of flowers' sexual functions and Avi was extremely enthusiastic and knowledgeable on *Dactylanthus*.

I'd like to thank all our speakers for preparing and delivering such wonderful talks.

At our members evening we also had an epic book sale, which raised more than $300 for the Jubilee Fund. Special thanks to Val Smith and Barbara Clark who donated books and Laura Girvan-West for organising.

Paul, our Zoom coordinator, also now records the talks, so they can be watched at a later date. I'd like to thank him for this work and for organising the room we met in every month.

Date	Speaker and topic	Attendance	
		In-Person	Zoom
19 Aug 2024	Phil Garnock-Jones – Sex, flowers and species		
16 Sep 2024	Colan Balkwill – *Syzygium maire* genetics		
21 Oct 2024	Student presentations		
18 Nov 2024	Chris Ecroyd – Working with plants		
17 Feb 2025	Chris Cosslett – 25 years of Long Gully Bush	28	28
17 Mar 2025	John Leathwick – New Zealand biodiversity	30	45
22 Apr 2025	Lara Shepherd and Leon Perrie – *Aciphylla* taxonomy	21	36
19 May 2025	Members' evening	22	-
16 Jun 2025	Avi Holzapfel – *Dactylanthus taylorii*	28	41
21 Jul 2025	Jane Humble – botanical illustration	23	29

Sunita Singh

All of the field trips and meetings I just covered were organised by Sunita Singh. Sunita has been our programme coordinator since December 2002. For 23 years, she has organised ten field trips and ten evening meetings a year, sometimes more, which works out at more than 400 events.

Throughout this epic career, Sunita has maintained a diverse range of field trip locations and speakers to keep our membership educated and entertained. She also continued to do an excellent job under Covid, which presented a lot of challenges. It's a mammoth effort and we recognised that effort with the gift of a bottle of gin at the AGM. This isn't goodbye though—Sunita is going to stay on the committee and Lara will come on as programmes coordinator.

Awards

Jubilee Award

The Society awarded the $2,600 Jubilee Award to Debra Wootton to extend her work on seed germination of critically endangered *Ranunculus pauciflorus* at Castle Hill.

We also made an additional award of $2,600 to Phil Garnock-Jones to assist with the publication of his book on New Zealand flowers.

Student grants

We awarded student grants to:

- Paul Bell-Butler (taxonomy, phylogeny, evolution and everything else about the liverwort family *Lophocoleaceae*)
- Lisa Wolf (symbiotic relationships between sea anemones and brown macroalgae extension of Masters to PhD)
- Sarah Goldberg (podocarp restoration, seed germination behaviour and dormancy)
- Charlie Tustin (wetland restoration, Wairio wetlands)

Lisa, Sarah and Charlie will present at our October meeting, while Paul will present next year.

NIWA science fair

As part of the NIWA science fair, we awarded two prizes of $150 and $100.

Thanks to all the Wellington Botanical Society members who provided plants and books for sale at our meetings, and to those who bought them as this contributes to these awards.

Braithwaite estate

A big event for the committee was the bequest from the estate of George Braithwaite. George was a BotSoc member who very passionate about Wellington's botany and in particular the Green Belt. It took several years for the Public Trust to work out George's affairs, as there were various complications. The committee had initially thought the bequest would be about $80,000. However, the amount was $224,000. According to George's wishes, we were then required to gift half of that amount to another organisation.

This was quite a large amount and took me and the committee a bit by surprise. I decided—and the committee agreed—that we should take our time in working out how to progress with the gifting half the funds and what to do with our half. So that's an ongoing project for the committee and we will keep members up to date with developments.

Committee

The committee did so much work this year—I really didn't realise quite how much until I put this report together! A lot of committee work has been getting the business as usual things running well—making sure comms about meetings and trips are good, making it easier for people to sign up, promoting the society.

A big task was redoing the constitution to conform to the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. Committee member Richard Herbert led this work, with his excellent eye for detail and knowledge of such things. I thank him for this big task.

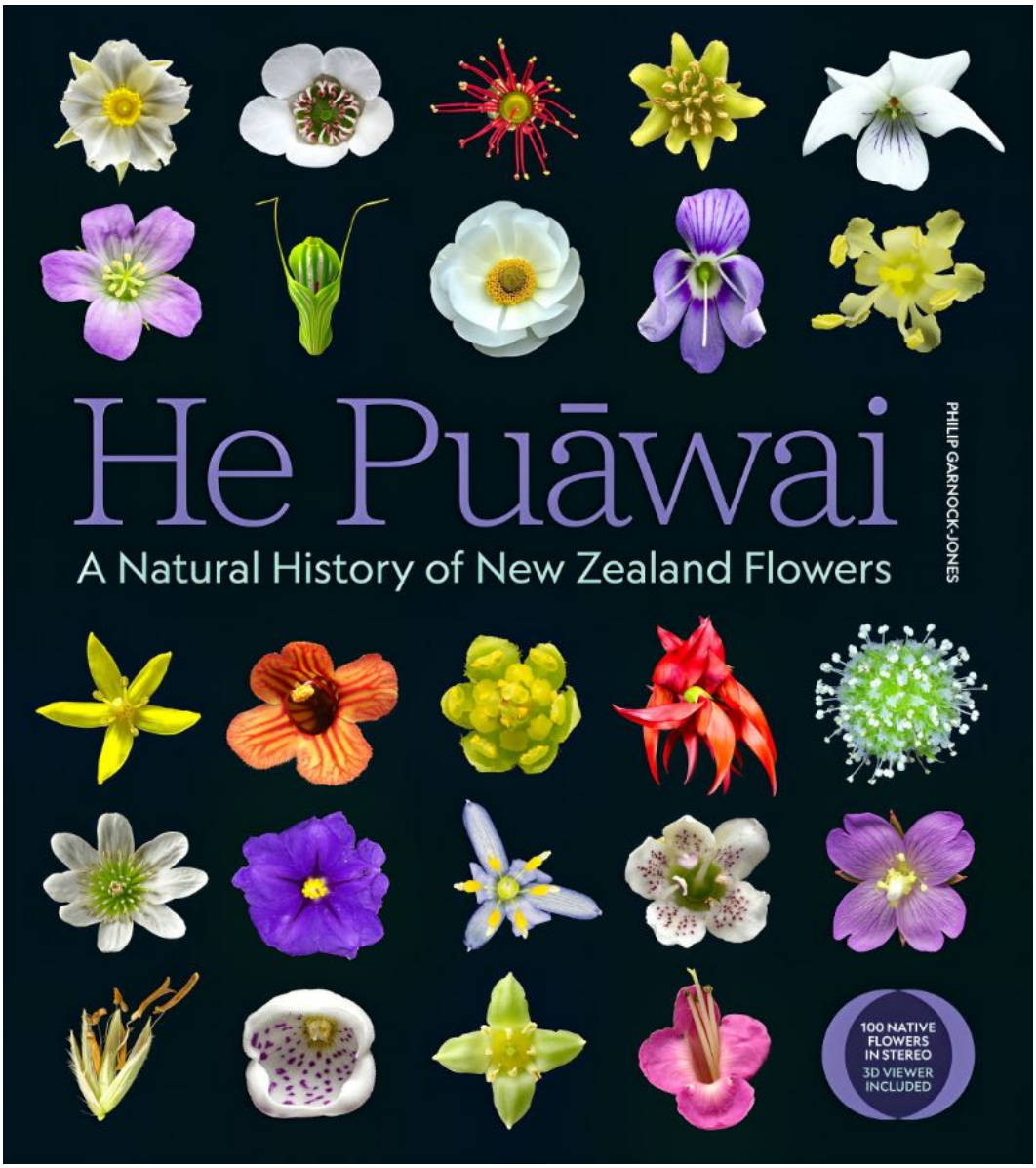
As I said earlier, Sunita is stepping down from programmes coordinator, but will stay on the committee and Lara will come onto the committee as programmes coordinator.

