



# Tiritiri Matangi Kids,

by Stacey

Pūriri is one of the most attractive larger rākau/tree species now becoming more visible on Tiritiri Matangi Island. It is one of the few Aotearoa rākau with colourful flowers that provide a year-round food source for manu/birds. Before the planting in 1984, there were only two pūriri left on the motu/island. Search the diagram to find the words underlined in the text at the bottom of the page. Have fun!

To grow more pūriri on the Island, seeds were collected from the two existing trees. Ray Walter put some of the seeds in a plastic bag and some in a bucket of water, then forgot about them until their outer coating rotted away. Then he stomped on them with his boots – hoping the seeds would germinate.

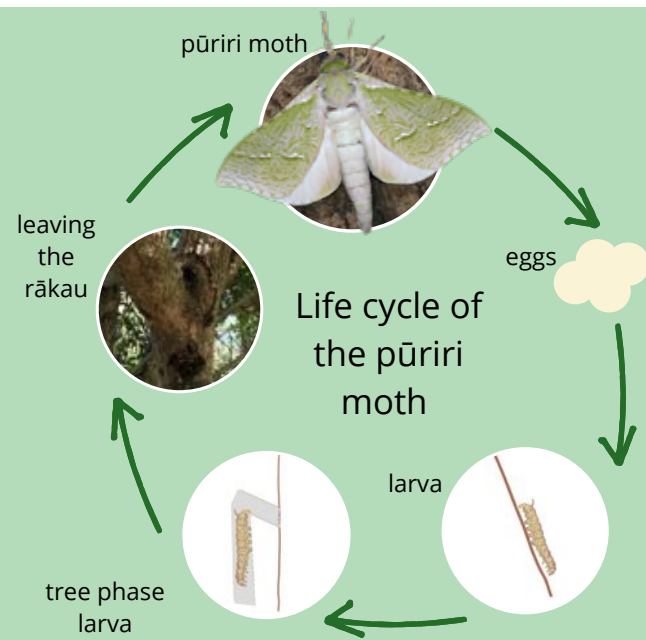
But after several unsuccessful attempts, someone suggested Ray could collect some seeds from Pūriri Drive at Cornwall Park in Auckland because they would have been crushed by the cars driving over them. And that worked!

A wide variety of manu love the flowers and fruit, making the rākau an important food source.

Older pūriri have rough bark which offers hiding places for all kinds of insects.



Left: This pūriri is one of the two mature specimens on the Kawerau Track. Early research on the korimako/bellbird was from a hide built in the canopy of this rākau and it was consequently known by students as “The Hide Tree”.



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.

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Answer: The larvae burrow up before going down because this prevents the rain from filling up their home.