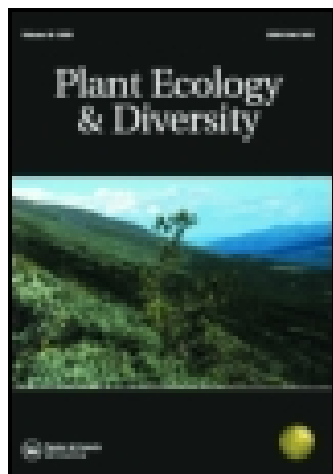


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IV. Remarks on *Juncus effusus spiralis* and the Varieties of Ferns

Mr M'Nab

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dilatata are common. The author concluded by giving a full list of the ferns mentioned, with the particular stations in which they are found.

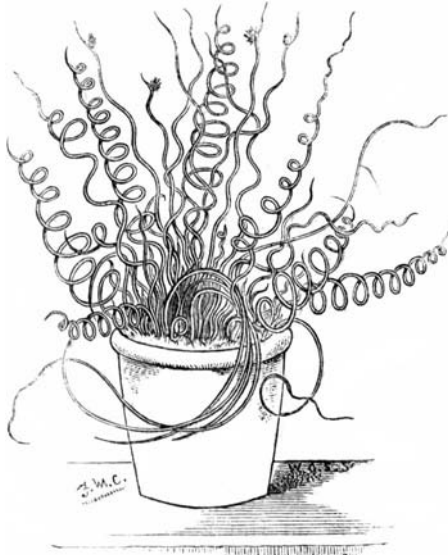
IV. *Remarks on Juncus effusus spiralis and the Varieties of Ferns.* By Mr M'NAB.

During the meeting of the British Association, held at Edinburgh in 1871, the attention of some of its members was directed to that peculiar spiral Rush known as *Juncus effusus* var. *spiralis*, now cultivated in the Edinburgh Botanic Garden. This remarkable variety was originally found in the North of Ireland by the late David Bishop, while Curator of the Botanic Garden at Belfast. As far as I can recollect, only one plant was discovered, which has been perpetuated ever since by division of the roots. On being asked if the spiral form were reproduced by seed, I could not then answer the question. Although good seed is very sparingly procured, I had some collected and sown; and I can now affirm that it may be thus reproduced, as all the seedlings raised are more or less spiral (see figure).

This peculiar Irish Rush resembles many of the finer crested Ferns now cultivated, in the circumstance that there is rarely more than one plant of each found in one locality. When the *Asplenium Trichomanes digitatum* was first discovered on a rock in Kirkcudbrightshire, by the late Mr David Dick, then gardener at St Mary's Isle, only one plant could be detected, although typical specimens were found in abundance. The same was the case with the *Lastrea Filix-mas* var. *cristata*, when first discovered in Cornwall; with the *Athyrium Filix-femina* var. *multifidum*, when first found in Ireland; and with the *Athyrium Filix-femina* var. *Victorice*, when found in Dumbartonshire. The same remark holds good with many other crested Ferns now in cultivation. Solitary plants of some of the anomalous forms have been found in remote districts, as happened with the *Blechnum boreale* var. *imbricatum*, which was found in the south of England at the same time that I discovered one in an old fir plantation at the Cairnies in Perthshire, and which turned out to be identical with the

English variety, and was then named by me *Blechnum boreale* var. *crassicaule*. Although I carefully searched the district, only one plant was got, the typical form, however, being in great profusion. The spores from it have since produced seedlings, and turned out to be identical with the variety found.

All the plants of crested ferns which I originally grew were raised from spores taken from fronds of plants collected in their native localities. Although these anomalies are freely raised under garden cultivation, it is strange



Juncus effusus spiralis.

that they do not come up in their original habitats, although spores must be freely dispersed on the spots where these varieties are first discovered, and which ought to be the soil and situation best suited for their growth. The same fact is noticeable in regard to the spiral Rush, as no plants of it in a natural condition have been found since Mr Bishop's time.

In Scotland we have a well-known saying, "As straight as a rush." This term, however, does not apply to this

Irish Rush. I may here remark, *per contra*, that Ireland has long been famous for upright varieties of certain well-known plants, such as the Irish Yew, and the Irish Whin, known in cultivation as the *Ulex europæus* var. *strictus*. The Juniper is also a shrub which in some districts of Ireland assumes an upright habit, very different from the procumbent form we are accustomed to see in this country. One of the recently-discovered Heaths in Connemara, named *Erica mediterranea* var. *hibernica*, and the first of a series that was got, has a compact, upright habit of growth very different from the other forms of *E. mediterranea* afterwards found in the same and other districts, showing the tendency which Ireland has for producing upright plants, the Screw Rush being quite an exception.

[The accompanying woodcut is furnished by the proprietors of the *Gardener's Chronicle*.]

V. *Report on the Open Air Vegetation at the Royal Botanic Garden* (No 3, 1873). By JAMES M'NAB.

Since the last meeting of the Botanical Society (March 13) the weather, upon the whole, has been favourable, somewhat dry, with much easterly wind, but with little or no frost. On seven mornings only, viz., 14th, 15th, 22d, 23d, 24th, 25th, and 28th of March, did the thermometer fall below the freezing point. On the 14th to 31°, and on the six other mornings to 30°; while the highest morning temperatures were on the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 9th, and 10th of April, being 39°, 42°, 40°, 39°, 41°, and 40°. The minimum temperatures noticed being above those recorded last year, while the higher morning temperatures are lower. Vegetation, although making progress, is still considerably behind last spring. The names of nearly all the plants now submitted were laid before the March meeting of last year. The early flowering bulbs, although late of flowering this spring, have not continued so long in a state of perfection as they do when their flowers are expanded at an earlier period. The buds of many of the forest trees, with the exception of the elm (which is now flowering), show but little sign of starting.