

# TE MAATU / THORP BUSH – OUR TAONGA

## The forest giants

**Kahikatea**  
The kahikatea, or white pine, is New Zealand's tallest native tree reaching up to 60 metres high. Kahikatea once dominated lowland swamp areas, but a lowered water table from drainage of the Motueka floodplain has caused some to die.



Imagine tall forest like this covering the floodplain of the Motueka River from Riwaka to Maniri, interspersed with areas of swamp along the water courses. Hundreds of years ago that's what it was like here and on the floodplain of the Waimaea River too

By the 1840s much of the forest had been cleared by Maori settling in the area. However, "Te Maatu", the Great Wood still covered an estimated 350 hectares. Clearance increased with European settlement through the 1800s. Today Thorp Bush is down to 4.5ha, but is still the largest remnant of podocarp-hardwood forest left in the district. So it is special!

## What is 'podocarp-hardwood forest'?

These forests are a mixture of tall podocarps, which emerge over a canopy of smaller trees (hardwoods), with an understory of shrubs, plants and ferns. Podocarps are a type of conifer, but their cones look more like berries. The best known are kahikatea, matai, tōhara and rimu.

In Thorp Bush tōhara-tioki forest now dominates, with a small area of matai forest and occasional kahikatea, which would have been more numerous in the past. Some of the trees are hundreds of years old, but many are more recent secondary growth after selective felling. The understory was destroyed by grazing livestock and subsequently much of it was kept as mown grass, so the present understory is all secondary growth.



**Lowland Tōhara**  
Tōhara grow up to 30 metres tall, with massive trunks and thick, stringy bark.



**Matai**  
Matai, or black pine, grow 25-30 m tall. The bark has a distinctive hammer-like scar patterning.

## Canopy tree



**Tioki**  
Tioki is the commonest of the hardwood canopy trees in Thorp Bush. They grow between 10m and 20m tall, with spreading branches, shining leaves and a smooth dark bark.

## Understorey



**Mahoe (whiteywood)**  
Mahoe is the commonest shrub and can grow into an 8m canopy tree. It is regenerating densely in many places.



## Conservation and Restoration

Today less than 1% of the original forest remains in the Motueka Ecological District. So, although it is much modified, Thorp Bush has immense ecological value as the largest remnant of alluvial podocarp-hardwood forest in the District. It also contains some trees that are now uncommon in this area, such as white maire and pokkaka. It is classed as an "acutely threatened" ecosystem.

Since 1977 efforts have been made to restore the bush and fill in some of the clearings with appropriate native species and the forest is now considerably denser than in 1950. Unfortunately some of the plants used were not indigenous to this area and further compromised the ecological value. Restoration efforts continue to this day.

## Protect our Bush

- Cycle only on the gravel paths
- Don't trample on plants
- Support restoration planting efforts.
- Be a tidy kiwi! Take rubbish away.

## Tracks in Thorp Bush (TBA)



To be modified by graphic designer

## Birdlife

Because of the abundant range of fruits, podocarp forests support large communities of birds. Tui abound, and you can hear them singing away, especially in the late afternoon, or early evening. Fantail (piwakawaka) are common, particularly in autumn, and native wood pigeon (kēreru) and kingfisher (kōtare) are seen occasionally, as well as the common introduced birds, such as sparrows and thrushes.

## Tui



## Piwakawaka (fantail)





Motueka Community Board Meeting. 18.12.2018

To: Mr Chairman + Members of the Community Board. From: Ian Williamson.

1/ Has there been any fresh positive news on progress with our Motueka High Street project? remembering what was said to us about a Strong Business Case.

2/ How did the research on the provision of a "Transport Plan" for the Resource Consent Application go on the new Queen Victoria Street Packing Shed Project.

3/ Has any progress been made on having a Resumé of our Community Board Meetings published in a magazine for the benefit of the Motueka Community. (? Swan)

4/ Press newspaper article on the new "4C" brand new technology centre within the YMCA building in Hereford Street. Christchurch providing for its member access to: 3D printers, computer numerical control machines (computer controlled cutters), robotics, augmented and virtual reality equipment and laptops. This provides young people access to technology they would otherwise miss out on.

4C's name stands for curiosity, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

The Todd Foundation donated \$1 million towards the technology centre.

5/ In today's Agenda of 18.12.18 on page 26 section 4.22 The High Street, Motueka upgrade project is essentially a streetscape renewal, amenity and active transport project. Budget set by Council through L.T.P. process. Is this a separate project to the L.T.S.A project essentially being upgrade of traffic management + pedestrian safety? What project is the Motueka River Bridge upgrade included in and when is this timed for?

MCB 18-12-18  
Tabled Document