

Millions That Never Live.

NATURE NEVER STANDS STILL.

(By Capt. E. V. Sanderson)



Dead Trees, Tarawera, and New Growth.

It can safely be assumed that all the trees—nay, all the plant-growth in a natural forest—are growing under the correct environment, so far as climatic, light and soil conditions, and their relationship to their neighbours forming the forest community is concerned because they are the survivors after intense competition.

Now how does nature go about planting growth according to the needs of each particular plant? Billions of seeds are broadcast by various means, the wind, birds, water, etc., etc. Millions upon millions fail to lodge in places suited to their needs. Most never germinate and those that do, have to assert their suitability and vigour in the mighty contest for a place in the sun as it were. Even those that may assume a temporary supremacy have to shew their suitability in the course of their life to resist weather conditions, disease, and such like; otherwise they fail and are replaced by more able contestants.

Some of the world's most able foresters admit that they do not always know for certain exactly what to plant, even in those districts in which they are practicing. The problem is further accentuated by the fact that there are vigorous trees and weak trees of the same species, just as there are strong men and weak men.

Faced with all these problems, the more eminent of foresters usually pin their faith on the trees which are native to the locality in which they are operating, because those trees have proved to be the successful survivors to date, after ages upon ages of contest. Further, Nature never stands still or is content to have reached a final goal at any period, but as thousands upon thou-

sands of years roll by, she modifies and gradually changes the flora so as to comply with the ruling climatic and soil conditions.

Faced with all these problems, the person who wishes to establish a native plantation will fortify his chances of success if he sticks to that plant-life which grew in his particular locality when the white man first set foot in this land. He will moreover, still further strengthen his likelihood of success if he carefully and accurately notes the aspect, soil and climatic and light conditions under which each species he wishes to grow, is thriving naturally, and endeavour to supply similar conditions for those plants which he wishes to utilize.

A tree is not a fencing post, but a real living thing. Planted under the wrong conditions it may grow, but will not thrive. It is usual in such cases to blame the plant as slow, or no good, when the real onus for its failure is with the person who put it there.

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Feed the Birds this Winter.

Winter is a deciding factor in the preservation of birds. Well-fed birds can care for themselves against enemies. Although August is the first month of Spring and berries have been plentifully produced this season, August is the month when the food supplies are shortest.

More food trees planted, more food given, more shelter provided—means more birds. More birds means more assistance against the huge invisible army of insects.

What food shall we give them? Many species of birds take fat freely and beef suet is especially acceptable. Many like potato or sweetened porridge and milk, and bell birds and tuis are included. Bird lovers should place food out of the reach of cats.

Feed the birds, especially in August.



The Bright-eyed Tomtit.