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*Nga  
Taonga  
© Nga  
Iwi*



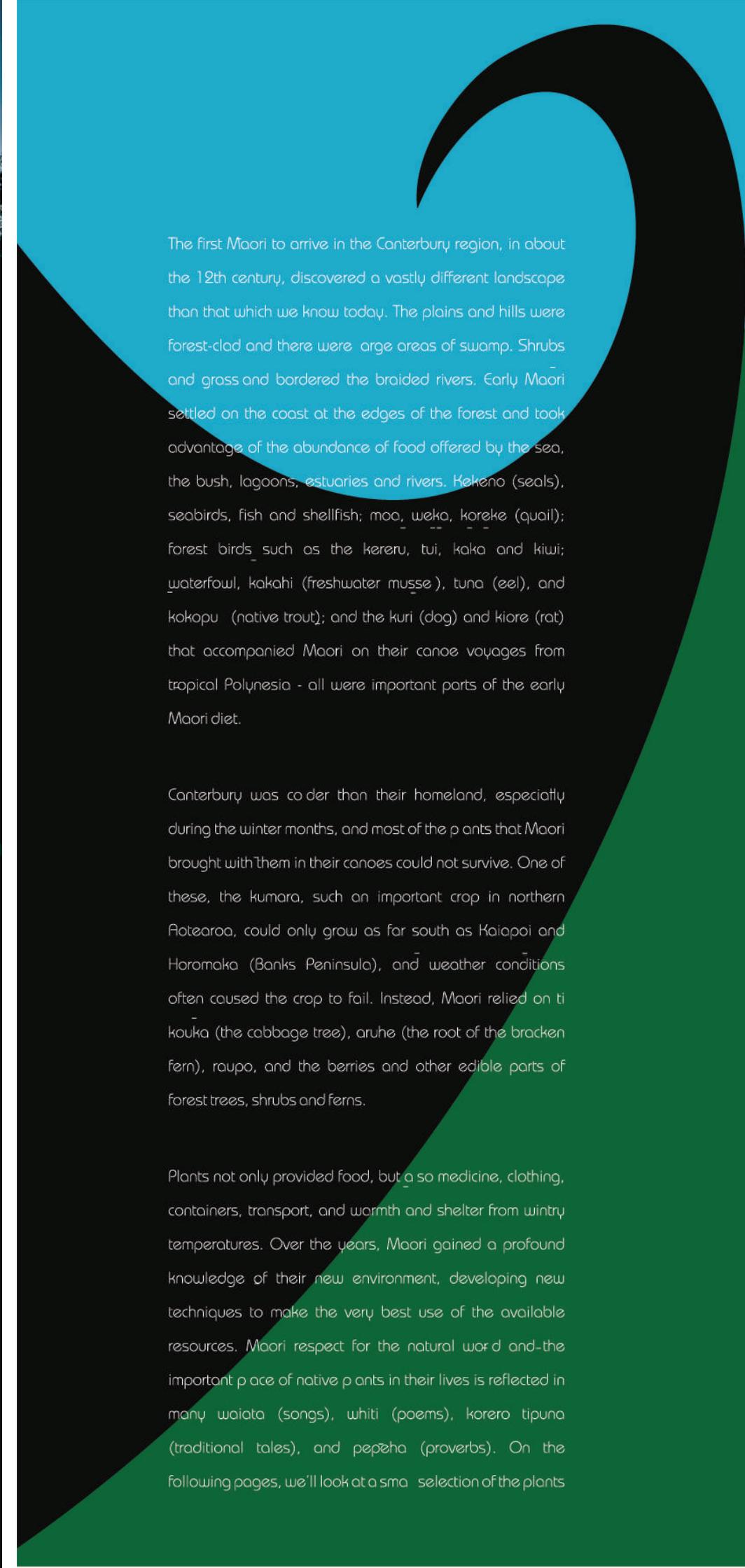


*Hutia Te Rito*

*Hutia te rito ō te harakeke  
Kei hea te kōmako, e ko?*

*Ki mai ki ahau  
He aha te mea nui ō te ao katoa  
Maku e ki atu ki a koe -  
He tāngata  
He tāngata  
He tāngata*

*If the centre shoot of the flax were plucked  
Where will the bellbird fly?  
You tell me  
What is the most important thing in this world?  
I will tell you -  
'tis People, People, People*