Owen Spearpoint is stepping down from the committee and we thank him for his years of service and the expert ecological knowledge he bought to the committee.

The committee did not make any submissions on local or national matters this year, as we did not have the capacity within the committee. This is something we're looking to address, but we really need the membership's help on this.

Other thanks and acknowledgements

Mick Parsons for reviewing the accounts.



Invasive shadows: a silent battle in Wellington's wild heart

Casey Bannon, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Wellington's rugged beauty has always been a source of pride, with its windswept coast-lines, steep forested hills, and native bush that hums with life. But beneath this natural splendour, a quiet invasion is underway. It's not loud. It doesn't roar. But it's relentless.

Exotic plants, once welcomed into gardens for their ornamental charm, are now slipping beyond fence-lines and into the wild. They're spreading fast, disrupting ecosystems that have taken centuries to evolve. And they're doing it with alarming efficiency.

Regional council staff and conservationists are raising the alarm. Among the most concerning invaders are four botanical trespassers: White-edged nightshade, Chilean myrtle, Chilean mayten, and Phragmites. Each has its own story, but they all share one dangerous trait: they thrive where they don't belong.

Meet the invaders

Let's take a closer look at these green infiltrators:

Species name	Origin	Appearance and traits	Ecological impact	Wellington management
White-edged nightshade (*Solanum marginatum*)	Northeastern Africa	Thorny shrub with chalky white leaf undersides and toxic yellow fruit	Forms dense thickets, blocks access, displaces native seedlings	Targeted removal; herbicide use in disturbed areas
Chilean Myrtle (*Luma apiculata*)	Chile & Argentina	Evergreen tree with cinnamon-orange bark and white flowers	Outcompetes native forest species, alters forest structure	Banned from sale; site-led control in reserves
Chilean Mayten (*Maytenus boaria*)	South America	Tall evergreen with glossy leaves and aggressive root suckering	Invades native bush, tolerates drought and shade	Banned from sale; controlled removal in urban bush
Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)	Cosmopolitan (non-native to NZ)	Tall reed with bamboo-like stems and feathery flower heads	Displaces wetland plants, reduces bird and aquatic habitat	Immediate reporting required; manual removal discouraged

Of the species mentioned above, Chilean myrtle remains under consideration for inclusion in the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) because of its invasive characteristics. Although it has not yet been officially classified as a pest by MPI, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has advised retailers to voluntarily discontinue its sale to help limit its spread. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is also reviewing the species and is likely to add it to its official list in the upcoming 2026 update.

A new threat for Wellington: alligator weed

In addition to the four weeds already mentioned, Alligator weed has begun surfacing in Wellington backyards and it's raising serious alarm. Listed on the region's RPMP exclusion list, this invasive plant is targeted for total prevention due to its ability to rapidly spread and dominate both land and water. If it reaches local waterways, it can block drainage costing the Council millions to fix, and also smother native habitats and disrupt aquatic life. Biosecurity teams are actively responding, but public vigilance is vital. Even a small outbreak could trigger long-term ecological damage and costly eradication efforts.

Lessons from the north: why every plant counts

Regions like Northland, Waikato, and Canterbury offer a sobering glimpse into what happens when invasive species slip through the cracks. In these regions, early signs were missed or underestimated, and the result has been costly.

Once pest plants spread beyond designated control areas, the challenge of managing them escalates dramatically. It's no longer a matter of simply removing a few rogue weeds, it becomes a long-term battle involving ongoing monitoring, repeated chemical treatments, and the protection of entire ecosystems under threat. Even a single missed clump can regrow and re-infest, reversing months of hard work and consuming valuable resources.

For councils, the financial implications are serious. If infestations spiral out of control, the cost of containment and restoration can soar into the millions, a burden ultimately shouldered by taxpayers. That's why early detection and complete eradication are critical. Every plant missed today could become a costly problem tomorrow.

That's why Wellington's best chance lies in vigilance and precision. Every fragment of alligator weed, every rogue sprig of Phragmites, if it's not found and stopped at the border, it could mean millions in future eradication costs and irreversible damage to our waterways and bush reserves.

Containment isn't just a strategy. It's a race against time, and every citizen plays a role in keeping Wellington ahead. Whether you're a gardener, tramper, student, or simply someone who loves the bush, your awareness and action in reporting your sightings via the hotline are crucial.

Citizen engagement: you hold the power

In this fight, one of the most powerful weapons isn't a chemical or a machine, it's your smartphone.

The iNaturalist NZ app is helping councils across the country track pest plants in real time. Every photo uploaded by a citizen helps biosecurity teams:

- Detect new threats early
- Map their spread across landscapes
- Prioritise control efforts based on verified data

Whether you're hiking through Ōtari-Wilton's Bush or pulling weeds in your garden, your observations matter. A single snapshot could be the key to stopping an invasion.

To report a pest plant directly, call the Greater Welling-

ton Regional Council Pest Plant Hotline at 0800 496 734 or visit gw.govt.nz/pest-and-weed-central.

Let's protect Wellington's wild heart, before the invaders take root.

