

A planter's handbook for Northland natives

Including special plants for wetlands, coast and bird food



*Tiakina nga manu, ka ora te ngahere.
Ka ora te ngahere, ka ora nga manu.*

*Look after the birds and the forest flourishes.
If the forest flourishes, the birds flourish.*



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Introduction

This handbook has been published to help readers decide which native plants to use on their land. The book does not include every native plant but provides a wide range that are readily available in local nurseries.

Charts on each page show whether a plant provides food for birds, what its final height may be and how quickly it grows. The book also includes plants that will handle harsh coastal environments, windy and/or dry locations and frosts, as well as those plants that tolerate shade or a wetter habitat.

To attract tui, kukupa (native wood pigeon) and other birds, the two calendars can help in choosing which trees you should plant to ensure a year-round berry and nectar supply. Basic information on site preparation, care after planting and weed and pest control is also included.

Remember, more detailed information on plant species, planting, weed and pest control is available from the Northland Regional Council and the Department of Conservation.



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

*Above: Although primarily a fruit eater the kukupa will sometimes eat the flowers and new shoots of the kowhai, *Sophora microphylla* and some other trees, when berries are scarce.*

Front cover: Tui in a pohutukawa at Waitangi Golf Club. Photo courtesy of Darren Markin.

Plants to 6 metres		What can the plant tolerate					Bird food		Environs		Growth	
		Dry soil	Shade: light med heavy	Wind	Frost	Do possums eat it? 1-No 2-At times 3-Often	Food for: bellbird tui silvereye	Food for: pigeons (kukupa)	Coast salt hardy	Damp margins wetlands	Growth rate	Final height metres
Alseuosmia macrophylla	karapapa		M			2	•				med	1.5
Clianthus puniceus	kakabeak	•	L			3	•				fast	2
Cordyline obtecta	3 Kings cabbage tree	•		•		1	•	•	•		med	4
Coprosma propinqua						2	•			•	med	6
Corokia buddleoides	korokia		L			1	•		•		med	3
Geniostoma ligustrofolium	hangehange	•	M			2			•		med	3
Hebe species	hebe	•		•		2			•	•	fast	1-7
Leptospermum scoparium	manuka	•		•	•	1			•	•	fast	4
Lophomyrtus bullata	ramarama	•		•		2	•				med	6
Myrsine australis	mapou	•		•	•	2	•		•		slow	6
Myrsine divaricata	weeping mapou		L			1				•	slow	4
Olearia furfuracea	akepiro	•	L			1			•		med	5
Phormium tenax	flax	•		•	•	1	•		•	•	med	3
Pseudopanax lessonii	houpara	•		•		2			•		med	6
Solanum aviculare	poroporo	•	M			2	•	•			fast	2.5
Tecomanthe speciosa	tecomanthe					1	•				fast	vine



Photo courtesy of Northland Regional Council

Hebe brevifolia is one of about 16 hebes native to Northland. They can provide a variety of different coloured flowers and are suited to Northland conditions.
Inset: Silveryeyes are among many birds that feed off flax flowers.

Plants to 6-8 metres		What can the plant tolerate					Bird food		Environs		Growth	
		Dry soil	Shade: light med heavy	Wind	Frost	Do possums eat it? 1-No 2-At times 3-Often	Food for: bellbird tui silvereye	Food for: pigeons (kukupa)	Coast salt hardy	Damp margins wetlands	Growth rate	Final height metres
Aristotelia serrata	wineberry		L	•	•	3	•	•			fast	6
Brachyglottis repanda	rangiora					1				•	med	6
Coprosma repens	taupata	•		•		2	•			•	fast	8
Coprosma robusta	karamu					2	•		•	•	fast	6
Dodonaea viscosa	akeake	•		•		1			•		fast	6
Entelea arborescens	whau		L			1			•		med	6
Griselinia littoralis	broadleaf	•		•		2	•	•	•		slow	8
Griselinia lucida	puka	•		•		2	•	•	•		slow	7
Macropiper excelsum	kawakawa		M			2	•	•			med	6
Melicope simplex	poataniwha		L		•	1				•	slow	8
Meryta sinclairii	puka	•		•		2		•	•		med	8
Olearia rani	heketara		L			1				•	med	7
Pittosporum umbellatum	haekaro	•		•		2			•		fast	7
Pseudopanax arboreus	five finger	•		•		3	•		•		fast	8
Pseudowintera axillaris	horopito			•	•	1					med	8
Schefflera digitata	pate	•				3	•	•			med	8



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

Photo courtesy of Malcolm Pullman

Fast growing and hardy, the five finger species also provide food for tui, bellbirds and silvereye.
Inset: Karamu, *Coprosma robusta*, berries are a favourite food for many smaller birds.