The first Maori to arrive in the Canterbury region, in about the 12th century, discovered a vastly different landscape than that which we know today. The plains and hills were forest-clad and there were large areas of swamp. Shrubs and grass bordered the braided rivers. Early Maori settled on the coast at the edges of the forest and took advantage of the abundance of food offered by the sea, the bush, lagoons, estuaries and rivers. Kēkēno (seals), seabirds, fish and shellfish; moa, weka, korēke (quail); forest birds such as the kereru, tui, kaka and kiwi; waterfowl, kakahi (freshwater mussel), tuna (eel), and kokopu (native trout); and the kuri (dog) and kiore (rat) that accompanied Maori on their canoe voyages from tropical Polynesia - all were important parts of the early Maori diet.

Canterbury was colder than their homeland, especially during the winter months, and most of the plants that Maori brought with them in their canoes could not survive. One of these, the kumara, such an important crop in northern Aotearoa, could only grow as far south as Kaiapoi and Horomaka (Banks Peninsula), and weather conditions often caused the crop to fail. Instead, Maori relied on ti kouka (the cabbage tree), aruhe (the root of the bracken fern), raupo, and the berries and other edible parts of forest trees, shrubs and ferns.

Plants not only provided food, but also medicine, clothing, containers, transport, and warmth and shelter from wintry temperatures. Over the years, Maori gained a profound knowledge of their new environment, developing new techniques to make the very best use of the available resources. Maori respect for the natural world and the important place of native plants in their lives is reflected in many waiata (songs), whiti (poems), korero tipuna (traditional tales), and pepeha (proverbs). On the following pages, we'll look at a small selection of the plants

## Harakeke new zealand Flax *Phormium tenax*

Of all the native plants, our familiar flax, or harakeke, perhaps most deserves to be called 'taonga' (treasure). William Colenso, a 19th century missionary and naturalist, tells how astonished some Maori were to hear that there was no harakeke growing in England: "How is it possible to live there without it?" and "I would not dwell in a land such as that", they said.



Fortunately for early Māori, harakeke grew luxuriantly on the swampy parts of Ka Pākihi Whakatekatēka o Waitaha (the Canterbury Plains). Maori were already familiar with plants in their Polynesian homeland that had similar long, strap-like leaves and the women knew how to plait them to make containers and mats. One of their first priorities was for warm clothing and we can imagine that they might have initially plaited the leaves to make rough capes and skirts. Such garments would have been inflexible and uncomfortable to wear. By experimenting, women learnt that they could extract silky fibre (whitau) from the harakeke leaves by scraping with a shell. Women had brought with them knowledge of a weaving technique called whatu aho patahi, or single-pair twining, used in Polynesia to make fish traps. They used this method to weave the harakeke fibre into garments. Pieces of flax or other plants were then attached in thick layers on the outside of capes and gave great protection against the wind and rain.



Women later developed various weaving techniques for making exquisitely patterned kete (baskets) and kaitaka (fine cloaks with decorated borders). Kuri skins and bird feathers were among materials used for ornamentation. Other plants, such as the golden leaves of pingao, provided a lovely colour contrast for patterned work. Often the whitau was dyed before being woven. It was placed in water in which the crushed bark of certain trees had been placed. Black was the most widely used colour. To make sure the dye would last permanently, the whitau was placed, after its initial soaking with pokaka (*Eleocharpus hookerianus*) bark, in a swamp of black mud called parapara or paru. Such swamps of iron-rich mud are still highly valued today and are looked after with care and respect.

Fortunately, the traditional knowledge and skills relating to harakeke were kept alive by women weavers over the generations, and in recent years weaving, and other traditional crafts, have undergone an exciting revival.

The tough leaves of harakeke were also used to make sails, fishing nets, traps and lines, and bird-snares - essential items for harvesting the bounty of land and sea. It was always on hand for tying and lashing purposes and for quickly plaiting food platters that were used once and discarded. The leaves would soon rot into the ground, unlike the throw-away plastics of today.

