

# He Mihi

# Ringatu planting, harvesting rites

by Te Kabautu Maxwell

*Tena koutou katoa,  
Kua tae mai te hotoke, a tatangia  
hoki te matabi o te tau ma tatou te  
iwi Maori.*

Late in the month of May, at approximately half an hour before sunrise, the constellation of stars known as Matariki can be seen on the horizon.

The new moon, which follows the rise of Matariki, marks the “tau hou” or new year for the iwi of Aotearoa.

The start of a new year is a time for celebration and remembrance. Gifts and prayers are offered for a bountiful new year and tears are shed for those who have passed during the outgoing year.

“Matariki atua, ka eke mai i te rangi e roa, e whangai iho ke to mata o te tau, e roa e.”

Matariki, the divine, you have come from hither, from distant skies to bestow the first fruits of the year upon us.”

“Haere atu ra e te mate, haere ki te paepae o Matariki, o Rehua. Haere, haere, haere atu ra.

“Fare ye well, you who have passed on, go to the threshold of Matariki, of Rehua, farewell, farewell.”

*No reira  
Ma Te Atua tatou e manaaki  
Nobo ora mai*

THIS korero is a brief study of Te Huamata and Te Pure, the planting and harvesting practices of Te Ringatu in relation to Matariki.

Te Turuki (Te Kooti) inaugurated Te Huamata and Te Pure in 1879 which became part of what is known by Ringatu as ‘Nga Pou o te Tau’. January 1, June 1, July 1 and November 1 are the pillars of the Ringatu year.

Te Huamata, the planting rite, is held on June 1 and Te Pure, the harvesting rite, is held on November 1. On June 1, Ringatu planted Te Maratapu (sacred garden). Te Maratapu was set aside on a hilltop for Te Atua (God).

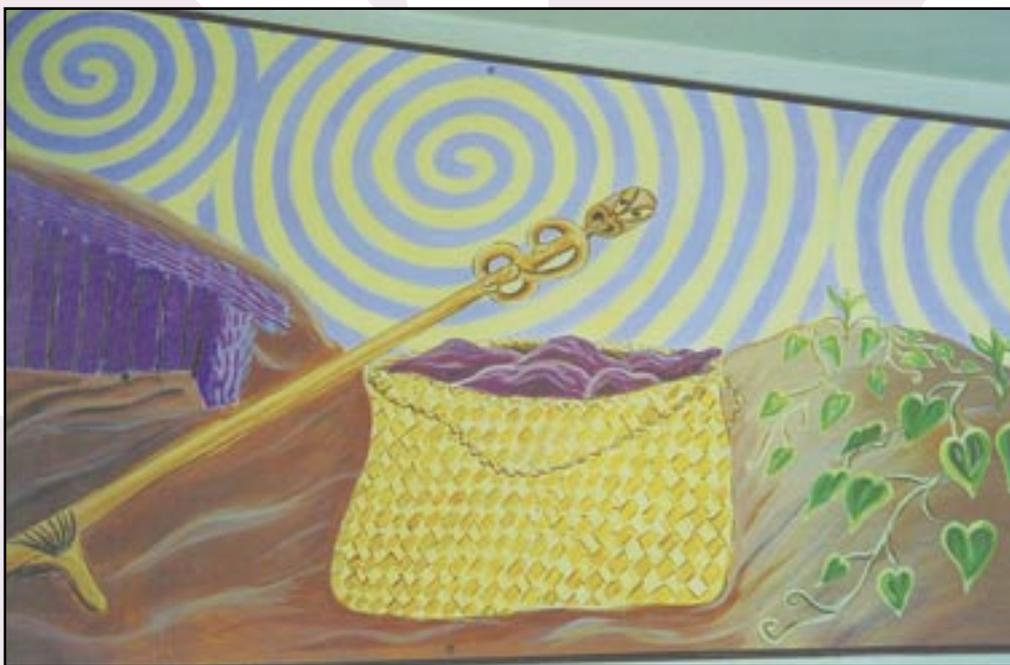
Whanau would attend Te Huamata and take with them kopura (seeds) from their crops the year before to be planted in Te Maratapu as an offering to Te Atua. These kopura would be placed in a special kete (kit) that was woven specifically for Te Huamata. Special karakia (prayers) would be conducted, whakamoemiti (thanksgiving) and tono (asking for bountiful crops).

