

NGĀTI MUTUNGA
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Paparoa Pohutukawa

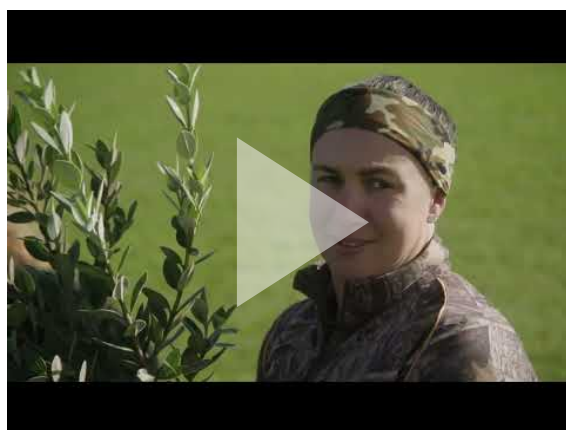
Ngāti Mutunga taonga

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Origins

On the coast at Paparoa reef there is a population of Pohutukawa that are taonga for Ngāti Mutunga. The origin of these trees is that they were brought to Taranaki by Ngāti Mutunga whanau on the Tokomaru waka and planted to mark the site of a puna.



29 May 2024

Because of this origin, the trees here are an important taonga for Ngāti Mutunga and the iwi has been working to ensure their survival

The trees have narrower leaves than other pohutukawa and also a paler flower. They do not tend to flower profusely and we have also have had trouble getting the seeds to set.

Threats

In the 1990s, Project Crimson did a survey of the site and there were over 100 mature trees and approximately the same number of younger trees - now due to the accelerated coastal erosion in this area there are less than 20 mature trees left.

Other threats include myrtle rust (which came to Taranaki in 2017) and damage to adult trees and seedlings from pest browsing - mainly possums as the trees are protected from Stock



Planting at Paparoa reef

How Ngāti Mutunga are protecting these taonga

Propagation

When Myrtle rust came to Taranaki, Ngāti Mutunga worked with the Department of Conservation, Atawhai nursery and Mimi school to propagate and protect the trees.

Over 500 seedlings were produced by Atawhai and Ngāti Mutunga have planted these at several sites within the Ngāti Mutunga rohe. Mimi school was the first site chosen as the school was already doing some tree planting on the school grounds and are also the closest school to Paparoa reef.



Plants being cared for at Atiwhai nursery

Over the past 5 years trees have been planted at the Urenui marae, Te Urenui pā, Pukekohe pā, Urenui and Uruti schools and other sites where the trees are likely to be protected from myrtle rust. Some trees have also been replanted back at the paparoa reef site



Planting at Mimi School

Myrtle Rust

The site is part of the myrtle rust surveillance programme that is carried out by Te Kōhanga Āhuru under a contract from Plant and Food organised by Waitangi Woods. This is carried out every month for most of the year and every fortnight during the myrtle rust season. Luckily no signs of myrtle rust have ever been found on the trees at Paparoa reef despite it damaging some of the planted nursery stock pohutukawa planted nearby

Pest control

Recently titi burrows were found among the paparoa pohutukawa. Ngāti Mutunga have been working with the Taranaki Regional Council and local landowners to put some pest control in place. Traps have been installed to control the cats, mustelids, rats and possums to give the chicks a better chance of survival - the possum control will also help the trees and seedlings



Titi bird - being protected at Paparoa

Next steps

Ngāti Mutunga is hoping to be part of an upcoming project from Scion which is aimed at protecting taonga myrtle species where they are - this will include propagation, working out the

best places to replant the trees and also developing control methods should the trees get myrtle rust

Thanks to:

Atawhai nursery

Department of Conservation - Herb Spanagel and Jim Clarkson

Taranaki Regional Council

Project Crimson

Mimi School

And a special thanks to the local landowners - the Reeds and Mick Low (best landowner ever)