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

Photo courtesy of Northland Regional Council

Lemonwood (or tarata), *Pittosporum eugenioides*, is quick to establish and can create an effective hedge. Plant eco-sourced trees that will be suited to your local conditions.
 Inset left: The purple fruit of mahoe, *Melicytus ramiflorus*. Inset right: Titoki, *Alectryon excelsus*, berries.



Karaka, *Corynocarpus laevigatus*, fruit are an important part of the kukupa's summer diet.
Inset: One of nature's nursery crops kanuka, *Kunzea ericoides*, in full flower.



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

Photo courtesy of Nan Pullman

*The foliage and flowers of the taraire, **Beilschmiedia tarairi**, provide important food for kukupa.
Inset: Rata flowers.*



Photo courtesy of Malcolm Pullman

Native grasses, rushes and sedges: A: Coastal tussock, *Chionochloa bromoides* B: Needle grass, *Austrostipa stipoides*
C: Rengarenga, *Arthropodium cirratum* D: Coastal astelia, *Astelia banksii*



Two fast growing, versatile groundcovers are pohuehue, *Muehlenbeckia complexa*, and the yellow flowering native hibiscus, *Hibiscus diversifolius*, (inset).

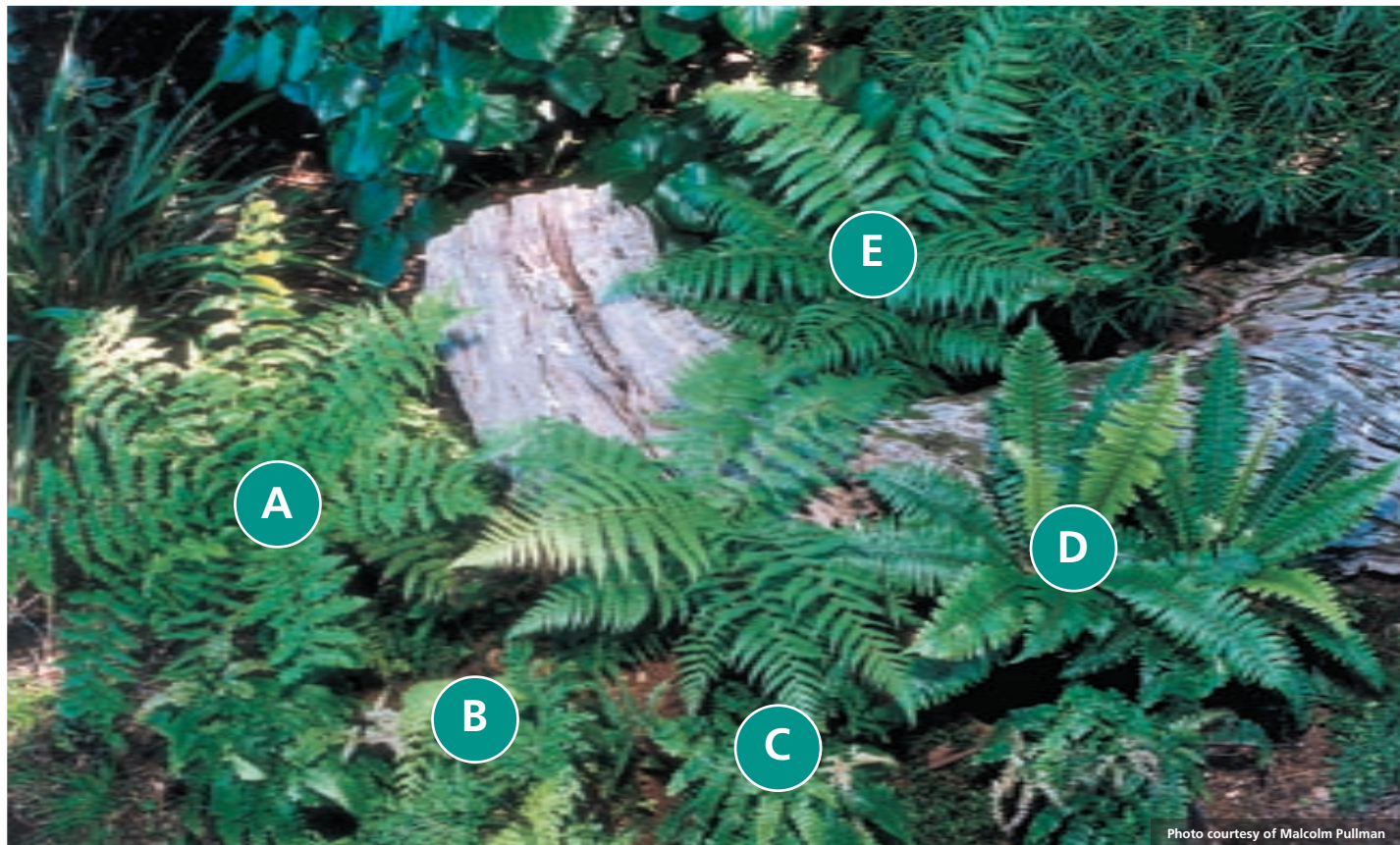


Photo courtesy of Malcolm Pullman

A: Gully fern, *Pneumatopteris pennigera* B: Hen & chicken fern, *Asplenium bulbiferum*
C: Rosy maidenhair, *Adiantum hispidulum* D: Crown fern, *Blechnum discolor* E: Wheki or rough tree fern, *Dicksonia squarrosa*

NATIVE TREES FOR KUKUPA FOOD

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Best food	taraire		taraire	taraire
		karaka	karaka	
	nikau	nikau	nikau	nikau
	puriri	puriri	puriri	puriri
Good food			kohekohe	kohekohe
		miro	miro	
			kahikatea	
			pigeonwood	
	maire			
	titoki	titoki	titoki	
OK food		tawapou	tawapou	
		mahoe	mahoe	
		kotukutuku	kotukutuku	
		karamu	karamu	
			lancewood	lancewood
		tawa		
	five finger	five finger		

During the breeding season (July -February) the home range of kukupa can be 4-5 hectares or even smaller if there is sufficient food.
During the non-breeding season kukupa will fly several kilometres for different foods.
These tree fruiting times are a guide only and may differ slightly in your area.

NATIVE TREES FOR TUI / SILVEREYE FOOD

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Best food	flax species	flax species		
	kowhai			
	kahikatea	kahikatea		
			kohekohe	kohekohe
	pohutukawa	pohutukawa		
	puriri	puriri	puriri	puriri
	rewarewa			
Good food				five finger
	karo			karo
	mahoe	mahoe		
		rimu	rimu	
	totara	totara		
	wineberry	wineberry		
OK food	kotukutuku			
		lancewood	lancewood	
	mapou	mapou	mapou	
	puka	puka	puka	
		putaputaweta	putaputaweta	

During their breeding season (September-January) tui have a home range of four to five hectares, but at other times will fly up to 50 kilometres in search of food.

Silvereye have a breeding season home range of just one hectare but at other times will typically travel up to 10 kilometres for food.