QEII National Trust update

Natalie Morrison – Communications Advisor

Anna-Kate Goodall – Land Protection Advisor

Trevor Thompson – QEII Regional Representative Wairarapa

Becky Harris – Team Leader Land Protection

QEII National Trust is an independent charitable trust that partners with private landowners to protect natural and cultural heritage sites on their land. Landowners retain ownership of their property and special areas are protected with legally binding agreements called covenants, which remain on the land title forever.

As of March 2025, QEII has a total of 5,345 registered covenants protecting 188,454 hectares throughout New Zealand. In the Wellington region there are 391 Open Space Covenants registered, protecting 6,591 hectares. The largest registered covenant in the Wellington region is 824 hectares and the average size is 17 hectares.

Managing rare plants in the Wairarapa region

Wairarapa is home to a number of Aotearoa's nationally rare plants and a good number of regionally rare plants. QEII regional representative Trevor Thompson takes us through a selection of rare plants he has been active in managing across the region.

Olearia gardneri (Threatened – Nationally Endangered)

In 2014, roughly 400 tree daisy (*O. gardneri*) plants were discovered in a QEII covenant, New Zealand's largest population of the plant. Four new insurance populations have since been set up in QEII covenants along with further plantings in the covenant they had been found in. There is now estimated to be around 1,000 plants in the country, with more at the nursery ready for planting. Fifty plants have been supplied to Hawke's Bay to reestablish the species there.

Olearia gardneri in seed. Photo: Trevor Thompson.

Brachyglottis pentacopa (Threatened – Nationally Critical)

Approximately 70 plants of this small tree are found on a single hill on the Wairarapa coast, a part of a significantly sized QEII covenant. Seed has been collected, and a small ungulate exclusion fence has been built to protect plantings from goats. As of December 2024, about 60 new plants are surviving within this protected area and about 10 more are protected by individual guards. Another 180 or so plants are at the nursery ready for planting, with more to come from seed collected the previous year. While one attempt to set up an insurance population has been made, this was unsuccessful. This is a priority action as an event such as a fire could be devastating should it occur in this fire-prone area. Much effort has been given to learning the secrets of successful planting and management of this plant and we continue to learn more.

Brachyglottis pentacopa older plantings inside fence. Photo: Trevor Thompson.

White mistletoe (*Tupeia antarctica* – Regionally Declining).

Tupeia antarctica is declining fast in all the unmanaged wild populations in Wairarapa with most plants now found in insurance populations. Black maire (*Nestegis cunninghamii*) is no longer as viable as a host, with other species now better suited. Numbers are declining in the wild because of zero recruitment and hosts dying of old age along with an out-of-control possum population over most of Wairarapa. Approx 100 plants are in insurance areas and barely double that figure in wild populations, widely scattered.

Tupeia antarctica fruit. Photo credit: Trevor Thompson

Yellow mistletoe (*Alepis flavida* – At Risk – Declining)

Alepis flavida is likely the Wellington region's rarest plant at a current total of seven plants, all in two insurance populations. The original wild population has now likely gone, with climate change a big factor in this. While good seed is very viable with the right methods, seed over the last two years has gone rotten on the plant before ripening, possibly due to excessive summer rain, lack of sun, and months of heavy overcast conditions. The seed this year has been abundant and hopefully will be able to successfully ripen and used to increase numbers significantly.

Other regionally rare species such as *Corokia cotoneaster* and kohekohe (*Didymocheton spectabilis*) are also making a comeback in numbers in Wairarapa thanks to propagation, nursery care and planting within protected areas.

Alepis flavida flowers. Photo: Trevor Thompson

Become a member of QEII

Learn more about QEII's work by joining a passionate group of over 5,000 members. An individual membership is just $30. You get two copies of QEII's Open Space magazine a year, plus other perks. Join online and help to encourage conservation on private land: qeii.org.nz/membership.

Percy Scenic Reserve news

Cliff Keilty, Gardener

Coming to the end of another winter, we have been busy in July and August with our winter planting. We planted about 500 plants supplied by Hutt City Council and a further 500 grown here at Percy Reserve. Most of this work has been bulking up existing plantings, although we have planted out several *Carex* species—115 plants—around the Retention Pond at the bottom of the waterfall track to beautify this area. These included *C. solandri* and *C. trifida*.

We have given the Off-shore Garden area near the top of the Stanhope Grove access road a bit of a revamp, removing many dead and damaged trees and shrubs—most of the *Veronica* species in the garden were very old and leggy. So this revamp was in part planned—we had taken cuttings from several plants from the garden area over the past few years to replace them, but also in part forced as Wellington Regional Council had been doing some repair work to the stream bank and had damaged/ destroyed several plants/ trees taking their machinery in. We have planted about 150 plants, 50 of these being planted to replace plants destroyed by the diggers and 100 to generally revamp the area. Most of these plants were grown from cuttings here at Percy Reserve. These included several offshore *Veronica* species, *Ceodes brunoniana*, *Pouzolzia australis* and *Dracophyllum arboreum*.

The new glasshouses are essentially finished. We are just waiting for the contractors to come and start the refrigeration system—a bit of a long running saga. We are looking forward to getting our plants moved into them.

We have been struggling with our *Myosotis petiolata* propagation for DOC Hawkes Bay for some reason. They grow really well from cuttings but then seem to die once they begin to get to a good size—we are really not sure why.

Percy Scenic Reserve is reached from Petone Station by crossing the bridge over SH2 then walking north along the footpath … or from the reserve's car park at the bottom of Maungaraki Road.

Grants to graduate students

Each year the Wellington Botanical Society provides small grants to assist post-graduate students in the VUW School of Biological Sciences.

These grants can be used for travel, materials and other costs related to research projects undertaken as part of the course of study. Grants to any one student will normally be not more than $1200.

Applications should be made to Eleanor Burton (trogs@duck.com) by 30 September 2025.

Applications should be brief and to the point. (Say two A4 pages).

They should state:

- Your name and email address
- Your current education qualifications
- The course of study being undertaken
- The nature and aim of the research project
- The name of your supervisor for this project
- The budget for this project
- The expenses that the grant is proposed to cover

You will be advised of the results of your application by 15 October 2025.

Names of successful applicants will be published in the Society's newsletter.

It is a condition of the grant that you make a short presentation to the Society on your project and/or provide a one page summary of the nature and results of the project to be included in the Society's newsletter or bulletin.

The small print.

