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A PRELIMINARY FLORISTIC LIST OF NATIVE PLANTS

FROM THE RAKAIA GORGE

Colin Burrows

The varied, rather low, tangled and scrubby native vegetation of the terraces and cliffs of the Rakaia Gorge contains some interesting plants. Divaricate shrubs are common and it is rather disconcerting to find Corokia cotoneaster side by side with Helichrysum glomeratum; or Myrsine divaricata and Lophomyrtus obcordata; or Melicope simplex and Pseudopanax anomalus. Podocarps and beech trees are rare; so far only two Podocarpus hallii trees, one P. spicatus and about eight Nothofagus solandri var. cliffortioides have been seen. Hoheria angustifolia is quite common but trees like Sophora microphylla, Griselinia littoralis, Pittosporum tenuifolium and Pseudopanax crassifolius and the shrub Olearia paniculata form most of the cover. They are usually draped with Muehlenbeckia, Rubus and Clematis vines. Of particular interest (all of them growing on the island between the bridges) are Scandia (Angelica) geniculata, Oryzopsis rigida (Stipa arundinacea) Microlaena polynoda, Linum monogynum and Pseudopanax ferox. The "sand dune" habitat on this island may be something to do with its peculiar richness in uncommon plants.

As well as the low forest and tangled scrub (much of it at risk from invading gorse and broom) there are some small swamps and minor herbaceous communities on cliffs and open areas which I have not investigated properly yet. The list below is bound to be incomplete and I would be glad to know of other species of native vascular plants from the Rakaia Gorge (and their location).

Ferns

Asplenium bulbiferum

A. flabellifolium

A. flaccidum

Blechnum chambersii

B. fluviatile

B. penna-marina

B. "procerum"

Hypolepis millefolium

H. rugosula

Phymatosorus diversifolius

Polystichum richardii

P. vestitum

Herbs

<u>Acaena</u> sp.	<u>Microlaena</u> polynoda
<u>Astelia</u> fragrans	<u>Notodanthonia</u> setifolia
<u>Carex</u> secta	<u>Oryzopsis</u> rigida
<u>Chenopodium</u> allanii	<u>Phormium</u> tenax
<u>Hydrocotyle</u> americana	<u>Scandia</u> geniculata
<u>Libertia</u> ixiooides	<u>Stellaria</u> parviflora
<u>Linum</u> monogynum	

Vines, Scramblers

<u>Calystegia</u> tuguriorum	<u>Muehlenbeckia</u> australis
<u>Clematis</u> foetida	<u>M.</u> complexa
<u>Fuchsia</u> perscandens	<u>Parsonsia</u> capsularis
	<u>Rubus</u> squarrosus

Shrubs

<u>Carmichaelia</u> rivulata	<u>Helichrysum</u> glomeratum
<u>Corokia</u> cotoneaster	<u>H.</u> selago
<u>Coprosma</u> brunnea	<u>Leptospermum</u> ericoides
<u>C.</u> crassifolia	<u>Lophomyrtus</u> obcordata
<u>C.</u> linariifolia	<u>Melicope</u> simplex
<u>C.</u> propinqua	<u>Muehlenbeckia</u> axillaris
<u>C.</u> rotundifolia	<u>Myrsine</u> divaricata
<u>Cyathodes</u> juniperina	<u>Olearia</u> avicenniaefolia
<u>Haloragis</u> erecta	<u>O.</u> paniculata
<u>Hebe</u> salicifolia	<u>Pseudopanax</u> anomalus
<u>H.</u> cf. traversii	<u>Parahebe</u> lyallii

Trees

<u>Aristotelia</u> serrata	<u>Pittosporum</u> tenuifolium
<u>Carpodetus</u> serratus	<u>Pseudopanax</u> arboreus
<u>Cordyline</u> australis	<u>P.</u> crassifolius
<u>Fuchsia</u> excorticata	<u>P.</u> ferox
<u>Griselinia</u> littoralis	<u>Podocarpus</u> hallii
<u>Hoheria</u> angustifolia	<u>P.</u> spicatus
<u>Myrsine</u> australis	<u>Schefflera</u> digitata