

Te Kouka

Cabbage tree

Te Kouka are not trees but the tallest lily in the world.

They are known as “cabbage trees” because the crown of the plant was eaten by early European settlers. Beer was brewed from the roots and the fire resistant hollowed out trunks made good chimneys. The shoots and roots provided starch and sugars for Maori and they used the leaves for baskets, sandals, rope and rain capes plus making tea to cure diarrhoea.

As Te Kouka are generally long-lived they were planted to mark trails, boundaries and urupā (cemeteries) and other special places.

They have sweet scented flowers in early summer, which turn into bluish-white berries that birds love to eat.



Te Kouka at Whareroa on the Te Kouka / Rocks track .

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