The strength of the leaves was important in making straps and packs for carrying things - there were no horses to share the load. Māori made many forays in and from coastal camps



at river mouths to hunt moa and gather other foodstuffs. Of all their journeys, none were more important than the treks over mountain passes to collect pounamu (greenstone). This stone was renowned throughout Aotearoa for its hardness in tool making and its great beauty. Using broadly plaited straps of harakeke could lead kawē, a strong man could carry back a large piece of the precious stone from Awa Wakatipu (Dart River) or the Arahura River on the Poutini Coast (West Coast).

Although any bush of harakeke was used for every-day purposes such as tying or making disposable food baskets, particular leaf or fibre qualities were required for making cords, nets, mats, garments and high quality kete. As Maori became familiar with the harakeke bushes in



their environment, they found, for instance, that some bushes had long, bendy leaves, suitable for making whariki (mats); another might have leaves which were easily stripped to produce very soft and silky whitou, suitable to use in kaitaka; and the leaves of another might dry to an especially attractive shade. When these bushes were discovered, divisions were taken from them and planted in special plantations, pa-harakeke. They were carefully tended and kept going over the generations.

In the late spring, the harakeke bush sends up tall korari (stalks) with bunches of reddish flowers. The flowers produce lots of sweet, watery nectar called wai-korari, enjoyed by both tūī and people. Māori used wai-korari to sweeten the fibrous roots of tī (cabbage tree) and the aruhe (bracken fern), both important food items.

One of the most frequently used routes to the inland lakes and mountains was up the Waitaki River. On the return journey, travellers would often float down the river on temporary, boat-shaped rafts (mokihi) made from thick bundles of dried korari or raupo.

Harakeke was also one of the important medicinal plants and very many uses have been recorded. The root was boiled and the thick, dark liquid applied to wounds to stop them from becoming infected. Pia harakeke, the gum found at the base of the leaves, was applied to more superficial cuts. The leaf bases and roots were roasted and pulped and applied to abscesses as a poultice, to draw out infection. A common remedy for constipation was to drink water in which flax roots had been boiled. It was effective, but the bitter taste was not enjoyed by the patient!

Little wonder that Colenso's Maori friends found it hard to understand how people could manage without harakeke! Today, harakeke is commonly planted as an ornamental and in restored wetlands. Two major natural groves are where Highway 1 intercepts the headwaters of the Irwell River, and behind Amberley Beach.



## Ti kouka cabbage tree *Cordyline australis*

Ti kouka at Burnside High School  
- an important meeting place  
and landmark.



Think of a tree that symbolises Canterbury, and the chances are that many would choose ti kouka, the cabbage tree. Its tall, elegant trunk, bearing flax-like leaves and sprays of sweet-smelling flowers, are a familiar sight in our landscape. Once, thousands of ti strode across the swamps of Ka Pōkihi Whakatekatēka o Waitaha and up into the lower foothills. They are now the most visible surviving native plant on the plains, dotted singly and in clumps, both on farmland and in urban areas. Some large specimens at least a century old survive in Ōtautahi (Christchurch City).

Ti kouka is another all-purpose plant. The leaves can be plaited like harakeke. They are much coarser and do not wear out so quickly. One of their special uses was for making paraerae (sandals). Patiti (tussōck) could be put in the paraerae to keep the wearer's feet warm. Ti leaves were often preferred over harakeke for making bird snares because of their durability.

The growing shoots were eaten and have a nutty taste. The most nutritious parts used for food, however, were the stems and top roots of the young trees, called kauru after being cooked. Protein foods (birds, fish and sēa mammals) were abundant, and relatively easy for Ngai Tahu to hunt. It took a lot more work to acquire and prepare the carbohydrates necessary for energy.

In the late spring and early summer, each hapū or clan would go to its own working pace and everybody would take part in cutting down and trimming the bark off young ti stems (up to about 2 metres tall), and digging up the tap-roots. The ti stems and roots were then stacked up to dry. The work parties would return later in the season and dig huge pits, called umu-ti, in which to steam the kauru. The umu-ti were up to two metres deep, much larger than a usual hangi. Wood was gathered to fill the hole, and greywacke stones were heated over the very hot fire. Once the fire had died down, the dried ti would be placed on top of the hot stones, covered with matting, splashed with water, then covered in soil. The

kauru would be left to steam for a couple of days before being dug up, beaten flat, and carefully dried. Once dried, they would keep for several years. Before being eaten, the kauru were resoftened in water, beaten, and shaken to extract the edible portion from the fibre. This soupy mixture of water and ti was called waitau kauru. The kauru was also mixed with aruhe (bracken fern root) and wai-korari (flax nectar) - eaten this way, it was by all accounts delicious.

