

REPORT ON TANGIHUA FORAY

May 20-24, 1992

The forest lodge at Tangihua Conservation Reserve near Whangarei was the site of the sixth national "Fungal Foray" in May 1992. This time there were 29 participants ranging in age from under two to over eighty, and a worthwhile time was had by all. There were the usual DSIR scientists and University staff, along with an enthusiastic band of photographers, naturalists and family supporters.

The overseas contingent was from Asia, in the form of a professional photographer, Masana Izawa, and his support team of Hiromi Tanaka and Yasue Marunishi from Japan. He contributed to the activities by giving a lecture, and by demonstrating his macrophotography equipment and methods in the field. We also had Assistant Professor Wu Rongmei, from the Edible Fungi Research Institute of Shanxi Province in China.

It had rained for nearly a week before we arrived, and there was a great diversity of fungi both for studying and eating. The farm paddocks by the road were full of field mushrooms, and we also sampled puffballs, honey mushrooms and *Auricularia* from the forest. (WARNING! Do not eat anything unless you are sure it is a good, edible species). The Tangihua Lodge, built by the Northland Lions Clubs deep in the bush, was clean, warm and well equipped. It was very well suited to our needs with microscope bench space and adequate room for book displays and specimen displays. Having three full days for the foray this time, seemed to give a more relaxed atmosphere too.

The first day began with the lecture by Masana Izawa on photography of fungi assisted by a Japanese interpreter; and then demonstration field work in the forest round the lodge where we saw him putting the information into practice. It was very enlightening to have an insight into his philosophy and most of us will remember to approach fungi "as lovers" in future. We were fascinated by the simple equipment needed to make the difference between ordinary pictures, and really good ones, and will be trying out his techniques. His own photographs were really superb, with crisp focus from fungus subject through to the background.

Eric McKenzie from DSIR Plant Protection showed slides on the Thursday evening of a professional trip he made earlier this year to study fungal diseases in Micronesia (Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau) north of the equator.

On the second day we visited the Pukenui Walkway near Kamo. We had carpooled, so there was quite a collection of cars parked on the roadside; and the nearly one kilometre walk across paddocks, crossing great stiles over the old stone walls, served to separate the party somewhat. Once at the bush proper most parties took the shorter main

circular track, but one group set off mistakenly and unnoticed on the very long route. The area had several different types of vegetation so yielded a good variety of fungal fruitbodies. We returned to Tangihua separately, and it wasn't until we were sitting down to dinner that we realised that the missing party couldn't still be looking for luminous fungi, two hours after dark. A call to Whangarei Police told us that a local farmer had just reported a car still parked at the end of the walkway. A search by a Police Constable with his dog together with a local Search-and-Rescue person finally found the missing four, cold and exhausted but unharmed. We were most relieved to have them back at the Lodge around 1.30 am although their collections were still to be written up, numbered and put on the drier before they could sleep.

The last morning dawned sunny and mild, and most people enjoyed the local Tangihua tracks. Two indefatigable fungus hunters went off to the Waipoua Kauri Forest that day, despite the previous night's experiences. They didn't return till after dark; but they were careful enough to telephone from Dargaville to say that they were safe and on their way.

That night was rounded off with a dinner which included various oriental dishes contributed by the Chinese and Japanese guests, and another slide show, this time of fungi. Sunday morning was packing and cleanup, and after the camp photo we set off home.

We offer thanks to the Department of Conservation, Whangarei, for permission to study fungi in the reserves under their care, and also to the NZ Police and to Whangarei Search and Rescue for their willing help when needed.

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