



Coastal forest community

Photos: Jeremy Rolfe

By studying the life in, on and around a mature forest tree you can begin to understand the interconnectedness of living things. Each plant and animal has an important part to play in a forest ecosystem.

- ☛ Find some of the plants on this card.
- ☛ Study a mature tree in the forest.
Think about, who lives on, in, around and under it.
- ? *Who uses the tree for shelter and/or food? How does the tree benefit from these animals (seed dispersal, composting).*
- ☛ Use your bird-caller to bring some birds closer to you.
- ? *How will these birds use the plants you can see?*

In the area around the Forest and Bird Nursery you will see many karaka trees.

In the late summer/autumn their bright orange berries are a popular food for some birds. Maori ate the large seeds of the **karaka** after boiling them to take away the poison. **Kawakawa** leaves were chewed for toothache or mouth ulcers or used as a breath freshener. **Koromiko** helped to cure dysentery. Flax leaves were used for rope-making.

- ☛ Find the plants highlighted above.
- ☛ Study some flax leaves.
- ? *What are the special qualities that make these leaves so good for rope-making?*
- ☛ Find plants that are used by insects
Kawakawa leaves have holes made by looper caterpillars, holes in trees are homes for weta.
- ☛ Share any ideas you have about plant uses.

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