



Getting to know your Trees / Rākau

Did you know 80% of Aotearoa's trees, ferns and flowering plants are **endemic** (found only in New Zealand). We have Māori, Pakeha and Latin (botanical names) for our vegetation!

Being able to recognise and name our vegetation is the first step to respecting and valuing it. Knowing someone's name is the first step to a relationship and potentially a friendship.

Your garden is full of life and ONE tree/shrub is waiting to be your friend. Get to know your tree/shrub, learn, and recognise your friend.

Task:

1. Walk slowly round your garden for 10mins.
Be observant, look low and high, don't forget the back and far corners. Pick ONE tree/shrub that appeals to you. Take a good look at all aspects - trunk, leaf shape, size, edges, under leaves, fruit, flowers, colours, feel, smell, listen, taste?)
2. Drawing time...
 - One leaf (veins, pattern of how they grow from the branch)
 - The tree (pattern of the branches growing from the trunk or off other branches)
3. Dig deeper...
List words to define the distinctive qualities, colours, things that would assist someone else to identify your friend
Find the name of your friend, maybe all 3 names (common, Māori, Latin)! These might be a starting point
<https://www.treesthatcount.co.nz/native-trees/>
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nztrees&hl=en_NZ&gl=US
Extra question that needs research: does it have any medical uses (rongoa)? If yes, what are they?
4. Walk slowly round the garden again.
Can you recognise a sibling of your friend? How can you tell?
5. Write a **short poem** about your tree/shrub.
Some suggestions: seasons, climbing in/on, shade it provides, the oxygen trees provide, the timber, the canoe, something about what we as humans can do for trees!

