

John Wynter (?1555 – 1619)

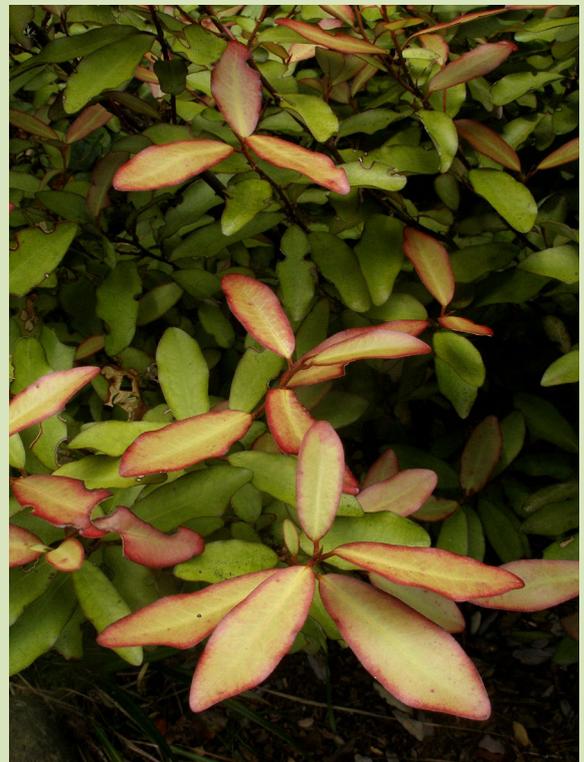
Some references suggest the Wintours were descendants of a knight who arrived in England with William the Conqueror, and others say they were originally Welsh. The family acquired the Huddington estates in Worcestershire through marriage, and a few generations later split into two branches: the Huddington branch, whose descendants included the gunpowder plotters, and the Lydney branch, with members involved in the slave trade and the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Surname spellings vary, and have been written Wintour, Wynter and Winter.

John Wynter, born around 1555 into a large family, was the son of George Wynter and Anne Brayne, an heiress. William Wynter of Lydney Manor, Gloucestershire, an admiral of the Elizabethan navy, was his uncle. They spelt their name Wynter. Both Sir William and his brother George financed Hawkins' slaving voyages and Francis Drake's expedition (sanctioned by the queen) to attack the Spanish in the Pacific. Of the four ships accompanying Drake in the *Golden Hind* at the outset of the voyage in 1577, only the *Elizabeth*, captained by John Wynter, then 22 years old, successfully rounded Cape Horn with him. The last two ships became separated in a storm, and Wynter, believing the *Golden Hind* lost, turned back. He re-entered the Strait of Magellan and spent three weeks searching for medicinal herbs. The aromatic bark he collected and used effectively to treat scurvy in his crew became known as "Winter's Bark".

He took the *Elizabeth* back to England, reaching Plymouth on 2 June 1579. Drake arrived back on 26 September 1580 after circumnavigating the world, and was rewarded with a knighthood, but John Wynter, 26 years old when his father died in 1581, was accused of piracy and causing embarrassment to his family. His land inheritances, including Dyrham Manor, which had been purchased by George Wynter ten years earlier, were left in trust "till he should have cleared himself". It seems this was duly done. In 1593, in Dyrham, John Wynter married Mary, daughter of Sir William Brunkar (Brounker or Brunkard), Knight of Wiltshire. They apparently had six sons and five daughters; most reached adulthood, but lived under the constant threat of pestilence and war. John Wynter died on 23 August 1619 at Bath, and was buried at Dyrham.

Charles de l'Ecluse, a Flemish naturalist and eminent botanist of the day, was among many on the continent interested in the discoveries made on Drake's voyage, knowing they were of scientific as well as commercial value. He went to London in

1581 and met Sir Francis Drake, Captain John Wynter and one of Drake's gentleman sailors, Lawrence Eliot, and obtained specimens from all three. His *Treatise of Aromatic Plants* (1582), the earliest published account of the 1577–80 voyage, contains skilful line drawings that record the actual specimens brought back on the *Elizabeth* and the *Golden Hind*, including Winter's bark that he named *Winteranus cortex*. Joseph Banks noted it much later in his *Endeavour* journal (1769), and in 1773 the Forsters established its botanical identity, naming it *Drimys winteri*. The neotropical family Winteraceae and the New Zealand endemic *Pseudowintera* genus both commemorate John Winter (Wynter).



Pseudowintera colorata

Pseudowintera ('resembling the genus *Wintera*') consists of three species of shrubs or small trees found only in New Zealand. The peppery, aromatic leaves with bluish-white waxy undersides, and the primitive structure of flower parts and wood, are typical of the family. The most common species, *Pseudowintera colorata* (mountain horopito or pepper tree), is so named because of the distinctive yellow-green leaves blotched with red. Small greenish downward-facing flowers tend to be hidden amongst the foliage. Plants growing in isolation produce few fruit, but being unpalatable to browsing animals, they often form thickets in disturbed areas. Common throughout New Zealand in lowland to alpine forests, and first collected near Akaroa, it was described in 1844 by Etienne Raoul.