# Planting guide for native birds, lizards, butterflies and moths using Porirua native species Robyn Smith, 2021, updated July 2025

# **Trees**

Coast tolerance E - exposed P - part shelter S- sheltered	Māori/ common name	Scientific name	Plant info	Link to photos on NZ Plant Conservation Network
E, P	Akiraho/ golden akeake	Olearia paniculata	Grows to 6m Good specimen tree but can be hedged Interesting, grooved bark Highly scented flowers in autumn	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/olearia-paniculata/
E, P	Ngaio	Myoporum laetum	Grows to 10m Wide spreading umbrella form Pink fruit Poisonous leaves and sap	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/myoporum-laetum/
E, P	Taupata	Coprosma repens	Grows to 8 metres Can be hedged Bright orange fruit eaten by kererū and other birds	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/coprosma-repens/
E, P	Rawhiritoa/ Kānuka	Kunzea amathicola	Coastal species of kānuka Up to 15m Can flower anytime of the year Beautifully sculptured by salt wind when exposed	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/kunzea-amathicola/
P, S	Kānuka	Kunzea robusta	Can get to 30m but only if sheltered otherwise much shorter.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/kunzea-robusta/

			Stringy bark when mature Flowers in summer	
E, P, S	Cook Strait	Melicytus	Grows from 0.5m to 4m depending on	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	māhoe	orarius	exposure to the coast.	ecies/melicytus-orarius/
			Very tough.	
			Flowers and fruits on the underside of	
			branches.	
			Small fragrant flowers in late Spring - good	
			for insects and lizards	
			Fruits in late summer/Autumn - good for	
			lizards and birds	
E, P, S	Kōwhai	Sophora	Up to 20 in sheltered places, smaller in	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		chathamica	more exposed sites	ecies/sophora-chathamica/
			Bright yellow flowers in early Spring	
			August/September	
			Favourite of tūī and korimako (bellbird) and	
			kererū and butterflies.	
E, P, S	Mānuka/	Leptospermu	Can get to 5m in sheltered sites but in very	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Tea tree	m scoparium	exposed sites grow to only 1 m.	ecies/leptospermum-scoparium-
			Pink or white flowers in early summer and	var-scoparium/
			again in winter which are pollinated by	
			insects.	
E, P, S	Tī kōuka/	Cordyline	Up to 20m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Cabbage tree	australis	Fast growing	ecies/cordyline-australis/
			Highly scented flowers	
			Flowers in Spring, fruits in summer	
P, S	Kaikōmako	Pennantia	Up to 8 m.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		corymbosa	Fast growing	ecies/pennantia-corymbosa/
		_	Highly scented flowers sought by korimako	
P, S	Poroporo	Solanum	Up to 5m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		laciniatum		ecies/solanum-laciniatum/

			Dark green foliage which purple flowers. The fruit turns orange when ripe and is a good food source for many birds.	
P, S	Māhoe/ Whitey wood	Melicytus ramiflorus	Up to 15m Abundant yellow-white flowers in springearly summer pollinated by insects and lizards Abundant purple fruit in autumn good food source for birds	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/melicytus-ramiflorus/
P, S	Wharangi	Melicope ternata	Up to 5 m Fresh bright green foliage Scented white flowers in Spring	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/melicope-ternata/
P, S	Maukoro/ Tainoka/ Common broom	Carmichaelia australis	Grows 2 to 8m Flattened branches act as leaves but real leaves are sparse and tiny Fragrant flowers in Spring – good for lizards and insects	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carmichaelia-australis/
P, S	Putaputawētā	Carpodetus serratus	Grows to 10m Marbled leaves Scented white flowers pollinated by insects and lizards Purple berries from late summer – good for birds	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/carpodetus-serratus/
P, S	Houhere, lacebark	Hoheria sexstylosa or	Small tree found from Waikato to Wellington with highly scented white flowers. Butterflies congregate on the flowers.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/hoheria-sexstylosa/

### Palm

P, S	Nīkau	Rhopalostylis	Grows to 15m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		sapinda	Flowers are highly fragrant November to	ecies/rhopalostylis-sapida/
			March – good food source for insects and	
			birds	
			Ripe fruit is bright red and a favourite with	
			kererū April to July.	