On May 29 before the setting of the sun, only the tohunga (high priests) would go to Te Maratapu to plant the selected kopura. On arrival, a karakia would be held prior to entry. When planting was complete, the tohunga would leave Te Maratapu, closing it off with another karakia. Te Maratapu was left and no person would be permitted to enter until Te Pure.

Two kopura would be left over after planting which the tohunga would place back in the kete with the remaining kopura, which became tapu also.

On May 30, the remaining kopura would be planted in the sea. A karakia would be conducted at this time. The tohunga would then proceed to the awa (river) and the ngahere (bush) where the same planting ritual would take place.

Maori regard these places as gardens also. Two kopura would be left over and these would be taken to Te Maratapu to be planted. This process would connect all gardens mentioned previously to Te Maratapu, hence rendering all these places tapu. No harvesting of kai (food) was permitted until Te Pure.



Te Huamata has its roots in Maori cosmology; Te Maratapu planted on June 1 marked the pre-dawn heliacal rising of Matariki, whose significance as the bright stars of fruitfulness was acknowledged among Tuhoë, Waikato and most East Coast peoples. (Binney, J. Redemption Songs, 1995, p.421.)

Te Maratapu, in former times, was known as Te Maratautane. Often it is a sacred precinct, but if not, the place will become sacred e.g. the place in the field (tautane) where the ritual planting takes place (te mara tautane: he mara tapu tēnei). (Johansen, P.J. Studies in Maori Rites and Myths, 1958, p.17.)

Te Maratapu of Te Ringatu was dedicated to Te Atua; Te Maratautane of former times was dedicated to Rongo (God of cultivated food). The scene is a small garden “set apart for the god (Rongo)” where the first sweet potato mounds are planted on behalf of the hapu settlement. Each person of the community contributes two seed kumara to the special basket used by the priest in planting. (Marshall Sahlins, ‘Hierarchy and Humanity in Polynesia’, Transformations of Polynesian Culture, Anthony Cooper and Judith Huntsman (eds), 1985, p.203.)

Te Pure, the harvesting rite of Te Ringatu, held on November 1, is based on the biblical references Exodus 34:22 and Deuteronomy 26:2.

(Binney, J. Redemption Songs, 1995, p.288.)

The cycle of ripening or fructifying was completed at the taking of the first fruits in November or December when Matariki reappeared in the evening sky. (Binney, J. Redemption Songs, 1995, p.422.)

It is clear that Te Turuki had adopted the examples of both Te Huamata and Te Pure rites from practices of former times and adapted these to suit the philosophies that underpinned Te Ringatu.

Although Ringatu do not overtly celebrate the rising of Matariki, both the Te Huamata and Te Pure planting and harvesting rites that Te Ringatu adhere to, are deeply rooted in Maori cosmology and the ancient practice of star worship.

‘Matariki ahunga nui; Matariki Tapuapua, Matariki hunga nui; Matariki kanohi iti’.