1. Grants will normally be to post-graduate students. Consideration may be given to applications by undergraduates where the supervisor considers that there is a special case to be made because the nature of the project is similar to that undertaken by graduate students.
2. Priority will be given to projects involving native New Zealand vascular plants and cryptogams. Consideration may be given to those projects involving other vegetation. With the anticipated competition and limited funds it is unlikely that applications for projects involving algae, fungi, or coral would be successful.
3. The primary purpose of the grant is to cover field expenses – transport and accommodation but not rations. Financial assistance towards the cost of chemicals and chemical and DNA analysis will be entertained. The Society is reluctant to fund capital items but will consider applications for these.

4. Applications for grants made after the closing date may be entertained if the Society has not already allocated the funds available for the Student Grant. Priority will be given to applications received before the close-off date.
5. The funds available are limited and priority will be given to those applications and those expenditures that agree with the main criteria set out above and are most in line with the aims of the Wellington Botanical Society.

TRIP REPORTS

5 April 2025: Western Lake Road

We all met in Featherston at the turn-off to Western Lake Road, where we attracted the attention of the police. Once they were convinced we were harmless we headed out down Western Lake Road. The property is being proposed as a Forest and Bird Reserve, but the process is quite slow. The track starts through a wetland at the bottom of the valley, where we were met and frequently escorted by fantails. The wetland had various *Carex* spp., *Coprosma tenuicaulis*, and many large old cabbage trees. Following the stream up the valley there had obviously been a recent flood/slip event with a lot of newly deposited gravel. We found a few interesting species, including *Alseuosmia pusilla* (trying to look like *Myrsine salicina* seedlings), *Azorella hookeri*, *Olearia rani*, *Rubus schmidelioides*. There were many black beech seedlings, looking like little green butterflies; apparently it had been a mast year. Further up the valley we found a grove of very large old trees, the most notable of which was an enormous white maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*). There were also 2 kahikatea, which explained the many seedlings. When the stream became impassable we made our way up the hill through beech forest, mostly black beech though hard beech was also present. Under the beech we saw *Dracophyllum filifolium*, *Gahnia pauciflora*, and towards the ridge a large patch of *Earina autumnalis* in flower. We had only seen *E. mucronata* until then. We walked down the 4WD track, finding other interesting herbs on the banks along the sides, including *Gonocarpus micranthus*, *G. aggregatus*, and *Pelargonium inodorum*, though there was a lot less *Pelargonium* than the last time we were there.

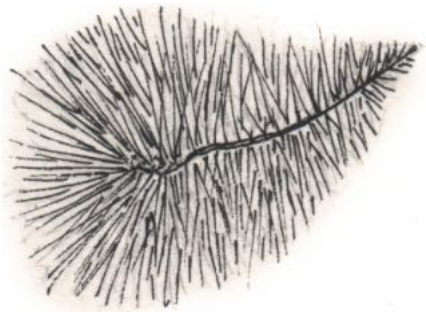
Most of us headed back to Sunita's bach at Corner Creek for the night, and we had a further botany expedition along the beach, first to look at *Ranunculus acaulis* in an ephemeral wetland at the top of the beach, and then further along the beach there was a wetland behind the dune with raupo, *Isolepis prolifer*, and *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* among others.

Eleanor Burton

3 May 2025: Lake Papaitonga

On a surprisingly fine day after 3 days of storm, we gathered to botanise the Papaitonga Reserve. This is a small remnant of lowland swamp forest around a dune lake, with an intact sequence up to drier forest on the tops of dunes and headlands. We started high and dry, in tītoki forest with very big old tītoki trees, and descended from this to swamp forest of pukatea and kahikatea. The bush is healthy, with good seedling recruitment. There is a trap network.

As we descended to the swamp forest, there were a good variety of ferns and rātā on the bank next to the track, including *Blechnum membranaceum* and *Lastreopsis hispida*, *Metrosideros perforata* and *M. fulgens*. In places the *Metrosideros fulgens* was flowering. The pukatea were in seed, and one of the highlights of the day was pukatea seed drifting down through the bush everywhere. From the first lookout there was a pukatea canopy visible, still with lots of seeds and capsules amongst the leaves. There were also sapling apple and cherry, presumably the result of previous picnics. Near this lookout we found a tree of *Coprosma areolata*, tall enough that we could only identify it by looking for leaves on the ground.



Pukatea seed. Illustration: Eleanor Burton.

When we descended from this lookout, we went through a boardwalk area, more open wetland with flax, swamp lawyer, *Coprosma tenuicaulis*, *Gahnia xanthocarpa*, *Fuchsia perscandens*, and various carices including *Carex megalepis*.

From the boardwalk we went into the swamp forest again. At this point the track divides into a loop, with another lookout at the far end. The loop through the swamp forest had parataniwha, white maire, and a reported swamp maire seedling which most of us failed to spot, despite doing a number of laps of the loop.

From the lookout at the far end, there was a view across the lake and its two islands, one natural and the other constructed by Māori, who had a pā here. There were karaka, both trees and seedlings, present throughout the reserve, presumably a legacy of long occupation of the area by Māori.

There is an extensive wetland between the forest margin and the lake, consisting of flax and raupō, but no access into it so we did not botanise this area.

Participants: Eleanor Burton (leader and scribe), Gavin Dench, Sunita Singh, Lynne Pomare, Dave Reynolds, Lynne Silcock, Scott Nodder, Julia Stace, Ellen Blake, Chris Horne, Ken Fraser, Michele Dickson, Mick Parsons, Gillian Candler, Jill Goodwin, Ian Goodwin, Robyn Procter, John van den Hoeven, Amy Macdonald, Hayden Jones, Pablo Wolinski, Julia Fraser.

7 June 2025: Redwood Bush, Tawa.

The coldest day of the year to date didn't discourage 19 from joining the trip, with two even travelling from Palmerston North. We met at the Peterhouse Ave entrance to Redwood Bush reserve, where a member of the Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves gave us an introduction to the history of the forest, including how it was saved from being turned into a housing development in the 1970s. More information about the area can be found in Gil Roper's excellent book 'Redwood Bush Tawa', available from Tawa Books and Post.

We walked a loop through the forest up to the edge of farmland behind Churton Park. The lower hillslopes were predominantly kohekohe (*Didymocheton spectabilis*), which was just coming into flower, and tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) forest with a few kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) and rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*). Towards the ridgetop the canopy was shorter but more varied, ranging from māpou (*Myrsine australis*), māhoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) to kōhūhū (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*).

