

available. They are all of compact habit and have fleshy, marked leaves. They require warmth.

**Pileas** are soft-stemmed plants. The artillery plant has fern-like foliage and is named for the manner in which the pollen sacks explode. The aluminium plant has green leaves with aluminium-coloured marking.

**Pineapples** make interesting plants for the home. The shoot on a fresh pineapple can be grown as a cutting and the plant may flower; in some instances under good conditions fruit has developed in about 3 years.

**Sansevieria** is grown for its stiff, erect, strap-like leaves. The usual type has silver marking on the green leaves; the golden form is superior but in short supply.

Variegated forms of abutilon and fuchsias can also be included in this group, as their foliage is usually more effective than their flowers.

#### Native Plants

There are many native plants which, because of their beautiful foliage, are very suitable as house plants. A few are suggested, but many more can be used.

**Akeake** (*Dodonaea viscosa*) is available in both green and purple forms. It is light in structure with narrow leaves.

The **cabbage tree** (*Cordyline* sp.) is available in several species, one with bronze leaves.

The variegated form of **taupata** (*Coprosma baueri variegata*) is slightly pendulous and a very useful subject.

There are several "five-fingers" belonging to the genus *Nothopanax* and the five-fingered lancewood *Pseudopanax lessoni*; the leaves of the latter are more finely cut and of a darker green colour than the former.

The variegated varieties of **flax** (*Phormium tenax*) are smaller than the common one and make excellent pot plants.

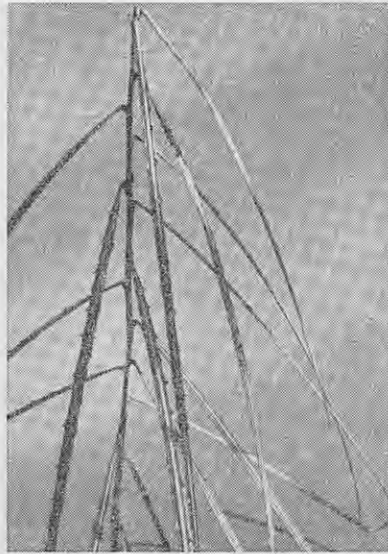
The prostrate **fuchsia** (*Fuchsia procumbens*) has very fine foliage, but the unique flowers and large, reddish fruits are a special attraction.

The **lancewoods** (*Pseudopanax* sp.) in the juvenile form make some of the finest plants for a contemporary home. The species vary in colour.

**Parapara** (*Pisonia brunoniana*), and especially the variegated form, is known for its large, decorative leaves.

Various *Pittosporum* species are suitable both in their green and variegated forms.

The **puka** (*Meryta sinclairi*) is useful both as a small and larger plant and grows well indoors. The thick-textured, large, green leaves are its most attractive feature.



Lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolium*).

**Puriri** (*Vitex lucens*), which has dark green, glossy leaves, can be flowered in pots. It develops quite a spreading habit which is unusual for trees grown in containers.

**Ramarama** or **New Zealand myrtle** (*Myrtus bullata*) has reddish-brown, crinkled leaves which are very attractive.

The **red beech** (*Nothofagus fusca*) is valued for its fine foliage.

The **rimu** (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), with its drooping branches and especially in its juvenile form, is one of the most graceful house plants.

**Titoki** (*Alectryon excelsum*) has distinctive, dark green foliage.

#### Climbers

For use as specimen plants the climbers are perhaps the most decorative. A great range is available. Among some of those mentioned great variation is found within the species.

The largest group is the **philodendrons**. The most vigorous is *Monstera deliciosa*, with large, deeply cut, dark green leaves. It has aerial roots, which are an added attraction. It is not a true philodendron, but is sometimes named as such in overseas literature.

## ... DECORATIVE PLANTS

The true *Philodendron* is a large genus of climbers with dark green leaves in many shapes, both deeply cut and with entire edges. They are tropical plants and will not tolerate cold conditions.

The variegated philodendrons belong to the genus *Scindapsus*, but are much like true philodendrons in habit and requirements.

Next in diversity is **ivy** (*Hedera* sp.). There are various variegated forms, but also species with different types of green leaves. They are among the most hardy plants and will tolerate fairly dark positions.

Some **Virginia creepers** can also be used as house plants, but they lose their leaves at the end of summer. They compensate, however, by their glorious autumn colour and the fresh green shoots in spring.

Closely related to the Virginia creepers are the *Cissus*, of which several species are available. They are vigorous-growing climbers with very decorative leaves.

The **climbing fig** (*Ficus pumila minima*) is very dainty, with small, green leaves.

The "**Wandering Jew**" (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) is well known in its white or golden, variegated forms. The one with silvery variegation and purple reverse is *Zebrina pendula*.

*Polygonum capitatum* is rather similar in habit, but not so fragile in the stems. It has a curious V marking on the leaves, which turn reddish if the plant is grown in the sun.

The **wax plant** (*Hoya carnosa*) is well known. To get the best view of



Succulents are useful for permanent decorations of bowls.