These tree fruiting times are a guide only and may differ slightly in your area.

Planting information

When to plant

The best time to plant is from late May until mid-August. Without irrigation many trees will not survive being planted in dry soil. In dry winters, planting should not take place until enough rain has fallen to make the ground easy to dig.

Choosing a site

Careful site selection and good site preparation are the main ingredients for successful plant growth. Look at your site and list the limitations it may have. Is it a frost-prone area, does it have poor, swampy, dry or sandy soil? Is the site exposed to wind, especially salt wind if it is near the coast? Is the site north or south facing, sunny or shady?

Select plants to suit the conditions at your site. Look at what else is growing near your planting area. This may give you some indication of what to grow.

Before planting

The most important actions you can take are:

- Remove weeds in areas to be planted before you begin to plant; spot spray patches rather than blanket spraying to avoid bare patches that weeds can invade. Where kikuyu is dominant pre-spray twice in autumn to knock it back hard: initially in March, then again in May, four to six weeks out from planting.
- Plant reasonably close together to avoid weed infestations and use larger plants if possible to avoid them being overtaken by grass and weeds.

After planting

- Keep up the pest control. Don't waste all that early work only to have rabbits, possums or goats kill or damage your young trees.
- Possums can often be found in city gardens. Northland Regional Council biosecurity staff can advise on control.
- Release your plants regularly (at least twice a year) in the first couple of years, until they are tall enough to out-compete weeds. Using stakes (e.g. bamboo stakes dipped in white acrylic paint) to mark the position of young trees helps you find them later. If you spray grass and weeds, take care to avoid spray drift or accidental spray around your young plants.
- Mulch around young plants if possible to retain moisture and reduce weeds; use weeds that have been pulled out to help mulch around trees.



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

Above: A cabbage tree in full bloom.

Inset: Puriri flowers.



Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

**Further relevant publications by
Northland Regional Council can be found at:
www.nrc.govt.nz/publications**

- Trees for the land - growing trees for protection, production and pleasure
- Clean streams - a guide to riparian management
- Looking after your wetland

Back cover: A tui in a kowhai.

Photo courtesy of Brian Chudleigh

Back cover inset: A silvereye eating a ripe berry in
a Three Kings Cabbage, *Cordyline kasper*.

Photo courtesy of Malcolm Pullman



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