Ururangi Merope

Waipuna-ā-rangi Electra

Hiwa-i-te-rangi

Caleano

Waitī Maia

Waitā Taygeta Pōhutukawa Sterope Tupu-ā-rangi Atlas

Matariki Alcyone **Tupu-ā-nuku** Pleione

M45: The Pleiades Star Cluster image credit: Robert Gendler

Rohutkawa Metrosideros excelsa

Amember of the Myrtle family

By Tim Allsop

New Zealand Christmas Tree Iron Wood

Grows up to 20 metres high with a crown of 35 metres across.

Usually splits into several leaders at ground level – a single trunk is rare.

Prefers warmer, drier areas close to the sea. Aerial roots form out from the trunks and settle in small pockets of soil.



Pohutukawa in Maori culture

- Regarded as a
- Used for beaters and other small items needing weight and hardness
- In mythology the red flowers are the blood of Tawhaki who fell to earth after an unsuccessful mission to heaven.
- There is an ancient Pohutukawa on the cliffs at Cape Reinga where traditionally the souls of the dead depart on their journey to Hawaiiki.
- Pohutu means 'soaked by spray'.



Distribution

- Natural habitat On the North Island north of a line from New Plymouth to Gisborne. It is a protected species in this area.
- It is now widely distributed throughout the country particularly in coastal areas.
- Plantings are continuing further south encouraged by Project Crimson.
- Probably originated in Australia but does not occur there now.
- It has been distributed widely and become well established in California and South Africa's Cape Province.

Comparative densities of selected timbers

Timber	Density (kg/m3)
Purpleheart	1050
Black Maire	995
Pohutukawa	950
Beech	800
Walnut	680
Cedar	450
Pine	420

Potential threats

- Possums these browse on seedlings and foliage to the extent of killing the trees
- Myrtle Rust a fungal infection that has caused significant mortality.





Pohutukawa on wood turning G MacIntyre





Some of my Pohutukawa turning



Bibliography

- NAW data sheet
- Woodturning in New Zealand Brian Massey 1987
- New Zealand Timbers N C Clifton 1990
- Project Crimson Pohutukawa Fact Sheet