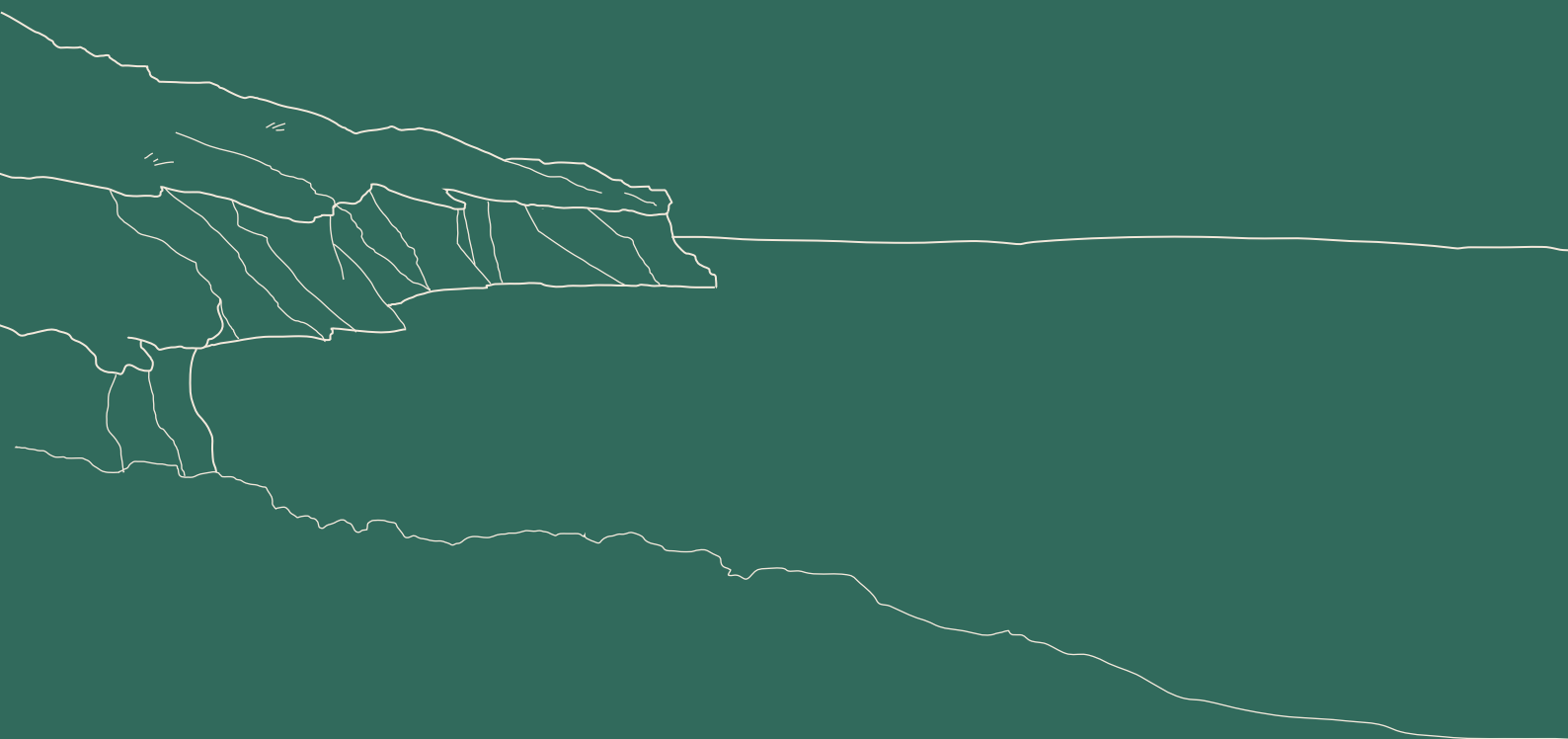


Ngā kūrae me ngā paripari takutai

Coastal headlands, cliffs and escarpments

Steep faces along the Wellington coastline are home to a surprising range of hardy plants. Often called coastal or grey scrub, these plant communities are dominated by clumps of wharariki, interspersed with broad-leafed poa and taupata or tauhinu. Orchids, ferns and herbs nestle amongst the larger shrubs and cling to craggy rock faces. These plants are adapted to survive blustering salt-laden winds and very little water. They provide habitat to several unique species including the Hutton's speargrass weevil and geometrid moth.

One of Wellington's important plant communities grey scrub, is found from Oruaiti around to Whitirea on the coastal escarpments and across the harbour. Grey scrub includes climbers like pohuehue and woody shrubs with fine, right-angled branches that grow in tangled mats. The nationally endangered shrub tororaro and regionally threatened matagouri both naturally grow amongst grey scrub.



Restoring these areas is slow going and requires hardy plants and hardy humans to look after them! They are often overrun with thick gorse and other equally tough weeds. The aim of planting projects at these sites is to plant natives between or within the gorse bushes, rocks and natural outcrops. The gorse acts as a shelter for young seedlings and the site is not opened up to the wind.

Tips for planting on and around headlands, cliffs and escarpments

Safety first! Watch out for loose rocks.

