

Cabbage tree / ti kōuka connections



Foods for animals

Cabbage tree flowers provide nectar for bees, flies, other insects and geckos. The white flowers are pollinated by these animals and then become fruit (berries). These white berries are good food for birds like kererū.



Cabbage tree. Photo: Shan Walker



Interesting fact

In parts of the South Island cabbage trees were planted as 'way marker' trees to direct Māori on their journeys.

Threats

In 1987, a mystery disease started to kill off cabbage trees in the North Island. After nearly five years of work, scientists found the cause was a parasite, which they think might be spread from tree to tree by a tiny sap-sucking insect, the introduced passion vine hopper. The disease makes leaves fall off when still green. Plant pests such as old man's beard can also smother and kill cabbage trees.

Habitat

Cabbage trees provide shelter and habitat for animals. Harrier hawks use the leaves for making their nests. Hollows in cabbage trees provide important roost sites for our native long-tailed bat.



Cabbage tree moth. Photo: Phil Bendle



Cabbage tree moth

Look for the beautiful cabbage tree moth and their caterpillars on cabbage trees. The moths hide under dead leaves during the day and caterpillars eat the young leaves.

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