Barry Fankhauser is an anthropologist who has studied the use of ti for food. We should not be surprised that he found that nutrient levels are at their highest in the tree during the traditional harvesting time. The carbohydrate breaks down into fructose, which is about twice as sweet as ordinary sugar. So for early Maori, the big team effort needed to produce the kauru was well worth it.

You can still see the remains of hundreds of umu-ti today, usually near streams, in the hills along the Waitaki River and in the foothills of Te Tari a te Kaumira (Hunters Hills), behind Waimate and Temuka. They are round sunken pits, mostly with raised rims.

Thin stems with leaves still attached were also used as a toboggan panukunuku. We can imagine children escaping the arduous task of preparing kauru, to sit on the slippery leaves, hang on to the stem and career down the hillsides!

'Ka whāti te ki, ka wānā te ti, ka rito te ti' 'the ti that is broken down sends forth a young shoot that develops and forms a new crown of leaves'. The ti was appreciated for its ability to resprout from the base after fire or after being cut down. Perhaps this ability to renew itself is why it came to have an important role as a boundary marker and as a marker of burial grounds and other special and sacred places.

## Kōwhai

*Sophora microphylla*

T

he flowering of trees was often used to predict the likely weather for the next season. On Horomaka (Banks Peninsula), the beautiful yellow low-flowered kōwhai was one of the first trees to come into bloom. If, in July, all the trees were flowering brightly, a good season was predicted to follow. Kōwhai may still be found on Horomaka, in Putaringamotu (Riccarton Bush), south of Kaikoura in the Hunderlees, and along the flood plains of the major braided rivers.

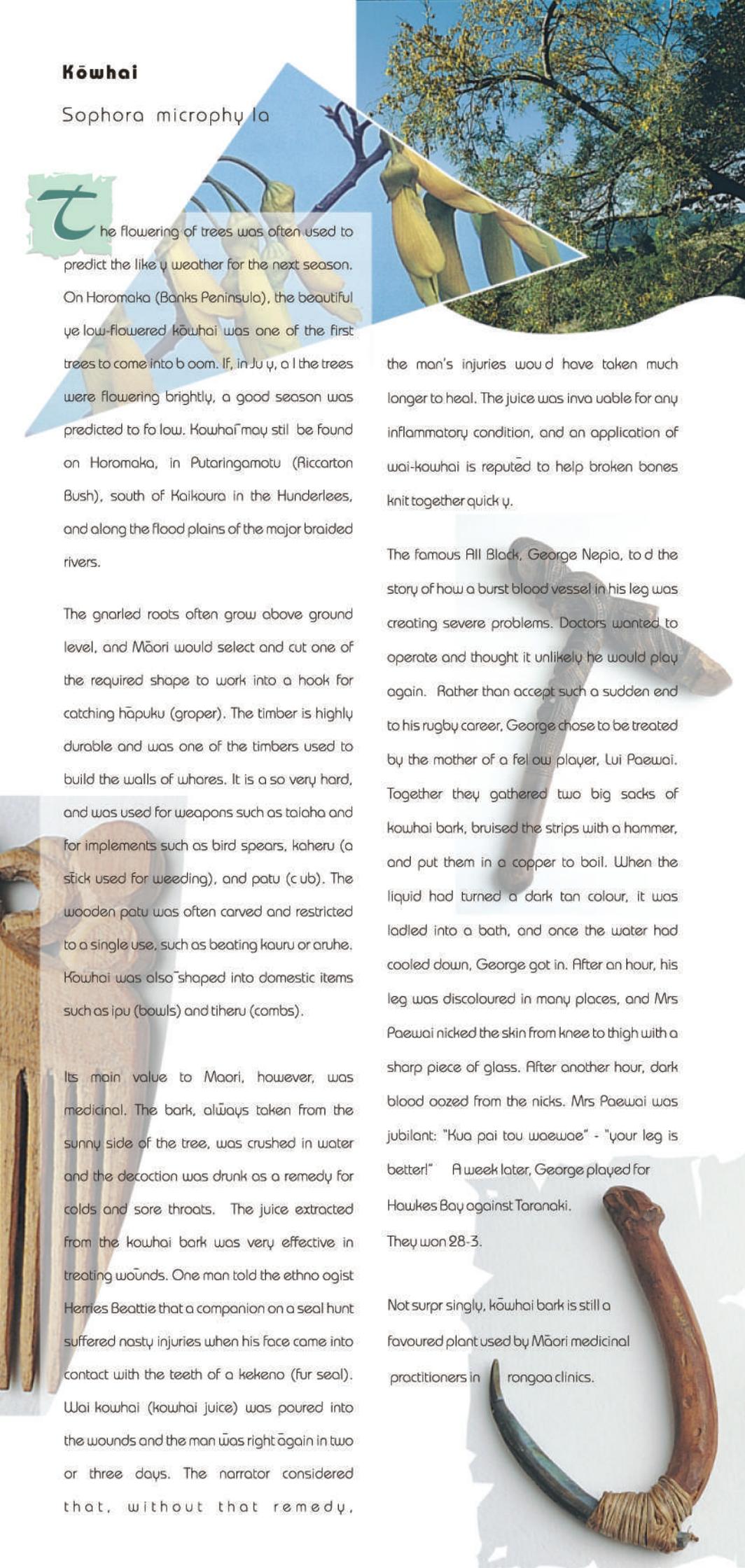
The gnarled roots often grow above ground level, and Māori would select and cut one of the required shape to work into a hook for catching hāpuku (gropers). The timber is highly durable and was one of the timbers used to build the walls of whares. It is also very hard, and was used for weapons such as taiaha and for implements such as bird spears, kaheru (a stick used for weeding), and patu (club). The wooden patu was often carved and restricted to a single use, such as beating kauru or aruhe. Kōwhai was also shaped into domestic items such as ipu (bowls) and tiheru (combs).

