



***The Essential Audrey Eagle: Botanical art of New Zealand* by Audrey Eagle. Wellington: Te Papa Press (2013). RRP: \$49.95. Soft cover, 163 illus. (chiefly colour) 240pp. ISBN-10: 1877385905; ISBN-13: 978-1877385902. Reviewed by Deirdre Hart.**

Based on the award-winning two-volume modern classic **Eagle's** *Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand* (2006), for which she won the 2007 Montana Medal for Non-Fiction, this latest publication, by popular demand, presents a beautiful selection of 165 full-colour, full-page reproductions¹ of Audrey Eagle's work. ***The Essential Audrey Eagle: Botanical art of New Zealand*** confirms her status as a first-rate botanical artist, sentient of the significance of plants in our lives, as sources of food, pleasure and medicine.²

Eagle's work has been well-served not only by her publisher, Te Papa Press, but also by Patrick Brownsey, a leading authority on ferns, who has penned a superb introduction.³ This tells the story of Audrey Eagle and sets her place in the history of botanical illustration of New Zealand's unique native flora. In terms of design and quality of reproduction, this accessible, affordable book compares well with Te Papa Press' ambitious and highly successful publication, Buller's *Birds of New Zealand: The Complete Works of J. G. Keulemans* by Geoff Norman.⁴ Such publications signal that many New Zealanders recognise and value this unique environment. Eagle's book, a selection reflecting a life-time's passion, will delight many and would make a perfect Christmas present for the gardener or nature-history enthusiast in the family.

- 1 Life-size plus enlargements revealing the the flowers, leaves and seeds of each plant in technically superb detail, while an appendix containing comprehensive notes, drafted in consultation with expert botanists, gives information on every plant.
- 2 Dunedin author, painter and botanist Audrey Eagle.
- 3 Dr. Patrick Brownsey has published more than 50 scientific papers and a research fellow for botany at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.
- 4 This includes the complete set of 95 artworks from both editions of *A History of the Birds of New Zealand* by Walter Buller and the subsequent supplement, specially photographed and reproduced at original size and in full colour using high quality modern printing techniques.