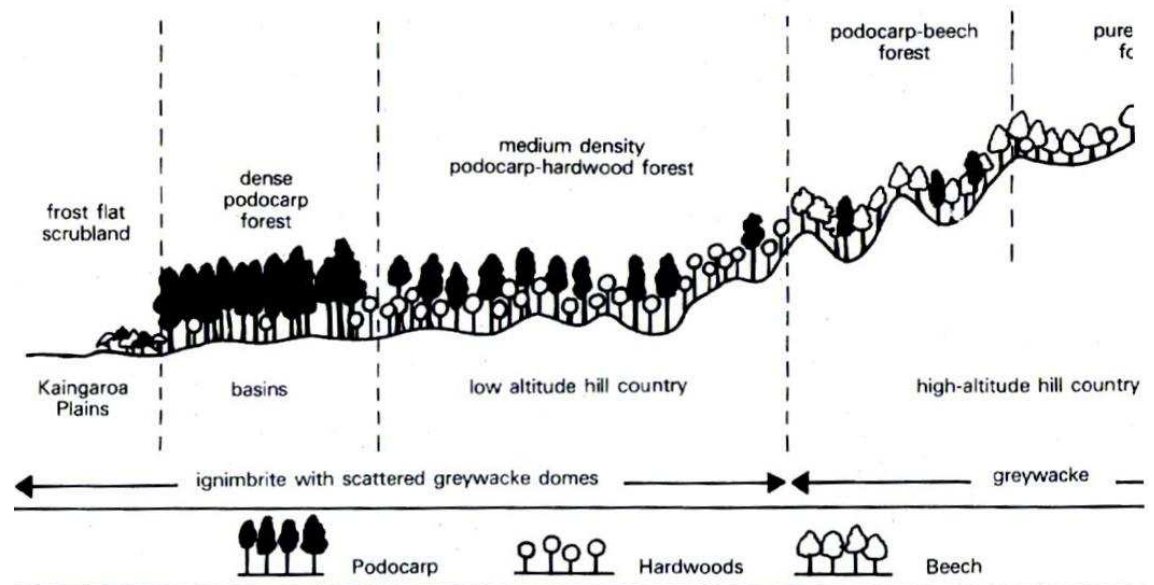


12. FOREST IN TRANSITION (FOREST REGENERATION)

In the last 30 years fire has swept up the face of this hill to the look out. The original forest on the lower slope was burnt and since then other plants have become established. This area now has a wonderful cross section of a forest in different stages. The area where the fire was on the lower slopes is gradually regenerating and will one day be mature podocarp forest. The species found on the lower slope are pioneer species, which will gradually die out with the emergence of podocarps. This pattern of change is called succession. Pioneer species are fast growing shrubs and trees. Under these light hungry species the shade tolerant future forest trees will establish and grow until they over top these smaller trees as they thin out and die.

A cross-section of the upper Whirinaki region showing the altitudinal forest sequence and associated landforms:



Did you know?

Pioneer species

Much of the vegetation on this site is known as pioneer species. They are short lived and do not grow as tall as the emerging podocarps. The pioneer species provide shelter and protection for the podocarps. Some of the pioneer species here are kanuka, putaputaweta, wineberry and kohuhu.

12.1 TASK

Choose three different types of leaves and draw them or try a leaf rubbing. See how different they are.

- Move around the area looking at the different trees and finding ways of recognising them. Using the chart included build up a description to help you identify trees or plants in the future. Make a list of at least 5 or more, small trees (different ones to the ones you have already done).
- There will be many plants that you can't identify. Be a naturalist or a botanist and sketch them carefully, writing descriptions of their shape, colour size and texture. This way you can identify it later.

13. LAND USE IN THE MINGINUI VALLEY

Over hundreds of years humans have made a difference to the landscape in the Minginui Valley, from the very first Maori to those living here today. The most significant changes have occurred in the last 100 years with large scale forestry (initially logging of the native podocarp forest and now the planting and harvesting of exotic pine trees) and farming.

13.1 TASK

- Look at the different patterns in the valley. Can you see the differences from the light green of the paddocks, the dark green uniformity of the pine plantations, the mottle greens of the native forest?
- Close your eyes and imagine what the valley would have looked like before humans arrived. Describe what you think it would look like. Use this as motivation for 'Recipe for a Forest' one of the activities in the 'Exploring the Forest' resource.