Several large tree specimens caught our eye. A large free-standing akapuka (*Griselinia lucida*) had obviously started as an epiphyte a very long time ago but whose host plant had long since died. While normally seen as shrubs or small trees, we noted very large specimens of akeake (*Dodonaea viscosa*), kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) reaching the canopy. A diversity of leaf shapes in hybrids between the locally-indigenous lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolius*) and coastal five-finger (*P. lessonii*) introduced from the north had many of us intrigued.

Ferns predominated on the forest floor, with thread fern (*Blechnum filiforme*) and mokimoki (*Microsorum scandens*) particularly abundant. The presence of three of the four species of hairy shield ferns—velvet fern (*Lastreopsis velutina*), bristly shield fern (*L. hispida*) and smooth shield fern (*Parapolystichum glabellum*, formerly *L. glabella*) allowed for easy comparison. A colourful array of small fungi were seen.

We added 11 species to the existing plant list. These were five ferns—button fern (*Pellaea rotundifolia*), bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), water fern (*Histiopteris incisa*), prickly shield fern (*Polystichum vestitum*), and climbing shield fern (*Rumohra adiantiformis*), kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), *Dichondra repens, Microlaena stipoides*, heketara (*Olearia rani*) and a few weeds—ferny asparagus (*Asparagus scandens*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), and cleavers (*Galium aparine*).

Several of us finished the day by popping across Peterhouse Ave to Larson Crescent Reserve to admire several large mataī (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) and a tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*), all of which were multi-trunked or branched within a few metres of the ground.

Admiring one of the mataī in the nearby Larson Crescent Reserve.

Button fern (*Pellaea rotundifolia*), one of the additions to our plant list.

Participants: John Barnett, Liz Bouda, Eleanor Burton (with Loki and Jack), Gillian Candler, Lorraine Cook, Michele Dickson, Richard Grasse, Helen Gray, Finn Harvey, Chris Horne, Kate Jordan, Amy Macdonald, Mick Parsons, Leon Perrie (co-leader, scribe), Robyn Procter, Simon Reeve, Lara Shepherd (co-leader, scribe), Emily Smith, Fleur Speedy.

5 July 2025: Te Ara Utuwai, Porirua Scenic Reserve

Te Ara Utiwai only opened in 2018 so was new for most of the trip's participants. It is a dual track for walking and uphill biking and has a very gentle gradient. Porirua Scenic Reserve is culturally and biologically significant, being an important site for Ngāti Toa and a Key Native Ecosystem.

Despite heavy rain the previous day, the track of compacted gravel was in good condition with little mud and only a few puddles. The day was drizzly in Wellington but dry in Porirua with the sun even making an appearance in the afternoon. There were 17 attendees with many on their first or second WBS trip.

We split up early on with an advance party of five concentrating on creating a species list for Te Ara Utiwa, and completing a loop by returning via the Colonial Knob track. Most of the remaining people stayed with Leon for a beginner's course and ventured a few hundred metres into the mature kohekohe forest.

The track started with a mosaic of regenerating areas and older, established kohekohe forest. Weeds were largely confined to the regenerating and replanted areas, with climbing asparagus particularly abundant. Karo was also of note. Higher up the hill we entered impressive kohekohe forest with dense understorey and groundcover in places. Further up towards the ridgetops the kohekohe was largely replaced with tawa and the occasional mataī and epiphytes were more prominent. The ferns also changed higher up with the *Blechnum filiforme* dominant as groundcover at lower elevations replaced by *Hymenophyllum demissum*, and a number of other fern species appearing including *Trichomanes venosum* abundant on tree fern trunks, *Blechnum discolor*, and *Leptopteris hymenophylloides*. This higher elevation forest would be worth a future botanical society trip.

Interesting species seen in the reserve included all four mainland species of hairy shield ferns (*Lastreopsis* and *Parapolystichum*), the regionally uncommon *Adiantum fulvum*, a good diversity of the region's *Coprosma*, and flowering *Metrosideros fulgens* at eyelevel. There were a number of large *Griselinia lucida* present, sometimes with their host trees still alive but others with dead hosts.

Participants: Jan Allen, Eleanor Burton, Bede Crestani, Richard Grasse, Finn Harvey, Christopher Hynes, Ned Johnston, Simon Kennett, Kim Livingstone, Leon Perrie (co-leader), Simon Reeve, Dave Reynolds, Lara Shepherd (scribe, co-leader), Pania Solomon, Fleur Speedy, Eleanor Thorpe, Benjamin Wright

The giant moss, *Dawsonia superba*, found in the reserve. Photo: Lara Shepherd.

Newsletter by e-mail?

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically in PDF format, please contact Memberships Secretary, wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com. The PDF newsletter includes hyperlinks to e-mail and website addresses, and colour images instead of the black-and-white images in the print version.

Ngā mihi, Laura Girvan West, Secretary

2 August 2025: Centennial Reserve, Miramar

In unexpectedly gorgeous weather (after a horrible week) 27 of us set out to botanise Centennial Reserve, which is a smallish reserve in a south-facing valley in Miramar. The reserve is second-growth forest with a mostly māhoe canopy, and there is a local volunteer group who have put a lot of effort into weed and pest control, and planting, so we saw a lot of young podocarps getting established and also interesting species such as *Paratrophis banksii*. They are currently investigating reintroducing freshwater mussels to the reserve. There was *Libertia cranwelliae* (from East Cape) planted near the entrance.

The tracks are designed to be shared walking and bike tracks, so the gradient (at least of the routes we went on) is quite gentle. In some places tracks have been closed and the bush allowed to take over.

There were a number of fern species in the reserve, including *Adiantum cunninghamii*, several *Blechnum* species, *Pakau pennigera*, *Asplenium* spp., *Hypolepis ambigua*, *Lastreopsis*, *Polystichum*, etc.

Other interesting finds were *Gonocarpus incanus*, a large *Gahnia* that Mick thought was *G. xanthocarpa* but which most of us failed to find at all, *Clematis forsteri*, *Gaultheria antipoda*, four species of orchid (none flowering), *Wahlenbergia violacea* and *Astelia*.

There was a good lunch spot at the top with a view over Evans Bay, though most of the group didn't get that far by lunchtime.

There were several species of *Carex* growing by the stream and causing some head-scratching; they included *C. virgata*, *C. uncinata*, and possibly *C. dissita*, *C. forsteri*, *C. lambertiana*, and *C. solandri*. We are missing Pat Enright who would have sorted them out for us.

