

Written by Julia Rata-Te Raki and Joshua Bristowe



Harakeke booklet

He Muka Takata

The strands of flax within the people



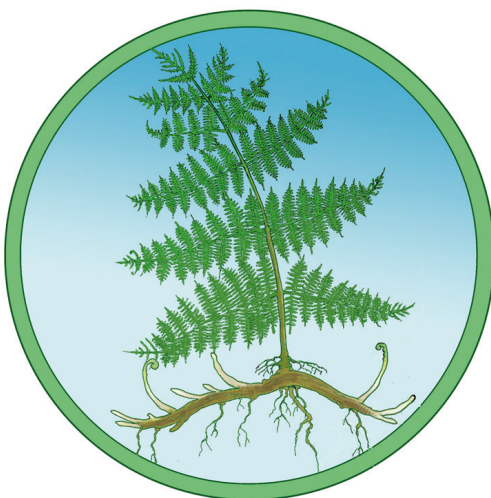
Ranginui
Sky Father



Papatūānuku
Earth Mother



Haumia-tiketike
God of Uncultivated Foods



Aruhe
Rhizome of Bracken-fern*



Harakeke
NZ Flax**

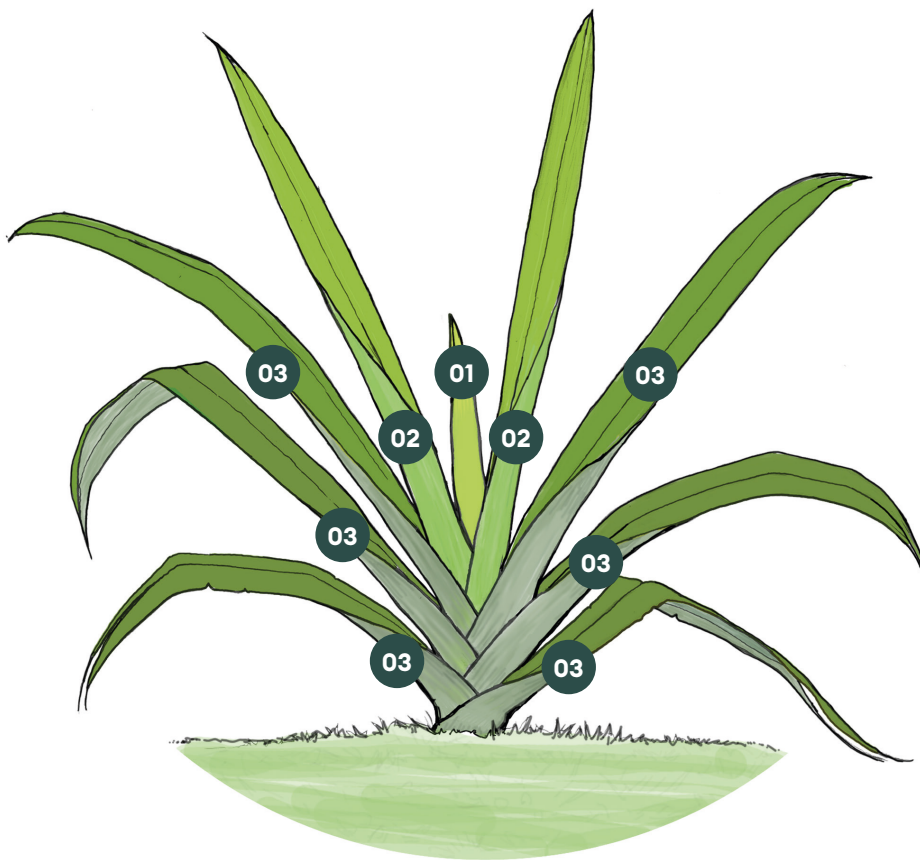
*** See page 7 for botanical names.

Te Whakapapa O Ngā Harakeke

Haumia-tiketike is the offspring of Ranginui (Sky father) and Papatūānuku (Earth mother). The atua (God) of uncultivated foods and fern root. The parent of harakeke.

Te Whakapapa Whānau O Ngā Harakeke

Each fan of the harakeke plant represents a whānau in Te Ao Māori. The middle leaf is the rito (child) and it is protected by the awhi rito (parents) leaves. All other leaves represent the tīpuna (grandparents). Not taking the three middle leaves will sustain the future growth of the plant. Each whānau shares common roots from which the plant derives its strength and stability.



- 01** Rito
Child
- 02** Awhi rito
Parents
- 03** Tīpuna
Grandparents

Whakatauki

Unuhia te rito o te pū harakeke, kei hea te korimako tangi ai?
If you pluck out the heart of the flax bush, where will the bellbird sing?