Its main value to Māori, however, was medicinal. The bark, always taken from the sunny side of the tree, was crushed in water and the decoction was drunk as a remedy for colds and sore throats. The juice extracted from the kōwhai bark was very effective in treating wounds. One man told the ethnologist Herries Beattie that a companion on a seal hunt suffered nasty injuries when his face came into contact with the teeth of a kekenu (fur seal). Wai kōwhai (kōwhai juice) was poured into the wounds and the man was right again in two or three days. The narrator considered that, without that remedy,

the man's injuries would have taken much longer to heal. The juice was invaluable for any inflammatory condition, and an application of wai-kōwhai is reputed to help broken bones knit together quickly.

The famous All Black, George Nepia, told the story of how a burst blood vessel in his leg was creating severe problems. Doctors wanted to operate and thought it unlikely he would play again. Rather than accept such a sudden end to his rugby career, George chose to be treated by the mother of a fellow player, Lui Paewai. Together they gathered two big sacks of kōwhai bark, bruised the strips with a hammer, and put them in a copper to boil. When the liquid had turned a dark tan colour, it was ladled into a bath, and once the water had cooled down, George got in. After an hour, his leg was discoloured in many places, and Mrs Paewai nicked the skin from knee to thigh with a sharp piece of glass. After another hour, dark blood oozed from the nicks. Mrs Paewai was jubilant: "Kua pai tou waewae" - "your leg is better!" A week later, George played for Hawkes Bay against Taranaki. They won 28-3.

Not surprisingly, kōwhai bark is still a favoured plant used by Māori medicinal practitioners in rongoa clinics.



## Tōtara

*Podocarpus totara*



Of all the trees in Te wao nui a Tāne - the great forest of Tāne - none is more respected than totara, te rakau rangatira, the chiefly tree. Indeed, when a chief dies, one saying goes 'Ka hinga te totara o te wao nui a Tāne' 'the falling of the totara tree in the great forest of Tāne'. Even the wood is reddish - a colour associated with chieftainship.

The wood of the totara is straight-grained and easily worked. It is also one of the most durable timbers of the forest. Little wonder that it was the preferred wood for building, especially waka (canoes). So large is the totara, that a waka could be hollowed out of a single log. Often, a suitable young tree was selected years before it was required. The bark was stripped off down one side of the tree, and some of the wood removed to expose the sap. As the tree grew, the bark and young wood would swell on either side of the wound, creating a hollow - so giving a start to the slow and arduous task of shaping the hull.

