

William Martin (1886 – 1975)

William Martin was born at the family home, Fairfield, on the outskirts of Green Island, Dunedin, on 23 October 1886. His Scottish grandfather served an apprenticeship in the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens before coming to New Zealand in 1848 and establishing Fairfield as a farm and renowned nursery. His father, a partner in the nursery, was killed in an accident in 1896, leaving his mother to cope with four children, the property and the business. Nevertheless young William excelled in his studies and became a pupil-teacher at Green Island School. His diligent evening class studies earned him a scholarship to the University of Otago, which he attended concurrently with Dunedin Teacher's College. He continued evening classes while in his first teaching position at Ravensbourne School and graduated BSc in 1911.

For the next two years William Martin taught science at schools in the Wanganui-Manawatu district. He married Jean Calder in 1913, and moved to Christchurch as agriculture instructor to the South Canterbury Education Board. While there he collected plants with Leonard Cockayne, frequented the Canterbury Museum herbarium and was an active member of the Philosophical Institute. In 1920 he relocated to Dunedin with a young family, to become lecturer in science at the Teacher Training College, and in 1923, as secretary of the Otago Institute, he was involved in the organisation of an expedition to the Chatham Islands. After four years as principal of Mosgiel District High School, he had eight years in charge of Marlborough College, Blenheim, during which he collected with John Harry Hadfield (caretaker) and Arthur Ernest Brockett (teacher). In 1935 he described and named two new *Celmisia* species after them.

After further senior appointments in Wellington and Carterton, he retired in 1945, presented his extensive herbarium of flowering plants to the National Museum and returned to Dunedin to focus on botany. Choosing to specialise in bryophytes and lichens, he sought the assistance of G O K Sainsbury, the only serious student of New Zealand mosses at the time, and within twelve years had built up a collection of around 12,000 specimens. James Murray of the chemistry department of the University of Otago joined him for his work on lichens, which concentrated on *Cladonia*, done mainly when he was in his seventies. His enthusiastic and informative lectures to the Dunedin Naturalists Field Club and his popular written accounts led to the publication in 1972 (with John Child) of a highly successful introductory work, *Lichens of New Zealand*, at a time when lichenology was at low ebb in this country.

Wherever he taught Martin established and maintained collections of native plants, and by 1960, when he was awarded the Loder Cup for conservation, 60,000 copies of his *Flora of New Zealand* had been printed for senior school classes. A dedicated Freemason, he was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in 1961–62. His happy home life and family of six sons (two of whom died in World War II) and a daughter complemented his long and productive career and interests. His wife died in 1973, shortly after celebrating their sixty years of marriage, and William Martin died at his Dunedin home, Anderson's Bay, on 6 July 1975, aged 88. Two lichens, *Xanthoparmelia martinii* (Esslinger 1977) and *Sticta martinii* (Galloway 1983), commemorate him.

Sticta martinii

Sticta ('spotted, dappled') are conspicuous foliose lichens with around 105 species known worldwide. Fourteen species are recognised in the New Zealand flora, of which three, including *Sticta martinii*, are shared with Australia. *Sticta martinii* is a mainly subalpine to alpine grassland species, irregularly spreading, often in clumps, on soil, shrub litter and damp rock crevices. The upper surface of the lacerate, somewhat papery lobes are bright lettuce green to olive green, partly suffused with brown or red-brown when moist, and pale olive when dry; the lower surface pale tan at the margins to dark brown or blackened centrally. In New Zealand it occurs from North Island to Stewart Island.

PHOTO: Allison Knight

