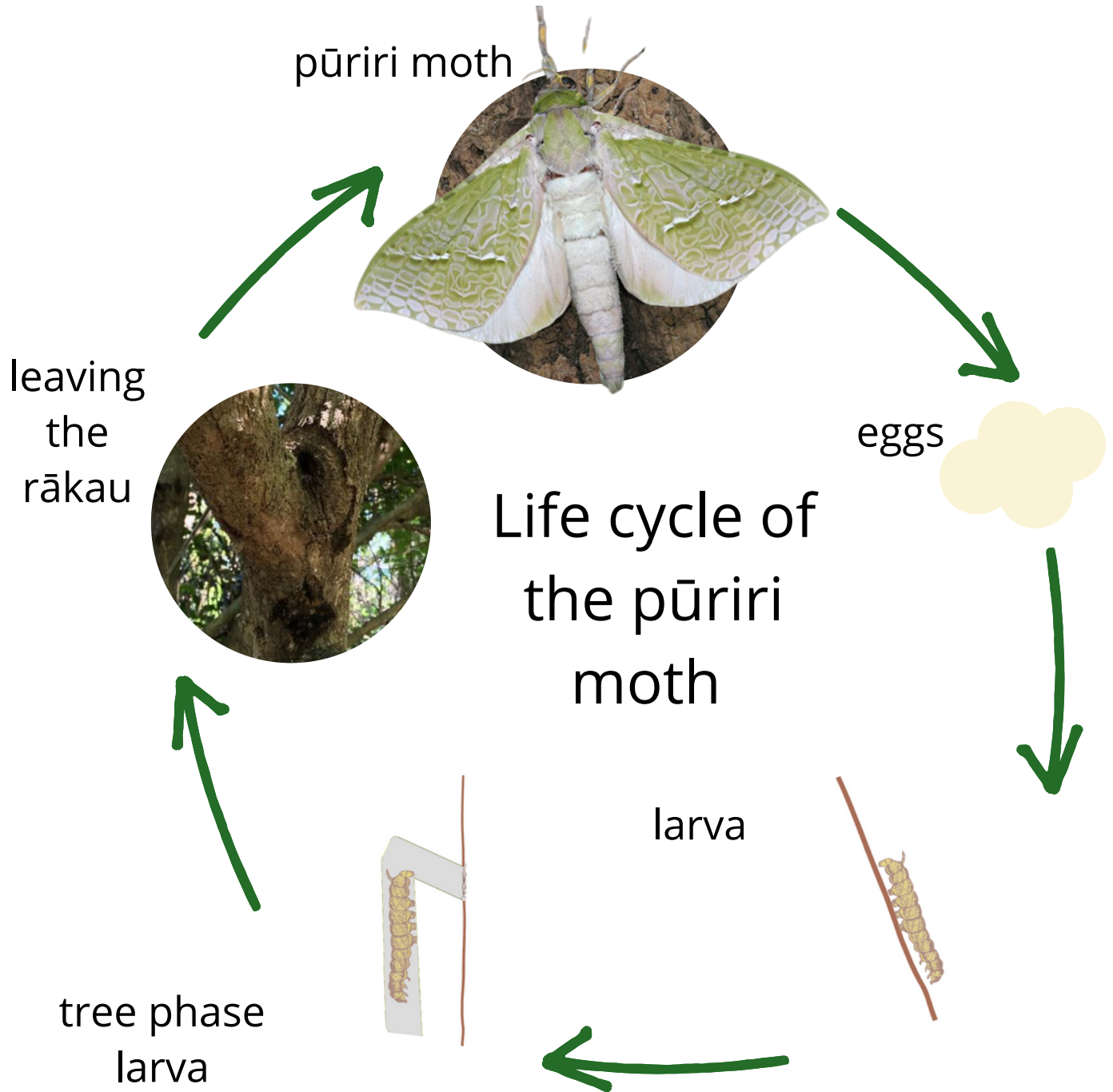


Pūriri moth



The pūriri moth is Aotearoa's largest moth, with a wingspan of up to 15cm. It spends the first five to six years of its life as a grub in the trunk of a rākau (the common hosts are pūriri and putaputawētā).

Eggs are laid on the forest floor and hatch after about two weeks. Initially, the larvae live under decaying wood and, after about a year, they move to their host rākau and construct a burrow in the trunk. This entrance to the tunnel is protected and camouflaged by a covering web, made from silk and wood chips. I wonder why the larvae make their tunnel go up before down (see diagram at left)?

The pupal stage lasts four to five months before the pupae wriggle out of their tunnels. For the last 48 hours of their life, they are a moth. They live off larval food reserves because they do not have any mouthparts to eat food. The adult moths emerge mostly from September through to November.