## Turanganui a Kiwa lunar calendar for June

2005 HUNE	TE RA O TE WIKI	TE RA O TE MARAMATAKA	TE AHUA O TE MAHI HII IKA	TE AHUA O TE MAHI ONO KAI
07	Turei	Te marama hou		
08	Wenerei	Whiro	He ra kino	He ra kino
09	Taite	Tuiea	He po ahua pa mo te hii koura, tuna rainei	He ahua pai te ra ki te ono kai
10	Paraire	Hoata	He ra tino pai mo te hii tuna me te koura	He ra tino pai ki te ono kumara me tahiti atu kakano
11	Rahoroi	Oue	He ra pai mo te hii ika	He ra pai ki te ono kai
12	Ratapu	Okoro	He ra pai ano	He ra pai ano
13	Mane	Tamateangana	He ra ahua pai, he ra hau, tera pea he ra marangai	He ra ahua pai ki te ono kai
14	Turei	Tamatea aio	He ra pai mo te hii ika erangi kia tupato te haere i nga ngaru	He ra pai ki te ono kai
15	Wenerei	Tamatea	He ririki te tuna, te ika erangi kia tupato te haere.	He ra pai ki te ono kai
16	Taite	Tamatea whakapau	Ka pau nga Tamatea kahore he ra pai mo te hii ika	He pai te ono kai mai i te whitinga o te ra ki te tonga o te ra
17	Paraire	Ari	He ra kino	He ra kino
18	Rahoroi	Huna	E hara i te ra pai ki te hii ika	E hara i te ra pai ki te ono kai
19	Ratapu	Mawaharu	He ra tino pai ki te hii ika	He ra tino pai erangi kahore e roa
20	Mane	Atua	E hara i te ra pai	E hara i te ra pai
21	Turei	Turei	He ra pai mo te hii ika	He ra pai ki te ono kai
22	Wenerei	Rakaunui Te marama kikii	He ra tino pai mo te hii ika erangi he ra pouri mo te hii tuna	He ra tino pai ki te ono kai
23	Taite	Rakaumatohi	He ra tino pai mo te hii ika erangi he ra pouri mo te hii tuna	He ra tino pai ki te ono kai
24	Paraire	Takirau	Kua makoha te marama he ririki te tuna me te koura	Kua makoha te marama he ririki te kumara
25	Rahoroi	Oike	E hara tenei he ra pai mo te hii ika	E hara tenei he ra pai ki te ono kai
26	Mane	Korekore te whiwhia	E hara tenei he ra pai mo te hii ika	E hara tenei he ra pai ki te ono kai
27	Turei	Korekore te rawea	He ra ano apopo	He ra ano apopo
28	Wenerei	Korekore piri ki nga Tangaroa	Mai i te whitinga o te ra ki te tonga o te ra ki te patu tuna, koura, ika nga momo kai katoa.	Mai i te whitinga o te ra ki te tonga o te ra ki te ono nga momo kai katoa
29	Taite	Tangaroa a mua	He ra pai ki te hii tuna me te koura	He ra pai ki te ono kai
30	Paraire	Tangaroa a roto	He ra pai ki te hii tuna me te koura	He ra pai ki te ono kai

GLOSSARY of TERMS	HE RARANGI WHAKAMARAMA
He ra kino	Bad day
He ra pai	Good day
Tino	Very
Kia tupato	Be careful
Hii ika	Fishing
Te Marama Hou	The new month
Etahi atu kakano	Other seeds
Te marama	The moon
Maramataka	Calendar
Hune	June
Mane	Monday
Turei	Tuesday
Koura	Crayfish
Whitinga o te ra	Sunrise
Tonga o te ra	Sunset
Ono kai	Cultivate food

# MAORI NEW YEAR

## Turanganui a Kiwa to celebrate Maori New Year

by Thelma Karaitiana  
Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa  
special projects manager

**Matariki ahunga nui - Matariki provider of plenty**  
*I te atapo o nga rangi o Mei ka kitea e te tangata te ahua tuatahi o Matariki. Na te rangi tuatahi o Hune ki te rangi tuarwhitu ka timata te whakaputa o enei whetu me te marama hou ki te rangi whanui o Turanganui a Kiwa. A te tuarwaru o nga rangi o Hune i timata te wa o Matariki ki Turanganui a Kiwa. Mai i te haurua o te ono karaka i te atapo ki te whitu karaka ka piataata mai nga whatu ririki o Matariki.*

HERE in Turanganui a Kiwa the new moon makes its appearance on the seventh of June. However, the maramataka or the lunar calendar for the iwi of Turanganui a Kiwa begins on the eighth of June 2005 and is marked as Whiro.

The Ngai Tamanuhiri Conservation Group and the people of Whatatutu are tangata whenua who have gathered to organise programmes to celebrate the advent of Matariki to Turanganui a Kiwa.

The revolving circuit of programmes being offered by the Ngai Tamanuhiri Conservation Group opens on June 20, 2005 at 8.30am with a powhiri at the Tairawhiti Museum. Soraya Pohatu is the co-ordinator of the Ngai Tamanuhiri programme which includes the Starlab from Te Papatongarewa, Art Workshops, a presentation from Te Whare Taonga o Te Tairawhiti, and a workshop about birdlife. The programme will be held over the week officially closing on June 26th 2005 with breakfast, karakia, a special planting ceremony and manutukutuku, or kite flying.

The Whatatutu focus for Matariki is the reinvigoration of the traditional concepts of planting, growing and gathering kai from gardens.

