

Andrew Davidson Beddie (1881 – 1962)

Andrew Davidson Beddie was born in 1881 in Kintore, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His father James Beddie (1840-1914), a granite quarry worker, was born in New Deer, Aberdeenshire, and his mother Isabella Davidson (1850-1913) was a labourer's daughter from Kinneff and Catterline, Kincardineshire. Andrew was the youngest of their five children, and like his older brother James, probably attended Kintore public school. Both his paternal grandfather James Beddie and great-grandfather John had been blacksmiths.



Chionochloa beddiei

From the Greek *chion* 'snow', and *chloa* 'grass', referring to the common name of snow grass, *Chionochloa* is a predominantly New Zealand genus, ranging from large tussock grasses to smaller tufted and sward-forming or creeping grasses. Twenty-two species occur in a wide range of habitats from Northland to the subantarctic islands, and one species is confined to Australia. *Chionochloa beddiei* is a small tussock, up to 60 cm tall, with rather widely spreading leaves, which are 30–60 cm long, about 4 mm wide and slightly channelled. The lower half of the leaf is stiff while the upper part becomes quite flowering. Flowering stems grow to about 75 cm long; the flower plumes are fairly dense and congested. Sometimes known as the Cook Strait tussock, it occurs in a small area of the southern North Island coast from Palliser Bay to the southern Wairarapa, growing on coastal cliffs and bluffs. Plants on the hills above Okiwi Bay in the Marlborough Sounds previously regarded as *Chionochloa beddiei* are now thought to be of hybrid origin.

On 6 January 1908 at the Temperance Hotel in the village of Kemnay, Aberdeenshire, Andrew Beddie, then a 27 year-old stonemason, married 21 year-old Elsie Coutts, a servant. After living for a short time with his parents at Clovenstone, Kintore, the young stonemason followed other family members who had emigrated, and by 1911 had built up a business in Petone, New Zealand. He shared botanical and horticultural interests with the nearby Percy family (of Percy Reserve), and his home at 174 Hutt Road was flanked on one side by his stoneyard, and on the other by a walled garden crammed with native plants. Andrew and Elsie Beddie are thought to have had two daughters and two sons. Elsie died in 1933, aged 46, and was buried in the old Taita cemetery.

In 1928 Andrew Beddie met Dr Leonard Cockayne and was soon collecting for him and the Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum. This led to his botanical explorations of Mt Matthews, the highest peak in the Rimutaka Range, during his holidays for the next six years, and publication of his paper about them in the *Journal of the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture* (1938). His account of a North Cape botanical survey with Ross Michie, Norman Potts and Cam Finlayson was published in 1945.

A skilled propagator, Beddie collected cuttings wherever he went. He also studied natural root-grafts, made wool dyes from indigenous species, and arranged exhibitions of native plants. For his work on the vegetation of the southern part of the Tararua Range and his contribution of rare and semi-rare species to botanists, parks and gardens, he was awarded the Loder Cup in 1948.

He was an avid member of the Tararua Tramping Club's botanical circle, which in 1939 formed the nucleus of the Wellington Botanical Society. His "waggon" (a small truck) was always available for transporting both members and visiting botanists, and was invaluable during the society's early years. He served as a council member for a total of six years, and contributed generously to the society's bulletin. His enthusiasm and participation in meetings and outings continued almost until his death, age 81, on 15 February 1962.

Andrew Beddie is remembered for his kindly and cheerful nature, and for his dedication to the study of New Zealand plants that was almost as much part of him as his Aberdeen accent. His contribution to New Zealand botany is recognised in the Cook Strait tussock, *Chionochloa beddiei*, described and named after him by his fellow trumper and botanical friend, Victor Zotov, in 1963.

