

Insects

Look closely!

Northland has a hidden world of incredible insects!

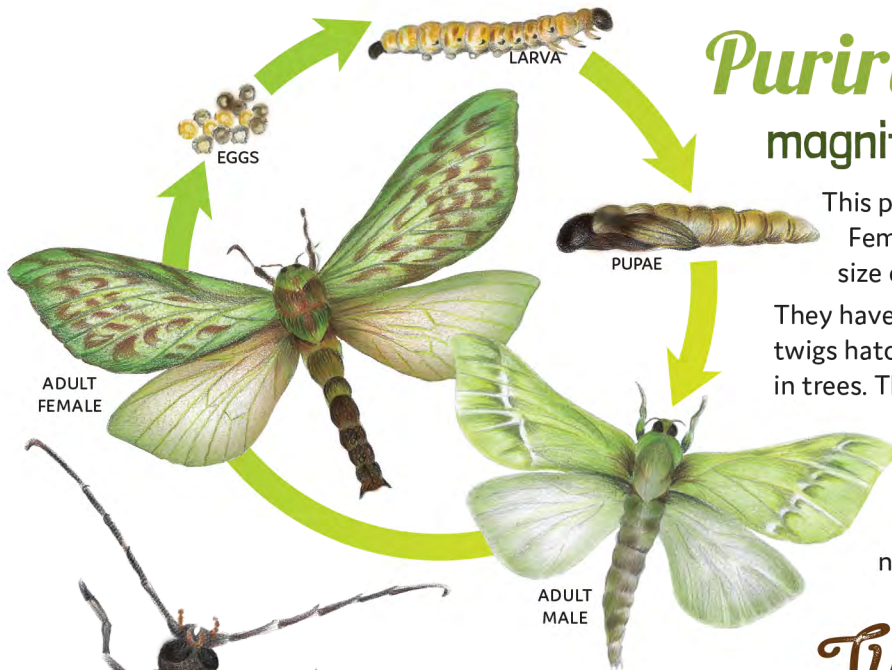
Mini-beasts and micro-monsters lurk all around us – foraging in leaves, hiding in trees, burrowing in logs and flying overhead.

SUPER SPECIAL - some of them are found nowhere else on the planet!

Puriri moth, Pepe Tuna magnificent flying creature

This pale green beauty is New Zealand's largest moth. Female wingspans reach 150mm, which is about the size of a child's hand!

They have a long and busy life. Eggs laid on leaves and twigs hatch into fungi-eating caterpillars that chew holes in trees. They stay in the hole for up to 6 years. When they are ready they make a special cocoon sleeping bag and slowly change into a moth. Emerging from their hole in the tree they fly away to find a mate. Adult moths only live for 3 days and have no mouths – they never eat!



Huhu Beetle - Rere

bumbling, flying monster...

You may hear Huhu bumping into your windows on warm summer nights as they stumble and crash while warming up to fly. They are New Zealand's largest and heaviest beetle growing up to 5cm long.

The larvae create large tunnels inside old, moist logs and spend up to two years feeding on decaying wood, growing bigger and stronger until they emerge as adults. Adult Huhu only live for two weeks and never eat – although they can bite!

Rō or whē **STICK INSECTS**

Stick insects hide by looking like leaves and twigs. These phantoms are found in a range of colours, shapes and sizes, some as big as 20cm long.

Stick insects are forever losing their legs, lucky they can grow new ones! A little shorter but still good as new – they can walk 1km/hour! These are the largest insects in New Zealand, and some only live in Northland.



Pūpūrangi Kauri Snails

Carrying their houses on their backs these enormous snails live around 20 years if they have safe habitats.

Naturally found only in Northland, they belong to the oldest family of land snails on earth, dating back 200 million years.

Kauri snails eat meat (carnivorous) which is very unusual for snails. Their favourite foods are insects, insect larvae and other snails. They like moist soils in forest and scrub with plenty of worms.

These ancient beasts are being eaten by rats and possums so keep those traps handy and set.

Activities

Weasels eat wētā, mice munch stick insects and rats snack on snails...

Keep your mini-beasts and micro-monsters safe from predators – get a rat trap going or join your local pest control group – check out Kiwi Coast's online Group Directory to find a project near you!

Create somewhere safe for mini-beasts to hide - Make a wētā hotel

There are many ways to make a wētā hotel... Saw a log in half, drill out some holes big enough for wētā to enter and make space for them to stay. Sandwich the log together using hinges and a hook to keep it closed. Attach to a tree or fencepost.

Or, stack some rocks or old bricks with holes or bits of old concrete together in a shady place with small spaces in between, not big enough for a rat, but plenty of space for wētā – lizards will love this too!



FEMALE
TREE WĒTĀ

Wētā

Dinosaurs of the insect world

Wētā are giant flightless crickets found only in New Zealand. There are five types of wētā – giant, tree, ground, tusked and cave.

Small wētā hunt smaller bugs and eat anything lying around.

Big wētā are vegetarians, eating leaves, seeds, flowers, fruit and twigs.

Wētā live in all sorts of places from mountain tops to caves, and of course, in your backyard.

Did you know that wētā have ears in their legs?

Wētā come out at night to eat - if you listen carefully you can hear them chatting to their neighbours.

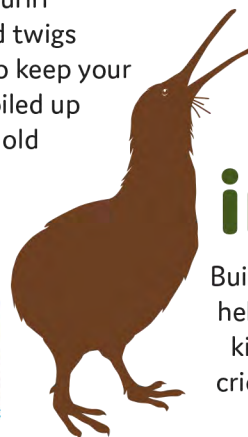
Plant their favourites

To help puriri moths and wētā, plant **putaputawētā (marble leaf)**, which is named after the wētā that often shelter in the old holes vacated by puriri moth larva. The new puriri moth caterpillars need old logs and twigs covered in fungi to start their life so keep your tree trimmings on the ground, piled up underneath your trees. These old bits of tree will attract huhu beetles too.



Kiwi LOVE insects too!

Building up a healthy stock of insects also helps kiwi thrive! The top 10 insects that kiwi love to eat are: worms, centipede, cricket larvae, flies, spiders, slaters, slugs, snails, millipedes and beetles.



Go to www.kiwicoast.org.nz/education for more info