There were not many weeds, though some of the ones present are a bit concerning. Small patches of *Tradescantia*, some climbing asparagus, Mexican daisy, one patch of ivy, and some climbing dock. There was also quite a lot of *Hoheria populnea*, and a few pōhutukawa including seedlings.

Participants: Eleanor Burton (leader and scribe), Jan Allen, Ellen Blake, Gavin Dench, Jen Erceg, Jenny Fraser, Richard Grasse, Finn Harvey, Chris Horne, Kate Jordan, Pip Kirkham, Joakim Liman, Kim Livingstone, Graham Hill, Ned Johnston, Simon Reeve, Dave Reynolds, Julia Stace and her niece Eloise, Mick Parsons, Leon Perrie, Lara Shepherd, Sunita Singh, Eleanor Thorpe, Charlie Tustin, Sophie Williams, Atom Zonnevylle.

Two species of *Paratrophis*: *P. banksii* (above) and *P. microphylla* (top left). Illustration: Eleanor Burton.

6 September 2025: Innes Bush QEII covenant, Wainuiomata

Thirty of us arrived on a chilly morning in Wainuiomata to visit the Innes family's private property during Conservation Week with some local conservationists. David and Pauline Innes have owned the land since 1965 and in that time they and their family, in particular their son, Craig, have done substantial work on the property, and were kind enough to invite BotSoc to visit and explore the bush. Thirty-eight hectares of land has been protected by a Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Open-Space Covenant since 2021. A deer fence (Figure1) was erected around the covenant shortly after this, and deer eliminated in June 2022. Since this time, the bush has been left to regenerate aided by significant effort in possum control.

Access to the covenant is via a steep climb (about 300 m rise) and as conditions had been rather wet the night before, driving the old forestry track was not possible. We were able to get Sunita and Gavin up in a side-by-side farm vehicle, which was great fun (if rather loud). After the climb, admiring the view, and taking the lay of the land (Figure2), we were treated to tea and biscuits by our hosts. We then split up to begin the real botanising.

John Barnett was kind and thoughtful enough to take two first-timers for general botanical lessons, something the trip leader had forgotten to organise… (Thanks, John!). Sunita and Gavin were given a further tour of the covenant boundary by David and Pauline, with Gavin perched nimbly in the tray of the side-by-side. Most others dived into the bush in various groups with various goals, following the two main baitlines that cross the covenant.

There are several large rimu in the covenant which avoided early logging efforts (Figure3)—a few BotSoccers went to visit these. The main vascular plant collectors and listers set out to see as much as possible—managing to cross the covenant twice! Some of us focussed on the smaller species (Figure 4), with a collection of over seventy bryophyte specimens—mostly by Leon—but covered slightly (orders of magnitude) less ground.

Figure 1. The group walking the deer fence, looking for their first baitline. Photo: Sarah Parker.

Figure 2. View over the covenant, looking south from Mowlem (400 m a.s.l.). Photo: Paul Bell-Butler.

Figure 3. One of the large rimu on the property. Photo: Simon Kennett.

Overall, while the bush has clearly been heavily degraded by deer, it is certainly beginning to bounce back after three years free, or nearly so, of mammalian herbivores (possum control continues). Several people commented on the abundance of *Asplenium bulbiferum* / pikopiko and other famously palatable plants such as *Schefflera digitata* / pāte and *Metrosideros robusta* / northern rātā were common in the undergrowth also. Much of the canopy we saw was *Pterophylla racemosa* / kāmahi, but

there was high general diversity of both broadleaved and coniferous species. We saw few weeds in the bush, but *Lomatia fraseri*, an increasingly common (but less widely known) pest in this area, was brought to the owners' attention. A full species list is in preparation.

Our day was a great success—only one person got locked behind the deer fence at the end of the day and our generous hosts recapped with us over a cuppa before we departed. Thanks to everyone who participated, but most especially to our hosts, the Innes family!

Participants (29): Paul Bell-Butler—trip leader & scribe, John Barnett, Eleanor Burton, Daniel Davis, Gavin Dench, Joe Dillon, Juliette Fuehrhop, Sarah Goldberg, Richard Grasse, Finn Harvey, Amanda Howey, Kate Jordan, Simon Kennett, George Lamb and his friend, Gavin Parker, Sarah Parker, Leon Perrie, Lynne Pomare, Dave Reynolds, Jeremy Rolfe, Lara Shepherd, Sunita Singh, Emily Smith, Fleur Speedy, Christopher Stephens, Janelle Veenendaal, Laura West, Benjamin Wright, Atom Zonneyville.

Figure 4. Some of the smaller species observed. Clockwise from top left: *Balantiopsis* sp. (a liverwort), *Oligonema verrucosum* (a slime mould), *Canalohypopterygium tamariscinum* (a moss), a mixture of liverworts in a seep, including *Leiomitra lanata* (teddy-bear liverwort), *Trichocolea* sp., and *Monoclea forsteri*). Photos: Paul Bell-Butler.

20 September 2025: Te Mārua Bush workbee

On Saturday, 20 September, 19 people gathered at short notice in fine weather to sample the first of a potential series of planting sessions over several years. Steve Edwards and Zane Gilligren from GWRC were present to keep the plantings away from critical areas.

Following a change in policy by GWRC to retire of all their grazing permits, lands have become available for planting natives. GWRC has contracted a commercial company which has planted a large area between the Ranger Station at Kaitoke Regional Park and Marchant Road (Farm Creek)—mostly in mānuka as there is a problem with deer browsing.

An area of about 2ha has become available situated between the Macaskill Lakes and Twin Lakes Road, Te Marua which is convenient for smaller groups to handle and has good access. The northern end of this block is opposite the Pumping Station. There is an ephemeral stream in this area which is part of the lakes flushing procedures. Wellington Water has restrictions on the plantings around the lakes.

Wellington BotSoc and the Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt and Wellington Forest and Bird branches were contacted to see what interest there was in either individual or collective projects in the future. We will ascertain further interest before next winter.