The spirit of Tāne lives in each of the forest trees, so before a totara was felled, special rituals and karakia (prayers) were performed, to show respect for Tāne and to remove the tapu from his child. When the moment came to chop down the tree, the sharp, hard edge of tōki-pounamu, the greenstone adze, came into its own.

Constructing a waka was slow and highly skilled work. Totara wood was soft enough to allow very fine, detailed carving and waka usually had intricately carved figureheads. A large waka slicing through the water is a magnificent sight and a source of great pride to iwi.



The thick, stringy bark of totara was used as a special cover when preserving food. Kiore and birds such as kereru and weka were put in an ipu (bowl) and hot stones put on top. The ipu would be covered in a mat of harakeke or ti leaves. The animals would cook in their own fat. When cooked, the stones were removed and the ipu was covered with totara bark, firmly lashed down with vines (aka). Food preserved this way would keep for years. If a gift of preserved birds was to be sent some distance away, they would be put in a rimu-poha (a bag made from ke p), covered in totara bark, which could be carried on the back. In Murihiku (Southland), titi (muttonbirds) were usually preserved in rimu-poha, but this method was not so widely used in Canterbury, where there was better access to birds all year round.

Totara bark was so cleverly folded into a basket shape and used for holding water.

'E kora te totara e tu noa ki te parae, engari me tu ki roto i te wao'

'A totara tree is not found growing out in open country, but in the heart of the forest.' So a chief's proper place is in the midst of his people.

Totara, rakau rangatira, can still be seen on Horomaka, and in Peel Forest and Woodbury, near Geraldine.



## Raupō bulrush

*Typha orientalis*



Raupō, another all-purpose plant, was abundant in the wetlands of Ka Pōkahi Whakatekateka o Waitaha (the Canterbury Plains). You can find it still around the shores of Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere), in Travis Swamp, the Kaiapoi ponds and Cockayne Reserve.

Who would imagine today that the long, fluffy brown seed-head of the raupo provided a delicious food. At the height of summer, large parties of people camped near raupo swamps. Te Waihora was a favourite spot. Early in the morning, before the wind got up, the flower stalks would be picked and laid out to dry. After a few days, the pollen was sifted out, looking just like yellow mustard, mixed with a little water, formed into cakes and cooked in a hangi. The cake was sweet and light and reminded some early Europeans of gingerbread. Sometimes, the pollen was mixed with water to form a porridge.

At other times of the year, the koareare (root) was eaten. In the spring the young, tender roots (pitau) could be eaten raw. As the roots grew, they thickened and were then peeled like a banana to reveal the soft, white core. Koareare were eaten both raw and cooked. The fibres come out more easily when it is



cooked. The old people, when feeling out of sorts, would send the youngsters into the muddy swamps to collect koareare for them to chew on.

A shelter could be built quickly out of raupo stems and the dry leaves were commonly used for a thatching material. Mokihi (rafts) were made from bundles of raupo, as well as korari. The spongy leaves were put on top of the raft to make it comfortable for the passengers.

The fluffy down was used as a light covering for wounds and sores.



Poi are traditionally made from raupo. The dried leaves form the outer wrapping and the fluffy seed head is used for the stuffing.



**koromiko, kōkōmuka**  
**Hebe salicifolia**  
and other similar **Hebe** species



Koromiko or kōkōmuka is a shrub with thinnish, willow-like leaves and long sprays of white flowers. Various forms of koromiko can be found from the coasts to the mountain tops. If you have a garden at home, the chances are that a koromiko will be there somewhere!

'He koromiko te wahie e taona ai te moa' - 'Koromiko wood was used to cook moa'. The hard wood of koromiko gave out an intense heat, so was used to heat the oven stones when cooking moa.

But it is not for its wood that koromiko is so renowned. The leaves, especially the young buds at the top, have long been recognized as a very effective cure for diarrhoea.

In the late 19th century, an epidemic of patients with stubborn diarrhoea (torohi) filled Christchurch Hospital. The doctors were unable

to cope with their sheer number until the traditional Maori remedy was used. Up to 12 soft leaves were chewed raw by a patient, and the juice swallowed. Relief was usually very rapid.

In World War I, koromiko leaves were sent to soldiers serving in the Middle East, where upset stomachs were common.