## **Shrubs**

Coast	Māori/	Scientific	Plant info	Link to photos on NZ Plant
tolerance	common	name		conservation Network
E - exposed	name			
P – part				
shelter				
S- sheltered				
E, P, S	Mingimingi	Coprosma	Can get to 6m in sheltered site but much	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		propinqua var	lower in exposed areas.	ecies/coprosma-propinqua-var-
		. propinqua	Branches are tightly twisted in exposed areas	propinqua/
			Very good habitat and food source for lizards	
			Small native bird species love the blue fruit in	
			late summer/autumn	
E, P, S	Mingimingi	Coprosma	This is a slightly different form of <i>C</i> .	https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/4
		propinqua var	propinqua var propinqua.	14192-Coprosma-propinqua-
		latiuscula	Depending on the exposure to salt wind, can	<u>latiuscula</u>
			grow from almost a flat pancake form to a	
			large bushy shrub.	
			Very good habitat and food source for lizards	

			Small native bird species love the blue fruit in late summer/autumn.	
E, P, S	Twiggy coprosma/ Red currant bush	Coprosma rhamnoides	Can get to 2 m in sheltered areas but usually around 0.5 m in very exposed sites Very dense foliage in exposed sites Red fruit in winter providing food for lizards and small birds	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/coprosma-rhamnoides/
E, P, S	Cook Strait kōwhai	Sophora molloyi	Can grow to 3m in sheltered sites but much lower and more spreading in exposed sites. Flowers in late winter Loved by tūī and korimako Can be stripped by the native kōwhai caterpillar but the plant is hardly ever killed by defoliation. Usually more affected during drought. (Please do not use insecticides)	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sophora-molloyi/ https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/tools-and-resources/identification/what-is-this-bug/kowhai-moth-caterpillar/
E, P, S	Tauhinu	Ozothamnus leptophyllus	Grows to 3m Beautiful, sculptured bark Produces huge numbers of highly scented flowers. Supports the native Cassinia tephritid fly and other native insects and lizards.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ozothamnus-leptophyllus/ https://nzacfactsheets.landcareresearch.co.nz/factsheet/InterestingInsects/Cassinia-tephritid-flyAustrotephritis-cassinae.html
E, P, S	Thick- leaved māhoe	Melicytus crassifolius	Grows up to 1.5 m wide spreading shrub Flowers and fruits on the underside of branches. Small highly fragrant flowers in Spring - good for insects and lizards Fruits in mid to late Summer - good for lizards and birds	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/melicytus-crassifolius/

E, P, S	Koromiko	Veronica	Grows between 0.5m to 2m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Hebe	(Hebe) stricta var. stricta	Flowers between July and October are sought after by insects.  Very tough In a garden setting an annual light prune after flowering keeps it bushy	ecies/veronica-stricta-var-stricta/
E, P	Kōkōmuka/ Shore hebe	Veronica (Hebe) elliptica	Grows to 1 m. Very tough and salt tolerant Large white flowers Does not like sheltered sites	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/veronica-elliptica/
E, P	Tātaraheke/ Sand coprosma	Coprosma acerosa	Low sprawling shrub grows to 1 metre tall New growth can come up from underground rhizomes so you either need plenty of room for it to spread or contain it by surrounding the garden bed with concrete. Blue or white fruit are produced only on female plants in late summer	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/coprosma-acerosa/
E, P, S	Waiū atua/ Shore spurge	Euphorbia glauca	Up to 1m Has attractive glaucous (blue-green) foliage. New growth can come up from underground rhizomes so you either need plenty of room for it to spread or contain it by surrounding the garden bed with concrete.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/euphorbia-glauca/
E, P, S	Coastal tree daisy	Olearia solandri	Grows to 3m but smaller in exposed sites Yellow-green foliage Trims well - hedge Heavily scented flowers in summer – good for lizards and insects	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/olearia-solandri/

