

### Flora News

By Warren Brewer

#### Flowers and fruit on kowhai, karo and puka

The kowhai trees on Tiritiri Matangi have been flowering for the past few weeks. A spectacular display has come from the large tree by the Ranger's house, attracting lots of visits from tui.



Attention is now turning to our karo trees. Their deep red flowers are providing a new source of rich nectar for our honey eaters. Karo flowers are gynodioecious, with fixed female and inconstant male flowers on separate trees.

Male flowers (left) have an outer ring of five yellow dots (stamens) and a larger central dot (a usually sterile ovary). The male flowers are in larger clusters than the female ones. Female flowers (right) have just a central stigma sitting on top of the ovary.



The puka tree close to the toilets below the Visitor Centre has tight bunches of new green fruit. The fruit ripens through purple to a final black colour.



Puka (*Meryta sinclairii*) was originally restricted to the Three Kings Islands. Nowadays with its large tropical looking leaves it has become a popular addition to suburban gardens. Meryta means to furl sails, to roll up, describing the tight bunches of fruit.