



Left—Ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*). Right—Karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigata*).

sudden death. These properties are destroyed by heat and the cooked seeds were used by the Maoris for making a flour.

Macrocarpa

Abortion has been caused in cows after eating shoots of macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), as was reported in the "Journal" of October, 1943, by Messrs. Gilder and Alexander. All the animals affected were cows close to calving (about 8 months pregnant) and they had been placed in paddocks containing fallen limbs of this tree.

Ngaio

Ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*) is a native and common throughout New Zealand, chiefly by the sea coast, being hardy and quick growing. Cases of poisoning have been reported in cattle, sheep, and pigs that have eaten ngaio foliage. The writer has seen several cases where up to six cows on one property have been lost, the owner suspecting malicious poisoning by his neighbours. The symptoms noted in cattle were pain and distress followed by bloating and dullness; death occurred within less than a day in most cases, although some beasts lingered for a few days. Sheep and pigs have been poisoned with the leaves, but usually a whole tree or large branch that has been blown down has been the cause of the trouble with cattle. Feeding experiments have recently been carried out at the Animal Research Station, Wal-

laceville, by Drs. I. J. Cunningham and C. S. M. Hopkirk, and full details have been published (2). The Tasmanian variety of ngaio (*Myoporum serratus*) has also been proved poisonous to sheep. The writer has not been able to give treatment in time, nor have others reported any success, so that stock owners are advised to take precautions after a wind storm by seeing that no stock have access to broken ngaio branches.

Nightshade

The black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) is a very common weed of cultivated land and odd corners of domestic gardens. It has even been cultivated and used for jam making. It is often misnamed the deadly nightshade, which is a very poisonous member of the same family rarely, if ever, found in New Zealand. Poisoning by the black nightshade has been reported only in one or two instances, symptoms being stupefaction and staggering. Sheep penned in a small paddock with no other herbage in it have died through eating it. Stock eating sprouted potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) have shown similar symptoms, and horses have died when fed sprouted potatoes mixed with grass (3).

Ragwort

Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) is a

well-known weed and the bane of many a property owner's life. Its consumption by stock causes Winton disease. It is distinguished by its fern-like leaves and brilliant yellow flower heads, which in summer time may be seen covering large areas in some districts. Poisoning occurs in horses, cattle, and sheep, and symptoms may appear in a month and up to six months after the stock first graze on the plant. A falling away in condition, capricious appetite, and brain symptoms such as paddling with the feet and walking into things as though unconscious of the surroundings are noted, especially in horses. There may be constipation or diarrhoea, with evil-smelling faeces. Death may supervene in a few days or more after the first symptoms, and a post-mortem examination reveals a pale, hard, fibrous liver with inflammation and oedema of the bowel. These symptoms are shown in both horses and cattle and often appear after the animals have been moved off the ragwort country to good pastures. Sheep can be affected but are slow to show the symptoms and, as with cattle, they will start dying a short time after being moved off the ragwort. There is no successful treatment generally known once the symptoms have appeared, although success has been claimed in some cases. Poisoning may be caused by eating the plant in the young rosette stage, the flowering stage, or when the weed has been cut

(2) A. J. Healy, N.Z. Journal of Science and Technology, Vol. XXVI.

(3) W. A. Dickinson, Vet. Record., Vol. IX, No. 42.