

# Report from the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network

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Promoting the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network has met with great success this year with our newsletter *Trilepidea* (now over 2 years old) being read by over 800 people every month and our website with over 12,000 visitors each month. The website now displays photos of 80% of the NZ flora with botanists from all over the country willingly donating their images to the site. This year the website hosted a 'New Zealand's favourite plant' poll with Cook's Scurvy Grass (*Lepidium oleraceum*) the 2005 winner. Cook's Scurvy Grass is now critically endangered and has disappeared from the mainland over the entire country except for one place in the South Island. This has been a catastrophic decline for a plant Captain Cook collected 'by the boatload' to prevent his crew getting scurvy (hence the name).

Our 3rd annual conference was held in August in Christchurch with the theme 'Restoring our threatened plant life – empowering our community'. Over 100 people attended with talks on a variety of subjects such as specific threatened plant projects, general plant conservation and the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew. Workshops were held on the cultural use of plants and fungi, Targets 5 and 8 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, New Zealand fungi and on the cultivation of native plants. Field visits were made to a specialist threatened plants Nursery (Motukarara) and Kaitorete Spit.

Inaugural Plant Conservation awards were made by the Network at a ceremony during the conference, with awards for councils, schools, and nurseries. There were also two individual awards, one for Peter de Lange, plant conservation scientist at the Department of Conservation and another, the Lifetime Achievement award, presented to David Given for his 30 year career promoting and researching



threatened plants. David was the first person in New Zealand to develop threatened plant lists as a basis for prioritising effort for conservation. David was a tireless presenter, lobbyist and networker at international conferences and with international agencies for plant conservation. Sadly David passed away in November.

The first phase of the Network's marae-based plant training courses was completed this year. The purpose of these courses is to provide training to Maori in a range of plant conservation activities. These information gathering meetings discussed possible course topics e.g. plant identification, restoration techniques, taonga species, sourcing funding for restoration projects, caring for covenants and wetlands. Maori representatives will also assist with course development, the next phase of the project.

For more information contact the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, email: [info@nzpcn.org.nz](mailto:info@nzpcn.org.nz).

## Vale David Given – plant conservation pioneer



Dr David Given FLS (1943-2005), a pioneer of the New Zealand and global plant conservation movement, died on 27 November 2005, after an eighteen-month battle with cancer.

David had been in remission until less than a month before his death, and was active at last August's

successful conference of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. In mid-October he was in Sydney for the commercial

launch of the Wollemi Pine, and caught up with some of his Australian friends and colleagues.

David authored over 200 scientific papers and four books. As a plant systematist he specialised in ferns, and in the mainly New Zealand daisy genus *Celmisia*, which also occurs in Australia. He had a strong affinity for the Chatham Islands, and was engaged in a major Marsden Funded research programme to determine the age, origin and evolution of the Chathams' flora.

He spent nearly 30 years as a research scientist with the old DSIR (New Zealand's version of CSIRO). He then moved to



Lincoln University, teaching landscape ecology, conservation biology, nature conservation and ethnobotany. At Lincoln, he was also one of the founders, and Manager, of the Centre for Nature Conservation (now the Isaac Centre). For this work and in recognition of his international stature in environmental management and conservation, he was appointed an Associate Professor in February 2000.

A pioneer of scientific plant conservation, first in New Zealand and then globally, David was a tireless presenter, lobbyist and networker at international conferences and with international agencies. He was deeply involved with IUCN – the World Conservation Union – and its Species Survival Commission (SSC). He was Chair of the SSC Plant Conservation Committee from 1997 to 2004, and of the SSC Pteridophyte (Fern) Specialist Group for several years. He also contributed to the work of other specialist groups, including those on Re-introduction, Conservation Breeding, and Sustainable Use, and to the work of Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

In 1995 David was awarded the Loder Cup by the NZ Minister of Conservation, for services to plant conservation, and at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in 2004 was given the SSC's Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit. In 2005 he was awarded the New Zealand

Ecological Society's celebrated *Te Tohu Taiiao* Award for Ecological Excellence, and a Lifetime Achievement Award by the NZ Network for Plant Conservation (NZ PCN), which he had helped found.

David's job at the time of his final illness was as Botanical Services Curator with Christchurch City Council – a more significant post than it sounds to the Australian ear (tuned as we are to three tiers of Government). He was in fact Curator of Christchurch Botanic Gardens, a role that he described as a 'dream position'.

David was a member of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation (ANPC) from its foundation in 1991, and attended several of our conferences. He was Vice-President of our National Management Committee for two terms, and was a consistent source of encouragement and international experience for plant conservation in this country.

David will be missed in both our countries and around the world. The ANPC sends its sympathy to his wife Karina, and to his children and grandchildren.

*Bob Makinson and Jeanette Mill, with acknowledgements to Peter J. de Lange (NZPCN), BGCI, and IUCN.*

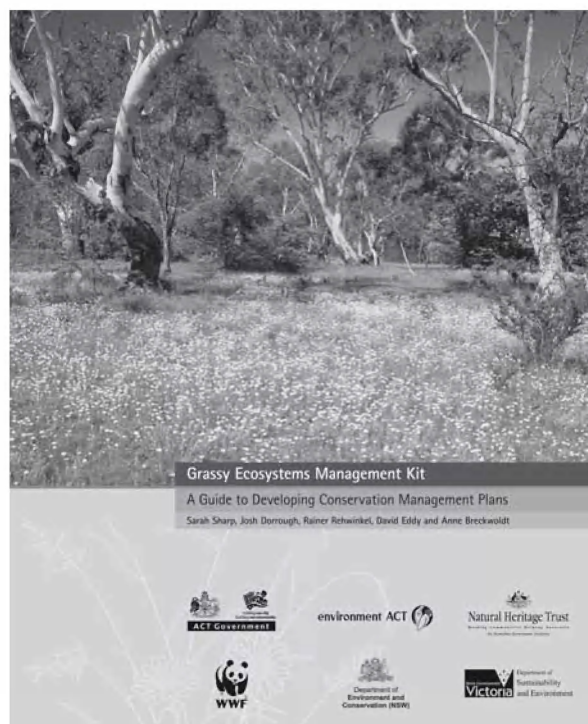
## Resource Kit Review

### Grassy Ecosystems Management Kit

Sharp S., Dorrough J., Rehwinkel R., Eddy D. and Breckwoldt, A. 2005. *Grassy Ecosystems Management Kit: A Guide to Developing Conservation Management Plans*, Environment ACT, Canberra. ISBN: 0 642 60340 5. Price \$30 (incl. GST) and \$10 postage. To order: [www.environment.act.gov.au/nativeplantsandanimals/grassyecosystemsmanagementkit.html](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/nativeplantsandanimals/grassyecosystemsmanagementkit.html).

Grassy ecological communities include native grasslands, grassy woodlands, secondary grasslands and native pastures. Many remnants of these communities are on private lands. These can be valued in various ways. They have intrinsic, ecological, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values. But they have traditionally been sacrificed to agricultural and plantation forestry developments, and urban and rural residential development and associated infrastructure. Their ecological value has only been recognised over the last 20 years or so.

Although today various grassy communities are listed as threatened under Australian Government and state and territory legislation, they continue to be impacted upon by invasive exotic species, inappropriate management, and other threats. This *Grassy Ecosystem Management Kit* aims to help people to better manage grassy ecosystems on their land for their ecological values, taking into account existing land uses.





Makinson, R O, Mill, Jeanette, and De Lange, Peter J. 2006. "Vale David Given - Plant Conservation Pioneer." *Australasian Plant Conservation: journal of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation* 14(3), 26–27.

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