Event organiser Vanessa Puia of Whatatutu says once upon a time there were small gardens flourishing all over the community. While this is not so evident now, she expects to soon see locals eating fresh homegrown vegetables. For further information on these initiatives please contact; Soraya Pohatu 06 8628 083 and Vanessa Puia 06 8621 001.



Pre dawn is considered the best time for star gazers wishing to catch a glimpse of Matariki in the north east skies.

### Matariki Celebrations

**Maori Film Festival**  
Wairoa  
June 2-6

**Star lab presentations, art work shops**  
Muriwai Marae and  
Tairawhiti Museum  
June 20-26

**History on Bird Life by Steve Sawyer**  
Muriwai Marae  
June 21, 6pm

**C Company presentation**  
Muriwai Marae  
June 22, 6pm

**Dawn ceremony, kite flying and community planting**  
Muriwai Marae  
June 26

**Outdoor Concert and Fireworks Display**  
Wairoa Riverbank  
July 9

PLEASE CUT OUT



## Stars signal life cycle

DURING Matariki, Maori celebrate their unique place in the world. Tangata whenua give respect to the whenua on which they live, and admiration to their mother earth, Papatuanuku.

Throughout Matariki, lessons are learned about those who came before.

This significant period signals growth and a season of change. It's a time to prepare, and a time of action.

During Matariki, iwi acknowledge what they have and what they have to give.

Matariki celebrates the diversity of life. It is a celebration of culture, language, spirit and people.

Matariki is the star cluster that heralds the start of the Aotearoa Pacific New Year and is important to Maori and Pacific people as well as other cultures around the world.

It is visible to the naked eye in the pre-dawn sky, after the full moon, from mid to late June each year.

There are many stories about its significance as a navigational star and also as a portent on whether the coming harvests will be plentiful. If the stars in the cluster are clear and bright, it is thought that the year will be warm and productive. If they appear hazy and shimmering, a cold winter is in store for us, and all activities

during the period of Matariki must take this into account.

Some say that Matariki is the mother surrounded by her six daughters, other stories suggest that Matariki is a male star.

The Maori names that make up the other six prominent stars of the Matariki cluster are Tupu-a-Nuku, Tupu-a-Rangi, Waiti, Waita, Waipunarangi and Ururangi.

In Greek legend they bear the names of Seven Sisters, the daughters of Atlas and Pleone — Alcyone, Merope, Asterops, Maia, Taygeta, Calaeno and Electra.

Astronomers generally refer to Matariki as Pleiades.

Matariki is celebrated at different times by different tribes.

For some, feasts are held when it is first seen. For others, it is the full moon after it rises that is celebrated and for others, celebrations are centred on the dawn of the new moon.

The cluster is a group of many hundreds of stars about 400 light years from Earth and has been recognised since ancient times.

The brightest stars are quite easy to see with the unaided eye.

For some tribes, Puanga or Rigel is the star that signifies the beginning of the Maori New Year.

**THE PRE-DAWN** rise of Matariki can be seen in the last few days of May every year. The new moon can be seen for the first time on these dates.

2005 June 8,	2006 June 27,	2007 June 16,
2008 June 5,	2009 June 24,	2010 June 14,
2011 June 4,	2012 June 21,	2013 June 10,
2014 June 28	2015 June 18,	2016 June 6,
2017 June 25,	2018 June 15,	2019 June 5,
2020 June 22,		

## Design a poster and win a \$500 book voucher

Design a Poster for Te Wiki o te Reo Maori - Maori Language Week and you could win this fantastic prize. The competition is open to all schools, pre-schools and kohanga reo in the Tairawhiti region.

### Your entry must include:

- 10 Maori words with English translation
  - Te Wiki o te Reo Maori - Maori Language Week
  - July 25 - 31, 2005
  - one of the following names: Tairawhiti, Gisborne or Turanganui a Kiwa
  - and measure no more than 36cm high x 26cm wide
- The winning entry will be reproduced and printed as an A3 size poster and used as part of the promotional material for Maori Language Week in July.



### Send your entry to:

Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori Poster Competition, Gisborne Herald, 64 Gladstone Rd.  
Entries must be received by Saturday June 18, 2005.  
The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.