

Grace Marie Taylor (1930 – 1999)

Marie Taylor, née Bulmer, the daughter of Harold Bulmer, a motor engineer, and his wife Ada, was born in New Plymouth on 29 September 1930. Following her primary school education at Central School, she attended New Plymouth Girls' High School, where she distinguished herself academically and showed special interest in the natural sciences. Her poem "The Spider" in the 1945 issue of the school magazine was probably her first published work. In 1947 she was awarded a Taranaki Scholarship.

She completed her BSc and MSc (Hons) at Victoria University, specialising in botany with a thesis on the life cycle of an *Ourisia* species. After qualifying as a teacher at Auckland Teachers' College, and a trip overseas, she taught at Wellington Girls' College. However, laboratory demonstrating at the university gave her more opportunities for fieldwork and the pursuit of her interest in native plants, and led to her becoming a full-time lecturer in botany there.

Marriage to Lawre in 1958 and the birth of two sons intervened. They moved to Oamaru for ten years, Marie taught part-time at local schools and the family explored and botanised the forests and alpine areas new to them. Marie developed her particular interest in fungi, motivated by earlier encouragement from Dr Greta Cone (Stevenson). She also wrote several taxonomic papers and a valuable key to the genus *Coprosma*, one of which

was named after her in 2005. However, it is now regarded as a synonym of *Coprosma dumosa*, retaining the taxon name first used by Cheeseman for the species.

When the family moved to Auckland in 1971, Marie obtained a position at Auckland University, and was senior tutor in the botany department for twenty years. She was a dedicated teacher, setting high standards, but was always ready to help those having difficulties with the course. At the same time she pursued her own research and produced several specialist papers on fungi classification, jointly describing at least 21 new species and having three named in her honour. Her popular books *Mushrooms and Toadstools of New Zealand* (1970) and *Mushrooms and Toadstools* (1981) were illustrated with her own watercolours.

Marie and Lawre became keen members of the Auckland Botanical Society, and on her retirement Marie was urged to undertake the huge task of revising Wall and Allan's popular guide to New Zealand plant names, first published in 1945. She immersed herself in the work, more than doubling the size of the original, and despite serious illness, completed the last draft shortly before her death on 24 April 1999. *Meanings and Origins of Botanical Names of New Zealand Plants* (2002) was Marie Taylor's final legacy to all those interested in the flora of this country.

Coprosma dumosa

Coprosma (Greek *kopros* 'dung'; *osme* 'odour, perfume' – from the unpleasant smell of some species) in the Rubiaceae or coffee family, is a genus of about 100 species of the Malaysian and Pacific regions, about half of them from New Zealand. *Coprosma tayloriae* Jane (2005) is now regarded as a synonym of *Coprosma dumosa* (Latin *dumosus* 'shrubby, bushy'), a shrub or small tree up to 7 metres tall, usually multi-stemmed, divaricate in the open and more lax in the shade. The plants are unisexual, with greenish yellow flowers, dappled violet in summer, and globular red, pink, purple, yellow or white to translucent drupes from February to April. It is common on forest margins and in clearings in hilly and mountainous country from the central North Island, southwards.

