

Pūriri *(Vitex lucens)*



Pūriri is a large, long-lived tree with some of the biggest flowers of any New Zealand tree and aided in pollination by our birds.

Large, pink flowers followed by marble sized, bright red fruits drape the tree for most of the year. The fruiting period normally commences early winter and extends into mid-spring.

Pūriri have the incredible ability to resprout and continue growing from where they have fallen over or supposedly senesced (died).

You will see this beautiful gnarled tree studded with the Pepetuna (Pūriri moth) burrows that are predated on by Ruru (Morepork). With both species being nocturnal you may need a torch to see this hive of activity.

Pūriri, being a hardwood with little buoyancy, was used in the construction of hīnaki (eel pots) along with many a fence post still in the ground today.

Pepe-tuna nunui
Kēhua kākārīki
Wairua rere o te pō
Pepe-tuna nunui
Kēhua kākārīki
rere runga puriri e.

Large pepe-tuna (pūriri moth)
A green apparition
Flying spirit of the night
Large Pepe-tuna
A green apparition
Flying on to a pūriri tree.

Size

20m tall

Distribution & Habitat

Found from the North Cape to Waikato. You will usually see them in paddocks where they have been left to shade cattle. Occurs mostly in coastal and lowland forests. Fast growing tree that will do well in most habitats.

Species it attracts

Fruits are loved by Kererū, who are the only birds able to swallow the berries whole and distribute them. Flowers also provide nectar for Tūi, Korimako (Bellbird), Tauhou (Silvereye).

Medicinal Properties

Leaves are boiled down to treat back ache.

Where to plant in your garden: Pūriri is a large tree with a wide root system so is best suited to large gardens. Seedlings and saplings are frost tender and require a sheltered, warm, semi-shaded site but are tolerant of a range of conditions once established.



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