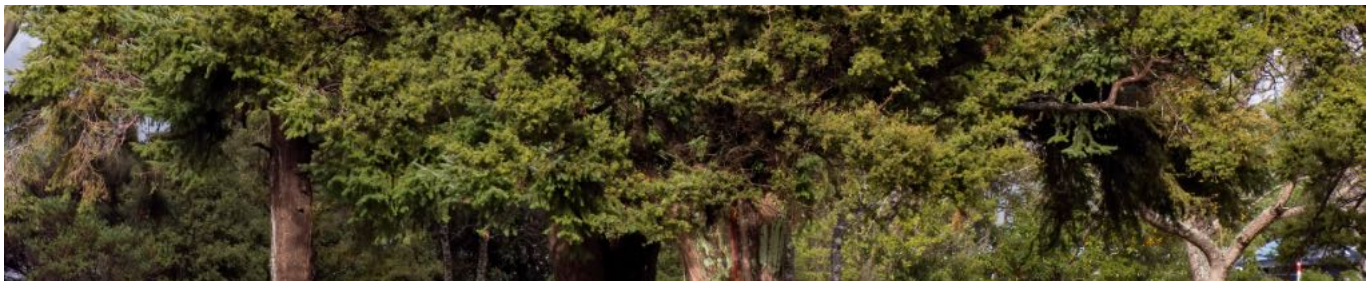
On the day there were 3 from BotSoc, and the rest from mostly F&B.

The Te Mārua Bush situated on the corner of SH2 and Twin Lakes Road that the combined Wellington Botanical Society and the Upper Hutt Branch of Forest and Bird has been maintaining for the last 25 years no longer provides sufficient interest apart from occasional checks to monitor its condition. Recently we found that someone had been cutting trees at the southern end.

The combined groups and GWRC will need to decide what the future holds for this area.

The planting session on Saturday consisted of about 300 plants, including *Podocarpus totara*, *Sophora microphylla*, *Pittosporum eugenioides*, *Phormium tenax*, *Coprosma robusta*, *Leptospermum scoparium*. We will be monitoring the planting to see what browsing damage occurs. The planting site had about 100–150 mm good loam with the occasional stone to break the monotony.

BotSoc participants: Chris Horne, Glennis and Allan Sheppard (scribe)



ATTENDING FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

Ideas please

We welcome your ideas about:

- places to visit on field trips, and potential leaders of those field trips.
- topics and speakers for evening meetings

Please send your ideas to Dr Lara Shepherd, lara.shepherd@tepapa.govt.nz, PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140 .

Field trips—single day

A field trip, usually lasting 4–5 hours, is an opportunity to learn how to identify native plants and adventive plants (weeds). During the trip, experienced participants record the species seen. After it, a new or updated plant list will be produced for the site. This list will be published on the NZ Plant Conservation Network web site, and copies sent to trip participants, landowners and managers.

If you intend to join a field trip, PLEASE phone or e-mail the leader at least TWO DAYS beforehand, so that he / she can tell you of any changes and / or particular requirements. If you cannot ring or e-mail in advance, you are welcome to join on the day. If you e-mail your intention, the leader will send you a copy of the draft plant list, so that you can print it out to bring with you. If you do not have a printer, tell the leader. At the meeting place, the trip leader will ask you to write on the registration form your name, e-mail address (so that you can receive the updated plant list), and a phone number for the leader to ring your next-of-kin in an emergency.

Booking on field trips: Give the leader/s your cell-phone number so that we can contact you if you are running late.

What bring—clothing

Choose from the following items, according to the weather forecast, and your personal needs: sun hat, woollen or polyprop beanie or balaclava, waterproof / windproof raincoat (parka) and over-trousers, long-sleeved cotton shirt*, singlet*, thermal or woollen top, woollen jersey or fleece jacket, nylon shorts or trousers*, polyprop long-johns, underclothes, thick socks, boots or walking shoes, gloves / mittens.

*Note: In wet, cold weather, do not wear cotton shirts, singlets, t-shirts and trousers.

What to bring—gear and food

Day pack with lunch, biscuits or scroggin, hot or cold drink, spare clothing, personal first-aid kit, notebook, pen, pencil, mobile phone, wallet. Optional: walking pole, clipboard, map or park brochure, camera, binoculars, hand lens, sunblock, sunglasses, insect repellent, whistle, toilet paper.

Field trips—overnight

Field trips usually last two days; at Easter, three days. We may be based at a campground with or without cabins, or a rented house, or a private bach. The field trip may last 4–7 hours each day.

Overnight trip gear and food

Add to the day-trip gear, food and drink listed above: breakfast, fresh fruit, torch, spare bulb and batteries, candle, mug, plate, knife, fork, spoon, small towel, soap, tooth brush. If accommodation is not provided for, bring tent, fly, poles and pegs, groundsheet, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, sleeping-bag liner and stuff bag. Optional: matches in waterproof container, water purification tablets, pocket knife, large plastic survival bag to line pack, gaiters. Note: dinners may be 'pot-luck'—ask the leader to suggest what your contribution might be.

Summer camps

These field trips last 7–10 days. Full details will appear in the newsletter.

Postponing field trips

The committee has decided to postpone field trips affected by bad weather or other reasons, rather than to cancel them. Generally, they will be postponed until the following Saturday. However, this will not always be possible. You must register with the trip leader and provide your phone number. If the trip is postponed you can then be contacted and told about rescheduling arrangements.

Health and safety

The leader will bring BotSoc's comprehensive first-aid kit, a topographic map, a mobile phone, and give a health and safety briefing.

The leader will describe the route, and approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip.

Bring your own first-aid kit. If you have an allergy or medical condition, bring your own anti-histamines and medications, tell the leader of any problems you may have, and how to deal with them.

Before the trip, if you have any doubts about your ability to keep up with the party, discuss this with the trip leader, who has the right to restrict attendance.

If you decide to leave a trip early, you must tell the leader, and be confident that you know your way back to the start. Enter your name on the 'register' under a windscreen wiper on the leader's car, or other agreed place, to record your safe return.

Fitness and experience

Our field trips are mostly on established tracks, and at a leisurely pace, but vary considerably in the level of fitness and tramping experience required. Although our main focus is botanical, our programme sometimes offers trips which, in the pursuit of our botanical aims, are more strenuous than others. Although leaders take care to minimise risks, you participate at your own risk.

Transport

When the use of public transport is practical, details will appear in the newsletter.

We encourage the pooling of cars for trips. If you need a lift, tell the trip leader.

Passengers: Pay your driver your share of the running costs. We suggest 10c per km / passenger. If a trip uses the inter-island ferry, pay your share of the ferry fare. If you change cars mid-trip, leave a written note for your driver, under a windscreen wiper on her or his car, and check that your new driver adds you to her or his list.

Drivers: Ensure that you know the route to the start of

the trip, and that you have a written list of your passengers. Zero the odometer at the start, and agree on a return time. Check from your list that all your passengers are in the car. Collect contributions towards transport costs.

Trip leaders

Draft a trip report for the newsletter, including a list of participants, then send it to the editor.

