

# Edward Phillips Turner (1865 – 1937)

**B**orn in England, Edward Phillips Turner grew up in Tasmania, and in 1884, when 19 years old, settled in New Zealand. He trained as a surveyor, and worked in several parts of this country as well as in Tasmania and New South Wales. On 28 July 1892, at St Mark's Church, Remuera, Auckland, he married Irene Ada Pirie, the youngest daughter of Major James Pirie and his wife Minna, née Carey, who had immigrated with their four children to New Zealand from Guernsey in 1879. Edward and Irene's only child, Rolland, was born in 1902.

In 1894 Edward Phillips Turner joined the Department of Lands and Survey and during the next twelve years undertook surveys, mainly in the Rotorua, Tarawera and Waikato regions.



## ***Brachyglottis turneri***

*Brachyglottis* is found only in New Zealand, and its 24 species of small trees, shrubs, herbs and a scrambling climber occur in a variety of habitats. The Forsters created the genus in 1775 for rangiora (*Brachyglottis repanda*); its other members were historically included with the genus *Senecio*. *Brachyglottis turneri* is a distinctive herb up to 2 metres tall, with long, widely curved and pointed leaves, long leaf stalks and clusters of bright yellow daisy flowers in summer. It has been recorded in several isolated Taranaki localities, usually growing on the upper faces of wet cliffs (with seepages), often with the sedge *Machaerina sinclairii* (tūhara), or overhanging streams and rivers.

He was appointed inspector of scenic reserves in 1907, and travelled the length of the country, gaining a good knowledge of the vegetation and landscape. The original release of Australian possums had been made at Riverton, Southland, in 1858, with the idea of starting a skin trade. In the early 1900s, while Cockayne, Smith and Kirk were supporting further release for commercial reasons, Turner recognised the damage done to large areas of forest by possums and questioned the wisdom of further liberation. In 1908, with Leonard Cockayne, he surveyed the central volcanic region and made recommendations for the boundaries of Tongariro National Park. During the following years he was responsible for delimiting scenic reserves on the Mokau and Whanganui Rivers and along the main trunk railway. He was appointed permanent head and secretary of the newly established Forestry Department in 1919, and from 1928 until his retirement in 1931, was director of forestry.

Edward Phillips Turner published numerous works on botany and forestry, the most important of which was *The Trees of New Zealand*, written collaboratively with Cockayne. The first edition appeared in 1928, the fourth (seventh printing) in 1958. He was a member of many professional societies and conservation organisations, and in his final years advocated the establishment of a bureau to administer national parks, pressing for a balance between protection and recreation. This objective was legislated into the 1952 National Parks Act ... to preserve parks in their natural state, and so that the public "may receive in full measure the inspiration, enjoyment, recreation and other benefit that may be derived from mountains, forests, sounds, lakes and rivers". In the winter of 1937, irked by a trifling foot injury that interfered with a planned botanical expedition, he died suddenly from blood-poisoning.

*Brachyglottis turneri*, a rare cliff-dwelling daisy in several isolated areas in Taranaki, was described by Thomas Cheeseman in 1910 as *Senecio turneri*, with the words, "I have much pleasure in dedicating it to its zealous discoverer, who has done excellent botanical work in the interior of the North Island in late years." *Pittosporum turneri*, from the Waimarino plateau, was described by Petrie in 1925. *Alseuosmia turneri* is a recently described species found locally in forest from the western slopes of Mt Ruapehu to the Waikato River. The specific epithet was chosen by Rhys Gardner in 1977 "to commemorate the association of E Phillips Turner with the flora of the above locality".