Translation next page: 01. Food storage house 02. Communal sleeping house 03. Kelp bags preserving mutton birds 04. Coarse harakeke mats, for covering earth floors 05. Fortified fence 06. Communal sleeping area 07. Open plaited basket 08. Harakeke mat to cover food in hangi or umu 09. Basket for gathering and storing kai 10. Basket for gathering shellfish 11. Anchor stone 12. Kēreru snare 13. Raft 14. Eel trap 15. Sail 16. Kiwi feathered cloak 17. Clothes 18. Basket for gathering and storing root vegetables 19. Fortified fence 20. Woven fishing net 21. Crayfish traps 22. Poi 23. Harakeke stem for playing games 24. Cape of red feathers 25. Water or food container 26. Meeting house 27. Ornamental lattice work 28. Stone wrapped in woven harakeke 29. Harakeke ceremonial mat 30. Clothes weaving 31. Woven harakeke baby bassinet 32. Rat snare 33. Rain cape 34. Harakeke skirt

01. Pātaka 02. Wharepuni 03. Poha tītī 04. Whāriki 05. Pā Tūwatawata 06. Wharepuni 07. Kete tātahi
 08. Tāpaki 09. Kete kumara 10. Kupenga kete 11. Punga 12. Waka Kererū 13. Mōkihi 14. Hīnaki
 15. Rā 16. Kahu kiwi 17. Kākahu 18. Kete waikawa 19. Pā tūwatawata 20. Kupenga
 21. Tāruke koura 22. Poi 23. Ti rākau 24. Kākahu kura 25. Hue 26. Wharenuī
 27. Tukutuku 28. Poi rākau 29. Takapau 30. Kākahu weaving 31. Wahakura 32. Paepae kiore
 33. Pākē 34. Piupiu



Karakia

One of many karakia that can be used in harvest and cleaning of harakeke

Tēnei mātou i inoi atu ka koe e Tāne Mahuta
Nāu ēnei rawa kua poipoia
Nāu ēnei hua kua whakatipu
Tēnei au he piapono whare tohungatanga raranga
Homai ngā rau o tenei taonga te harakeke.

*We are praying to you Tane Mahuta
For these things that you have nurtured
And for these fruits you have grown
We are dedicated students
From the place of the old weavers
Give me some leaves of this treasure the harakeke.*

Tikanga (Protocols)

Protocols for harvesting and cleaning harakeke:

- Say a karakia (provided above) before any mahi starts; give thanks to the plant, papatūānuku and ranginui for the bounty you are about to receive.
- Don't cut harakeke when you (a wahine) have your mate wahine (menstrual cycle) or hapū (pregnant).
- Never cut the Rito (child) or the Awhi Rito (parents).
- Don't step over or on the cut flax; harakeke is a highly prized taonga (treasure) and must be respected at all times.

Kawa (Rules)

- Check weather; only cut during the day and never when it's wet or frosty.
- Do not cut during flowering.
- No food can be taken into the pā harakeke.
- Have correct tools ready; flat blade knife or box cutter (no scissors, pruners or serrated knives).
- Always cut the leaves on a downward angle, away from the fan (see 1-6).
- Always cut the leaves as low to the base of the fan as possible.
- Cut leaves (Tīpuna 03) evenly on both sides of each fan.
- Only cut what you will use. You can leave a layer of tīpuna as long as the plant is kept even.
- Traditionally discarded leaves were put back into the pā harakeke. Now it is common to dispose of leaves as green waste.

Harvesting & Cleaning Harakeke

Tools needed: Sharp utility knife and garden gloves

1



Select the harakeke you want to harvest and clean, put your gloves on and have your knife ready.

2



Give a karakia.

3



Make your cut at the base of the leaf at a steep downward angle away from the fan.

4



Harvest the leaves on both sides evenly. Remove/clean all the rotting, dead and yellow leaves from the fan.

5



Once you have harvested enough leaves, sort into two piles; one you want to keep and one for disposal.

6



Bundle the 'keep' pile using strips of harakeke. Secure firmly at the bottom and loosely at the top.

7



Discard the disposal leaves. You are good to go!

Page 2 botanical names:

**Pteridium esculentum*

***Phormium tenax*

Naku te rourou, nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi.

With my food basket, with your food basket, the people will thrive.

It is with great joy that we present to you this booklet, He Muka Takata. This work came from a collaborative vision Julia Rata-Te Raki (Ngāti Maniapoto) and Joshua Bristowe (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou) had, looking to explore the kaupapa of the two interlinked knowledge systems of mātauranga Māori and putāio (science, in this case chemistry). When first developing this mahi and exploring the possibilities of research with harakeke we quickly identified a key priority, to educate people on the importance of harakeke as a taonga (treasured) plant to Māori. Making sure to include its whakapapa and the tikanga particularly in relation to caring for and gathering harakeke safely and correctly.

This work was done together with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki as Julia is connected to the rūnaka through her husband and children's whakapapa, as well as Kane Holmes Haweturi who gifted us the name He Muka Takata. However, the mātauranga specific to this booklet comes from Julia Rata-Te Raki handed down through her whānau and tīpuna of Ngāti Maniapoto. This is by no means an exhaustive or complete guide to harakeke, and the mātauranga, tikanga, and kawa will vary between iwi, hapū, and rohe. But we hope that this booklet inspires and grows your love of harakeke while perhaps teaching you something new.

Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro, nōna te ngāhere. Ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōnā te ao.
The bird that eats the miro berry has the forest, but the bird that eats knowledge has the world.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou,
Julia Rata-Te Raki and Joshua Bristowe

Ōtepoti, February 2024

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