Sometimes a particular tree or rock was regarded as sacred, inhabited by a spirit. Passing travellers would pick a twig or small branch of a green shrub as an offering. Koromiko was one of the plants used for this and other ceremonial occasions.



## Pīngao golden sand sedge *Desmoschoenus spiralis*



Once, at the beginning of time, Tangaroa, guardian of the sea, quarrelled with his brother Tāne Mahuta, guardian of the forests. Tangaroa was jealous of Tāne Mahuta's success in separating Ranginui, Sky Father, from Papa-tua-nuku, Earth Mother. Tāne Mahuta tried to end the conflict, and, as a sign of peace, he plucked out his eyebrows and gave them to Tangaroa. But Tangaroa would not forgive him and flung the eyebrows back at his brother. There they remained on the sand dunes, between the domains of forest and sea - curving tufts of narrow, sharp, grass-like leaves called pīngao.

The wonderful colour of the leaves distinguishes pīngao from other vegetation on the dunes - green-gold in winter turning bright orange to deep yellow as the summer progresses. This is the traditional Māori weaver's gold. The leaves need no further processing and provide a vibrant contrast to other fibres when used in tukutuku paneling and in decorative kete, whāriki and pōtāe (hats).

The leaves are tough - and in the past were woven into poho-taupā - a chest protection worn to protect warriors when fighting with spears and taiaha. Down south, they were used to make pōkeka (rainproof capes) and eggings.

The growing shoots have a peasant flavour and were sometimes eaten by travelers. Today, introduced animals, such as rabbits, hares and cattle find them all too palatable! Pīngao has largely disappeared from many dune systems, though it is still found on Kaitorete Spit. It is being replanted at New Brighton and elsewhere, and its golden leaves may become a common sight again, gleaming in the late summer sun.



## Kahikatea, Kahika white pine Dacrycarpus dacrydiodes

Of all the trees in the original forest of Ka

Pāikihi Whakatekateka o Waitaha (Canterbury Pains), none stood taller than the kahikatea.

Today, you can still see this giant in Putaringamotu (Riccarton Bush), where the oldest trees have watched over human activities for at least 600 years.

Kahikatea is a conifer, or cone bearing tree. The

male and female cones are borne on separate trees. Dacrycarpus means 'weeping fruit', a

name that makes a lot of sense if we look at a female tree in fruit. Each branch ends in

numerous small, drooping stems. Each stem ends in a bright orange red, swollen 'berry',

with the bluish-black cone or 'seed' perched on top. Although very small, the fleshy orange

'berries' (but not the seed) have a sweetish, oily taste and were eaten in large quantities by

Maori. They used makē shift ladders and their very best climbers to get the fruit (koro),

because it does not fall easily by shaking the branches.

The berries of kahikatea and other trees

attracted birds and kiore, so that some of the best hunting was done in the fruiting season. A

well known proverb reflects the dangers faced by those who climbed the forest giants



to gather berries or to snare birds: 'He toa piki rākau he kai na te pakiakai!' - 'A brave man who climbs trees is food for their roots!'

'He iti hoki te mokoroa, nāna i kakati te kahikatea' - 'the huhu grub is very small, but it

eats the kahikatea'. This proverb tells us that persistence can win in the end, even against the

mighty! It also reminds us that

the kahikatea sapwood, though

straight grained and easy

to work, is soft and not

durable, so was rarely

used for building or

canoe-making.

The resinous māpara

or heartwood,

however, was

much more useful.

It was hard, so

could be used for

various implements.

It split easily and

thinly, and was tied

in tight bundles and

set alight as a torch.

Such torches (rama) were

used at night for seeing, a

major activity in many of the

Canterbury waterways. The resin

itself was often chewed as gum.

When the māpara was burnt, it produced a

blue-black soot which was used in tattooing.



## Rauaruhe bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum*

aruhe = 'fernroot', the underground stem of bracken fern



In the early days, kākāpō was on the menu along with other birds. But kākāpō is a secretive bird, who holes up during the day in dense undergrowth, and is hard to find. One of the signs of kākāpō's presence was pieces of gnawed aruhe (fernroot) lying about.

This plant

refuse was a welcome sight - not just because of kākāpō, but because a source of good aruhe might be close at hand.

