

New Zealand's favourite plant – Cook's scurvy grass!

NZ's top 10 plants



1.

Lepidium oleraceum nau, Cook's scurvy grass Photo: John Smith-Dodsworth.

Cook's scurvy grass is New Zealand's No.1 plant for 2005. New Zealanders have been voting for months on the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network website on what their favourite native plant is this year.



2.

Sophora chathamica
kowhai, coastal kowhai
Photo: Geoff Walls.



5.

Rhopalostylis sapida
nikau palm Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



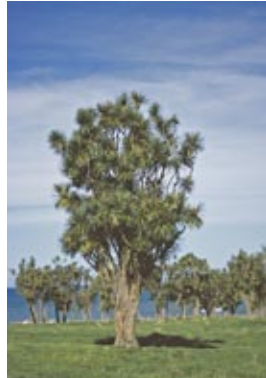
8.

Carmichaelia williamsii
Williams's broom, giant-flowered broom
Photo: Andrea Brandon.



3.

Xeronema callistemon
Poor Knights lily, raupo-taranga Photo: Gillian Crowcroft.



6.

Cordyline australis
cabbage tree, ti, ti kouka, palm lily Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



9.

Myosotidium hortensia
Chatham Island forget-me-not, kopakopa, kopukapuka



4.

Metrosideros bartlettii
Bartlett's rata
Photo: Peter de Lange.



7.

Clianthus maximus
kakabeak, kowhai ngutukaka Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.



10.

Pisonia brunoniana
Parapara Photo: Bec Stanley.

The Network and the Isaac Centre for Nature Conservation in collaboration wanted to find out what people see as New Zealand's most popular plant. Interestingly, the silver fern managed just five votes despite being such a high profile species among our NZ sporting teams. The question therefore is should the All Blacks lose the silver fern from their rugby jerseys? Should our netball team become the Golden Kowhais? Hundreds of people voted for over 190 native plants out of a possible 2350 natives. The pohutukawa topped New Zealand's national list in previous years with the kowhai, cabbage tree, kauri, nikau and rimu all making the top ten. Voting has highlighted differences in people's favourites around the country.

Some comments about Cook's scurvy grass:

"Its a wonderful plant—tastes great, pretty flowers, grows in far out, wild, remote and unusual habitats—special, special, special"

"Everyone needs it nau and then"

"Way cool herb—can you smoke it as well?"

"Amazing—a versatile, threatened, endemic vegetable for which I can do my bit by growing it and eating it"

"An indigenous natural antiscorbutic how cool is that?"

"Captain Cook's botanists harvested this plant in 1769 just down the road from where I live!"

"Hey nau, hey nau, don't dream its over!"

Region favourites are as follows:

Auckland: Poor Knights lily

Wellington: cabbage tree

Taranaki: nikau

Tongariro: kowhai

Southland: kowhai

Christchurch: climbing everlasting daisy (*Helichrysum dimorphum*)

Northland: nikau

Bay of Plenty: Poor Knights lily

Otago: Southern rata

Marlborough: Shrubby tororaro

Hawke's Bay: pohutukawa

Waikato: Williams's broom

International voters have gone for Cook's scurvy grass because of the published history about the species and how it was used by Captain Cook to feed to his crew to protect them from Scurvy. After discounting overseas votes, kowhai (*Sophora chathamica*) takes out the top spot. Many voters did not realise that some of the most charismatic plants are so threatened. The Chatham island forget-me-not is nationally endangered in the wild despite being a popular choice in people's gardens. This project has helped raise the profile of New Zealand native plants.