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SHORT NOTE

Bellbirds eating fruits of strawberry trees

In May 1961, when the OSNZ held its AGM in Dunedin, my very kind hosts were Brian and Nancy Ellis.

In their garden I noticed Bellbirds (*Anthornis melanura*) and Silvereyes (*Zosterops lateralis*) enjoying the fruits of the introduced strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), a native of the Mediterranean and south-west Ireland, where I have found it round the coast.

An American tree, strawberry dogwood (*Dendrobenthamia capitata*), is also sometimes called strawberry tree. In Rotorua in May 1945 and again in May 1947, I had also noticed the same two species of birds feasting on the fruits of a well-grown specimen of this tree.

It would appear that the Polynesians are not the only early inhabitants of New Zealand to be tempted by the tasty foods brought in from other lands.

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