E, P, S	Shrubby	Muehlenbecki	Grows to 4m tall and can spread as wide	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	tororaro/	a astonii	Deciduous over winter	ecies/muehlenbeckia-astonii/
	Wiggywig		Sparkles in the rain	
			Great hedging plant	
			Tiny highly scented flowers in summer – good	
			for insects and lizards	
			Tiny fruit in Autumn – good for lizards and	
			small birds	
E, P	Taramea/	Aciphylla	Grows to 1 metre tall but its flowering spike	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Kurikuri/	squarrosa	can be another 0.5m tall	ecies/aciphylla-squarrosa-var-
	Spaniard	var.	Very spikey so difficult to weed under and	squarrosa/
		squarrosa	around. Can use a garden for to hold leaves	
			back while weeding.	
			Striking blue/grey/green spikey leaves.	
			Highly scented flowers on female plants	
			pollinated by insects and lizards.	
E, P, S	Rauhuia/	Linum	Grows to 0.5m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	NZ linen flax	monogynum	Rauhuia is a woody subshrub which has a	ecies/linum-monogynum-var-
		var.	short life span of a few years but self-seeds	monogynum/
		monogynum	very freely.	
			It has large white flowers.	
			Although it looks delicate, it is a very tough	
			plant.	
			Pollinated by insects.	

## Climbers

Coast tolerance E - exposed P - part shelter S- sheltered	Māori/ common name	Scientific name	Plant info (All climbers like their roots in cool places but foliage in full sun)	Link to photos on NZ Plant Conservation Network
E, P, S	Puawānanga/ Coastal clematis	Clematis forsteri	White starry flowers in Spring – good for insects and lizards Fluffy wind dispersed seed on female plants in summer	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/clematis-forsteri/
P, S	Kōhia/ NZ passionfruit	Passiflora tetrandra	Flowers in late Spring-early Summer Bright orange fruit on female plants in summer – good bird food source	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/passiflora-tetrandra/
P, S	Kaiwhiria/ NZ jasmine	Parsonsia capsularis	Highly fragrant flowers in Spring - good for insects and lizards. Long brown pods with fluffy wind dispersed seed in Autumn	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/parsonsia-capsularis-var- capsularis/
P, S	Akakiore/ NZ jasmine	Parsonsia heterophylla	Highly fragrant flowers in early summer - good for insects and lizards.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/parsonsia-heterophylla/
E,P,S	Akatea	Metrosideros perforata	Woody climber. Needs plenty of light. Has white or sometime pink highly nectivorous flowers.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/metrosideros-perforata/

E, P, S	Climbing rātā	Metrosideros	Needs a cool root run but will climb up trees	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
		fulgens	or fences.	ecies/metrosideros-fulgens/
			Has a long flowering period of highly	
			nectivorous red or orange flowers.	

# Flax/grasses/sedges

Coast	Māori/	Scientific	Plant info	Link to photos on NZ Plant
tolerance	common	name		Conservation Network
E - exposed	name			
P – part				
shelter				
S- sheltered				
E, P, S	Wharariki/	Phormium	Grows to 2m tall	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Coastal flax	cookianum	Tough coastal flax.	ecies/phormium-cookianum-
		subsp.	Continually grows new fans on its sides so	subsp-hookeri/
		hookeri	continues to spread.	
			Droopy leaves.	
			Highly fragrant yellow flowers in	
			September/October – a favourite for tūī and	
			korimako	
			Long twisted seed pods in early summer	
E, P, S	Harakeke/	Phormium	Can grows up to 5m in sheltered fertile soil.	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Swamp flax	tenax	Less tall in more exposed sites.	ecies/phormium-tenax/
			Grows in wetlands, on river margins and in	
			dune swales (low lying areas behind the front	
			dune).	
			Continually grows new fans on its sides so	
			continues to spread.	

