

# Native bush



## Digging deeper...

### The Catlins rainforests

The Catlins coastal rainforests include the MacLennan and Tautuku forests of approximately 19,000 and 13,300 hectares respectively.



## Digging deeper...

### Liverworts

New Zealand has a remarkably large number of liverworts – over 10% of the world's 7,000 species. Liverworts are small plants lacking a vascular system for transporting liquids, so are found only where it is shady and damp including all the bush areas of Otago. Some liverworts look like tiny ferns, others like small, wet, shiny leaves on the ground.



## Linnaeus says...

### Ferns

Ferns are typically plants of the tropics and there are around 20,000 species in the world. For a cool climate, New Zealand is unusually well endowed with fern species, some 170 all up. The study of ferns is called pteridology, and someone who studies ferns is called a pteridologist.

Towering Tōtara and Rimu trees, Beech and Rata trees form a seamless canopy above the ground. Under this, lush green ferns, lichens and mosses cover every rock, branch and ground space available. The unspoilt Catlins Forest Park still has it all.

Large parts of Otago, especially more coastal regions, were once covered in vast forests. Many of these forests have been logged and cleared for agriculture and horticulture over the past 150 years, but there are still many places where a forest lover can enjoy pristine native bush.

The most extensive area of native bush in Otago today is found in the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park. This area includes a rich array of different forest types with canopies dominated by Southern rata, podocarps (such as Rimu) or Silver beech. These forests are most famous for their giant podocarp trees including Rimu, Miro, Kahikatea, Tōtara and Matai.

The Catlins rainforest is also well known for its lush undergrowth of small broadleaved trees, tree ferns and vines, while the ground level is dominated by ferns. An abundance of ferns, lichens and even some native orchids can be found growing on the trees.

Closer to Dunedin numerous pockets of native bush are also well worth visiting. The cloudforest stretching from Mount Cargill to Flagstaff contains some largely untouched areas of bush and supports an abundance of flora and fauna.

Remnant or regenerating pockets of Silver beech forest are also found in the Waipori Valley of Eastern Otago, in the Silverpeaks area and on Dunedin's northern hills. The Waipori Falls area is Dunedin's largest scenic reserve. The western parts of Central Otago also support native bush, predominantly Beech forest.



The Easter orchid, *Earina autumnalis*, grows on many native trees



A stream running through regenerating bush in the Catlins