The root (really the underground stem) of the coarse-leaved bracken fern was the most valued plant food. 'Ka ora karikari aruhe, ka mate tariki kakā' - 'Fernroot diggers enjoy good health, while parrot snarers die'. This proverb says that aruhe was a staple food, available all year round, unlike many other foods that could only be obtained at certain seasons.

The bracken grows best in deep, rich soil and can produce roots nearly half a metre long and about 2.5 cm thick. The best roots contain lots of starchy meal, but not too many fibres or stringy bits. The area around Wairewa (Lake Forsythe) was famed for the big, luscious aruhe that grew there. Another excellent source was at Waihao (Morven), in Tai O Arai Te Uru (South Canterbury).

When the aruhe was dug up, it wasn't eaten immediately. It was put on high platforms to dry, then sorted into different grades, and stored.

dry, then sorted into different grades, and stored. When it was wanted, it was soaked for a while in water, then roasted in the embers of an open fire. A woman who lived at Korotuahaka (Waitaki River mouth), said that aruhe was never cooked on the range or fire inside the house, but always outside. If the aruhe was cooked inside, it was said that the fishermen wouldn't catch any fish.

After roasting, the bark was scraped off and the aruhe was pounded into a lump. It could be chewed just like that, and people would spit out the fibres. Often, it was sweetened with wai-korari (flax honey) or kauru (prepared ti roots) or the juice squeezed from tutu berries. Sometimes, it was mashed into tuna fat, kiore oil, or titi fat. Aruhe mashed with inanga (whitēbait) was a popular dish. Aruhe was very sustaining and a popular food for travelling. To prepare fernroot for a journey, the fibres were removed by hand, and the starch was formed into a roll and roasted again. These rolls or cakes were called komeke.

The growing shoots of rauaruhe were cooked and eaten too, though they weren't as popular as the succulent tips of other ferns, such as the mouku (hen and chicken fern).

A pitopito (amulet) of fernroot could be worn around the neck to help ward off headaches and colds.



**Mānuka, kahikātoa**  
*Leptospermum scoparium*

**Kānuka**  
*Kunzea ericoides*

**Akeake**  
*Dodonea viscosa*



ke, ake, ake - forever and ever. A good phrase to use to describe the woods of manuka, kānuka and akeake, which were valued for their strength and durability. Big clumps of manuka and kānuka grew throughout the region, while akeake grew as far south as Kaitorete Spit.

Akeake was a preferred wood for making pronged eel spears (matarau). You might see the raupo move as the tuna (eel) threaded its way through the swamp, and quickly spear it with the matarau. Spears with a single, sharpened point were also used. On the side of rivers like the Waikirikiri (Selwyn) and Waiwhio, manuka or kānuka 'fences' were made to trap the tuna on their heke (migration) or on their return (hoki). The sticks were about three or four metres long and set into the water about three centimetres apart. The eels were brought ashore in hinaki, large eel pots made of strong vines (akatea). In Te Waihora and Wairewa, blind-ended drains were dug to intercept some of the tuna as they headed for the sea during the autumn migration. The tuna were split open and sun-dried over racks of manuka poles. Eels are still caught this way in Wairewa today, but are much less abundant.

Other essential tools and implements were fashioned from manuka, kānuka and akeake, such as bird spears, wooden sticks for digging aruhe, beaters, clubs, paddles, brooms and bowls. The mallet (tukituki) used to hit the chisel when carving was made from akeake. A hook 'strong enough to hold a wha e' could be made from a manuka root. 'He iti, he iti kahikātoa' - 'Though he is small, he is small like manuka' was said of a short, but strong man.



The seeds of manuka were chewed and the juice swallowed as an effective antidote for diarrhoea. The essential oil has strong antiseptic properties. The leaves make a refreshing tea as the early European settlers discovered - hence the common name, tea-tree. Try it sometime when you're out camping. Take a sprig of manuka and put it in a billy of boiling water. Let stand for just a minute or so (not too long, or the taste becomes a little bitter). Enjoy!



Today, though, the once common manuka has all but disappeared from the Canterbury landscape. You can see it still in Travis Swamp. Kānuka is still prevalent in some locations such as around the Eyrewell Plantation, and akeake may be found on Horomaka and on the northern Canterbury coast around Nape Nape.



# SIGNIFICANT NATURAL SITES IN CANTERBURY