E, P, S	Toetoe/ Cliff toetoe	Austroderia fulvida	Erect leaves for two thirds of their length but can be droopy in the top third of the leaf. Highly fragrant red flowers in October November– a favourite for tūī and korimako Erect seed pods in December to March.  Leaves grow to 3 m Grows on coastal hillsides or stream margins Flowers September to November Fruit November to March	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/austroderia-fulvida/
E, P, S	Toetoe/ Swamp toetoe	Austroderia toetoe	Leaves grow to 3 m Grows in wetlands or stream margins Flowers November to February Fruits January to April	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/austroderia-toetoe/
E, P, S	Wī/ Silver tussock	Poa cita	Grows to 0.5m Hardy Clumpy tussock Looks good mass planted	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/poa-cita/
E, P, S	Orange sedge	Carex "Raotest"	Undescribed sedge which grows to 0.40m. Hardy Looks good mass planted In the open it is an orange colour, under shelter it is green.	No link as this is an undescribed species but is a local species
E, P, S	Wīwī/ Knobby clubrush	Ficinia nodosa	Grows to 1.2m Very hardy in any soil Green but can be orange tinged Spreads easily by seed	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp ecies/ficinia-nodosa/

E, P, S	Oioi/	Apodasmia	Grows to 1.5m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Jointed wire	similis	Erect, grey-green or red-green leaves	ecies/apodasmia-similis/
	rush		Flowers in November- December	
			Fruits January to March	
			Looks good mass planted	
			New growth from underground rhizomes so you either need plenty of room for it to spread or contain it by surrounding the garden bed with concrete.	
S	Tupare	Gahnia	Grows to 3m	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Maunga/	xanthocarpa	Likes moist or wet sites	ecies/gahnia-xanthocarpa/
	Gahnia		Like shade or semi-shade	
			Flowers in summer	
			Black shiny seed	

### Groundcovers

Coast tolerance E - exposed P - part shelter S- sheltered	Māori/ common name	Scientific name	Plant info	Link to photos on NZ Plant Conservation Network
E, P, S	Horokaka/ NZ	Disphyma	Hardy trailing succulent herb	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	ice plant	<i>australe</i> subsp.	Leaves are either green or red-green	ecies/disphyma-australe-subsp-
		australe	Can root at every leaf node	australe/
			Flowers pink or pinky white	
			Nectivorous and pollinated by insects	

E, P, S	Pōhuehue/	Muehlenbeckia	Rampant groundcover which sprawls or will	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Wire vine	complexa var.	climb given the opportunity	ecies/muehlenbeckia-complexa-
		complexa	Looks good in a mass planting	var-complexa/
			Tiny highly scented flowers in summer –	·
			good for insects and lizards	
			Tiny fruit in Autumn – good for lizards and	
			small birds	
E, P, S	Pinātoro/	Pimelea	Very low growing sprawling plant	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	NZ daphne	prostrata	Blue-green foliage	ecies/pimelea-prostrata-subsp-
			Highly fragrant flowers in September-	prostrata/
			October	
			Important nectar source for lizards and	
			insects	
			White fruit in November-December	
			important food for lizards	
E, P, S	Remuremu/	Selliera	Succulent creeping herb	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Half star/	radicans	Can root at every node	ecies/selliera-radicans/
	Bonking grass		Prefers damp areas with full sun	
			Large white flowers	
			Pollinated by insects	
E, P, S	Kōkihi/	Tetragonia	Scrambling stems up to 4 m long	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Beach	trigyna	Tiny starry yellow flowers in summer	ecies/tetragonia-trigyna/
	spinach		Bright pink fruit	
			Self-seeds prolifically	
E, P, S	Mercury Bay	Dichondra	Creeping groundcover	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	weed/	repens	Very hardy, full sun.	ecies/dichondra-repens/
	Kidney weed		Makes a great lawn substitute	
			Tiny white flowers in spring	
			Fruits in summer	
P, S	Pānakenake/	Lobelia (Pratia)	Creeping groundcover	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	Pratia	angulata	Full sun or semi shade	ecies/lobelia-angulata/
			Prefers moist sites but hardy	

			White half-star flowers in spring and	
			summer	
			Bright pink fruit in late summer-autumn	
E, P, S	Button	Leptinella spp.	Ther are many species of button daisy,	https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/sp
	daisies		some are available to buy. They are highly	ecies/?scientific_name=Leptinella
			scented, therefore nectivorous and also	
			provide dense habitat for caterpillars and	
			other invertebrates, once established.	