When leading a field trip into a regional park please tell the park ranger beforehand.

Other matters

After your first BotSoc field trip, tell the leader if you think there is information newcomers would appreciate seeing about future trips, in the newsletter, on the web site, or on Wellington Glean Report.

If you would like to offer to lead a field trip, or be a deputy leader on a field trip, contact our programme organiser, Sunita Singh, sunita@actrix.co.nz

Meetings

Public transport to meetings

The following bus services stop on Kelburn Parade near Victoria University's Murphy Building Lecture Theatre M101:

TO MEETINGS

No. 18 Karori: 6.45 p.m. from Darlington Rd, Miramar, 7.17 p.m. @ VUW Stop B.

No. 18 Miramar: 6.51 p.m. from Allington Rd, Karori, 7.03 p.m. @ VUW Stop A.

No. 21 Courtenay Place: 7.02 p.m. from Karori Mall – Beauchamp St, Karori, 7.14 p.m. @ VUW Stop A.

No. 21 Wrights Hill: 7.00 p.m. from Courtenay Place – Stop B, 7.08 p.m. @ VUW.

No. 4 Mairangi: Strathmore Park 6.30 p.m., Courtenay Place 7.02, 7.22 p.m. @ VUW. Stop B.

No. 4 Strathmore Park: 6.50 p.m. from Norwich St, Wilton, 7.05 p.m. @ VUW. Stop A.

Cable Car: 00, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 minutes past the hour from Lambton Quay terminus to Salamanca Station. Ten-minutes walk up Kelburn Pde to Murphy Building lecture theatre M101 at VUW.

FROM MEETINGS

No. 4 Strathmore Park: VUW Stop A 8.45 p.m., 9.15 p.m. or 9.45 p.m.

No. 4 Mairangi: VUW Stop B 8.57 p.m. or 9.27 p.m.

No. 21 Courtenay Place: VUW Stop A 9.14 p.m. or 10.14 p.m.

No. 21 Wrights Hill: V.U.W. Stop B 9.38 p.m. or 10.38 p.m.

Cable Car: No service after 8 p.m.

Further information info@metlink.org.nz Metlink, 0800 801-700.

Zoom link for meetings

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89547154619?pwd=bE0zRXRWSXBBUkVoUjdPcElJNXlJUT09.

A developing sporophyte (spore-bearing structure) on the liverwort *Trichocolea mollissima* / woollywort. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

Wellington Botanical Society

Te Ropū Manaki i Ngā Tamariki a Tāne, o Te Whanganui a Tara

New Membership application

I hereby make application for membership of the Wellington Botanical Society Inc., an incorporated society under the Incorporated Societies Act 2020.

I wish to join the Wellington Botanical Society ☐

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

The membership year is from 1 July to 30 June. Dues received after 1 May will be credited to the following year.

☐ Ordinary membership	$35.00	
☐ Country (out of Wellington area)	$30.00	
☐ Group/family	$40.00	
☐ Student	$10.00	$ _____
☐ Donation to the Jubilee Award Fund (optional)		$ _____
(Donations are tax deductible. Please request a receipt to be emailed to you if you require one.)	Total paid	$ _____

Please make payment to: **Wellington Botanical Society Inc.**

Bank Account: **02 0536 0017812 00**
Particulars: *Name*
Code: *Membership type*
Reference: *amount of any included donation*

Authority to hold your name, address and phone number with the Society

I understand that if approved, my name, address and contact details will be added to the register of members, as required under the Act, and that I may resign my membership at any time. Contact information may also be used by the Society for communication, and mailing of bulletins etc. Under the Privacy Act the circulation of names on such lists requires the approval of the individual members. The list will not be used for marketing, soliciting or political purposes.

☐ I approve Signature: _____ Date: _____

Members' obligations

I agree to abide by the Members Obligations as noted in the constitution (see excerpt below)·

Every Member shall provide the Society in writing with that Member's name and contact details (namely, physical address, email address and a telephone number) and promptly advise the Society in writing of any changes to those details.·

All Members shall promote the interests and purposes of the Society and shall do nothing to bring the Society into disrepute.

☐ I agree Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please **e-mail** this completed form to the Memberships Secretary at wellingtonbotsocmembership@gmail.com or post to Wellington Botanical Society Inc:

Memberships Secretary c/o Wellington Botanical Society Inc., PO Box 10 412, Wellington 6140

www.wellingtonbotsoc.org.nz

Wellington Botanical Society–2026 Summer Field Trip
In Friday 16 January 2026, out Friday 23 January 2026

Based at **Pureora Forest Lodge**

Register online at https://forms.gle/QorDg2VoXRGFHsMW7.

Alternatively, complete the form below and send to botsocsummercamp@gmail.com by 25 November and pay your deposit.

Completed forms and deposit to be in by 25 November 2025

Name:	Address:
Home phone:	Mobile:
E-mail:	
Emergency contact:	Relationship:
Phone:	

Travel and accommodation arrangements

Please indicate which evenings you intend to be at **Pureora Forest Lodge**.

☐ 16 Jan ☐ 17 Jan ☐ 18 Jan ☐ 19 Jan ☐ 20 Jan ☐ 21 Jan ☐ 22 Jan

Type of accommodation you require:

- ☐ Bunk accommodation in dormitories, $20 per person/ night
- ☐ Camping available, $20 per person/ night
- ☐ I/ we will make my/ our own arrangements.

Please specify your mode of travel to **Pureora Forest Lodge**, e.g., public transport, own car, or as a passenger with someone else.

☐ Public transport ☐ Own car ☐ Passenger in someone else's car

Do you need transport from the ☐ Bus Stop ☐ Train station ☐ Airport nearest Pureora Lodge?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are going with your own car, how many additional passengers could you take?

☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

If you are taking a car, will it be available for day trips? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Is it a 4WD? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have any dietary requirements?

☐ Vegan ☐ Dairy-free ☐ Vegetarian

Student application

Do you wish to apply for the student support? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, are you studying or doing an apprenticeship in 2024 or 2025? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please acknowledge that you know you need to pay your own transport to and from and the possible additional cost at the end of the trip. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Payment: Estimated cost per person: $490. Please deposit $490 by internet banking when your registration is confirmed.

Account name: Wellington Botanical Society

Account number: 02 0536 0017812 02

Reference: put your name in the particulars/ reference boxes of the payee section.

After the trip, depending on the final cost, you will be sent an invoice (or a refund) for the full cost less your original payment.

E-mail the registration form to botsocsummercamp@gmail.com by 25 November.