

Egmont National Park vegetation

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<http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/Site/publish/Journals/nzjb/1988/11.aspx>

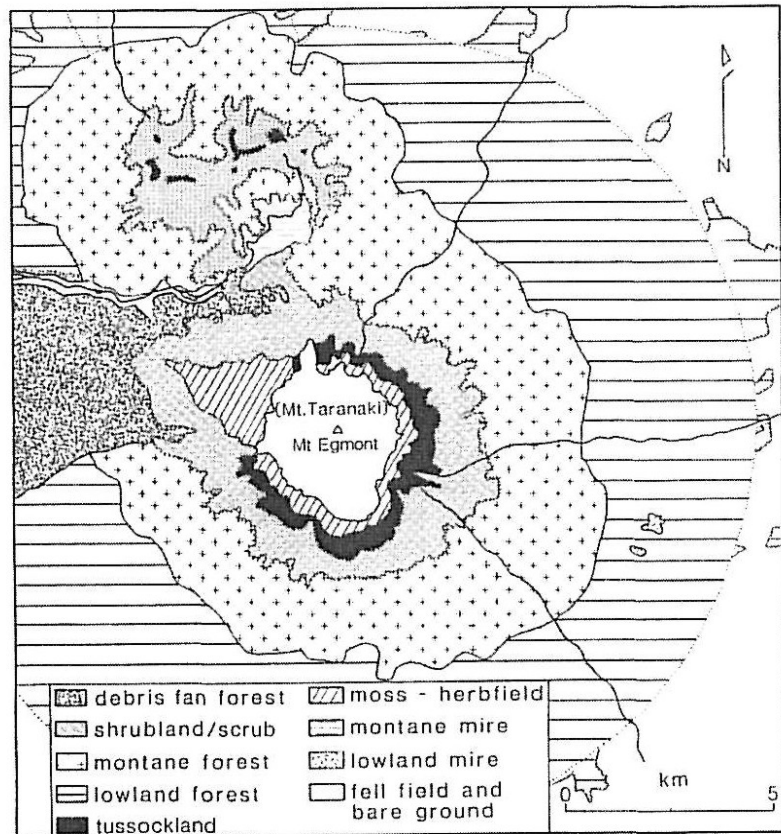
The Egmont National Park vegetation has been described by Druce (1964) and Clarkson (1980, 1981, 1985). Nine broad vegetation classes are recognized here (Fig. 3): lowland forest, montane forest, forest on recent debris fans, scrub and shrubland, tussockland, herbfield, fellfield and bare ground, lowland mire, and montane mire. Lowland forest encircles most of Mt Egmont and the Pouakai Range below 760 m and completely covers the Kaitake Range to the north-west. The main forest type is *Dacrydium cupressinum*-*Metrosideros robusta* (epiphytic origin)/*Weinmannia racemosa* forest. Other types represented include *Dacrydium cupressinum*-*Metrosideros robusta*/*Melicytus ramiflorus*-*Weinmannia racemosa* in the ESE quadrant affected by Burrell eruptions, and *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*-*Dacrydium cupressinum*/*Weinmannia racemosa* on poorly drained soils on the eastern side of Mt Egmont.

Above 760 m lowland forest gradually gives way to montane forest which extends as high as 1050 m in altitude. The most common forest types in the lower levels of this forest class are *Weinmannia racemosa* and *Podocarpus hallii*/*Weinmannia-Griselinia* while at the upper levels, *Libocedrus bidwillii*-*Podocarpus hallii*/broadleaved shrubs type (NE to SW) is predominant. However, at the upper limit of the montane forest on the NE, E, and SE slopes of Mt Egmont various combinations of *Podocarpus hallii*, *Libocedrus bidwillii*, *Griselinia*, and broadleaved shrubs are found. These variations relate to differential effects of recent eruptions. On the north-western slopes of Mt Egmont the pattern is markedly different. There fans formed by recent debris flows support young forest, the main types represented being *Metrosideros robusta* (terrestrial)-*Weinmannia*, *Weinmannia-Myrsine salicina*, and *Kunzea ericoides*. The upper limit of forest in this quarter is considerably depressed, occurring at about 790m, whereas elsewhere it is up to 1050 m.

The scrub and shrubland belt is dominated by *Brachyglottis rotundifolia* var. (*B. elaeagnifolia*) with substantial amounts of *Dracophyllum longifolium*, *Hebe stricta* var. *egmontiana*, *H. odora*, *Cassinia vauvilliersii*, *Coprosma pseudocuneata*, *Pseudopanax colensoi*, and *P. simplex*. Above 1250 m on Mt Egmont *Chionochloa rubra* (red tussock) becomes dominant, forming an extensive zone of tussockland, while on the Pouakai Range only the highest peaks and poorly drained tops have tussockland. Among the tussocks are small shrubs, especially *Hebe odora*, and the ground is covered with a herb-dominated turf.

Above 1500 m the herbs occupy a greater area of ground than tussock. In places, particularly at the upper levels of this herbfield, mosses, especially *Racomitrium*, are prominent. Moss-herbfield of this type extends well down the NW slopes of Mt Egmont, marking the course of former debris and pyroclastic flows (Fig. 3). Above 1650 m the plant cover is patchy, being confined to more stable ground and sheltered hollows and crevices, and beyond 1750 m it is inconsequential.

Fig. 3 Present vegetation map of Mt Egmont and the Pouakai Range.



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