



Volume 11, Number 1  
June 2008

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The Printery, Massey University <http://printonline.massey.ac.nz>  
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#### Front Cover

Mountain neinei (*Dracophyllum traversii*),  
a distinctive dragon-leaf tree of New Zealand.  
Image: ©Paul Ashford ([www.NZplantpics.com](http://www.NZplantpics.com)).

## From the Editors

To gardeners and horticulturists it may seem annoying to learn that botanists have yet again changed the names of their beloved plants. However, these new names are intended to more accurately reflect relationships of that plant with its relatives. Considerable progress has been made by botanists using traditional taxonomic methods as well as the latest DNA techniques and this issue presents a special feature on their research into the New Zealand native flora. Although this is a rather technical and complex field we hope these articles help to demystify and explain this research.

Dr Peter Heenan of the Allan Herbarium, Landcare Research, delivered the 2007 Banks Memorial Lecture in Christchurch, in association with the NZ Gardens Trust 'Southern Splendour' conference, held 4–6 May 2007. Peter's lecture is published here and provides some examples of recent research.

We follow this with related articles from Peter Heenan's colleagues. Four of these are based on contributions to the magazine *NZ Science Teacher*, issue 116, 2007. The other article summarises the mounting DNA evidence that much of the New Zealand flora is more recently derived than has generally been accepted.

Congratulations to the 2008 RNZIH award recipients – Helen Leach for her Award in Garden History and our new Associates of Honour, Peter Arthur and Peter Sergel. We will publish their citations, as well as several obituaries in the next issue of this journal (Vol. 11, No. 2, Dec. 2008).

We conclude with some botanical book reviews. Andrew Maloy presents an original review on a guide to plant names, and three reviews are reproduced courtesy of the *NZ Journal of Botany*.

Murray Dawson and Andrew Maloy

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