Ensure all seedlings to be planted are hardened off to salt spray and wind before planting them. Do this by slowly introducing them to the conditions, salt spray and wind, before planting them.

One of the biggest threats to young plants in these areas is browsing from rabbits and hares. Carry out rabbit control before planting and monitor animal damage throughout your project.

Shelter is key to establishing plants in these areas. Plant young plants firmly in the shelter of existing vegetation and rock formations, where there are gullies between landforms, plant taller shrubs and trees.

If there is gorse present, clear small areas between the bushes and plant into them. The gorse will act as a shelter while the young plants establish. Keep the cleared areas small so wind can't funnel through the site between young seedlings.



(Above) Coastal cliffs and scree slope with pockets of sand, tussock, flax and scab weed, Te Kopahau, South Coast.

(Middle) Silver tussock establishing well in the lower quarried areas of Te Hape Stream.

(Below) The nationally endangered tororaro, South coast, growing amongst grey scrub.

Plant list for coastal headlands, cliffs, escarpments & gullies

Coastal headlands, cliffs & escarpments

Māori/ Common name	Botanical name	Life form	Plant preferences & tolerances				Abundance	
			Soil moisture needs	Light levels	Frost tolerant	Wind tolerant	Early stage / initial planting	Later stage / shelter established
Akiraho / Golden akeake	<i>Olearia paniculata</i>	Dense shrub, 4m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	++	
Blue wheat grass	<i>Anthosachne solandri</i>	Grass	Dry to semi-moist	Sun to semi shade	Moderate	✓		+
Coastal tree daisy	<i>Olearia solandri</i>	Bushy shrub 3m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	++	
Common broom	<i>Carmichaelia australis</i>	Shrub 3m	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓		++
Cook Strait kōwhai	<i>Sophora molloyi</i>	Shrub up to 3m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun	Moderate	✓		++
Cook Strait melicytus	<i>Melicytus orarius</i>	Shrub	Semi-moist	Sun	Frost tender	✓		+
Tree Hebe	<i>Veronica parviflora</i>	Bushy shrub 2-4m	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	+++	
Horokaka, NZ ice plant	<i>Disphyma australe</i>	Ground cover	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	Frost tender	✓	++	
Karamū, shining karamu	<i>Coprosma lucida</i>	Shrub 3m	Semi-moist to dry	Sun to semi shade	✓	✓		++
Kōkihi, NZ spinach	<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>	Herb	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	Frost tender	✓	++	
Koromiko	<i>Veronica stricta</i>	Shrub, up to 4m	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	++	
Matagouri	<i>Discaria toumatou</i>	Shrub	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	Moderate	✓		+
Mingimingi	<i>Coprosma propinqua</i>	Shrub	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	+++	
Mīkoikoi / NZ iris	<i>Libertia ixioides</i>	Flax-like shrub, 0.7m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun to semi-shade	✓	✓		+
Pinātora / NZ daphne	<i>Pimelea prostrata</i>	Herb	Semi-moist	Sun	Moderate	✓		+

+ use sparingly ++ use commonly +++ use plentifully ✓ yes • categorised

Note: In the table above a 'herb' is a plant that is not woody and a 'shrub' has a hard woody stem with branches but no defined trunk.

Plant list for coastal headlands, cliffs, escarpments & gullies (cont.)

Coastal headlands, cliffs & escarpments		Life form	Plant preferences & tolerances				Abundance	
Māori/ Common name	Botanical name		Soil moisture needs	Light levels	Frost tolerant	Wind tolerant	Early stage/ initial planting	Later stage/ shelter established
Poa/ Broadleaved poa	<i>Poa anceps</i>	Grass	Semi-moist	Sun to semi-shade	✓	✓	++	
Puawānanga/ Small white clematis	<i>Clematis forsteri</i>	Climber	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	Moderate		++
Rangiora	<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>	Shrub 3m	Semi-moist to dry	Sun to semi shade	Moderate	✓		++
Scab weed	<i>Raoulia hookeri subsp. hookeri</i>	Herb	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	Moderate	✓		+
Silver tussock	<i>Poa cita</i>	Grass	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	✓	✓	+++	
Small leaved pōhuehue	<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	Scrambler	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	✓	✓	+++	
Taramea	<i>Aciphylla squarrosa var. squarrosa</i>	Herb	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓		+++
Tauhinu	<i>Ozothamnus leptophyllus</i>	Shrub 1-2m	Semi-moist to dry	Sun	✓ When Mature	✓	++	
Taupata	<i>Coprosma repens</i>	Shrub / small tree up to 4-6m	Semi-moist	Sun	✓ When Mature	✓	+++	
Thick leaved māhoe	<i>Melicytus crassifolius</i>	Shrub	Semi-moist	Sun	Moderate	✓		++
Ti kōuka/ Cabbage tree	<i>Cordyline australis</i>	Tree up to 20m	Moist	Sun to semi-shade	✓ When Mature	✓		+
Toetoe	<i>Austroderia toetoe</i>	Grass	Semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	++	
Tororaro	<i>Muehlenbeckia astonii</i>	Shrub up to 4m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓		+
Wharariki / Mountain flax	<i>Phormium cookianum subsp. hookeri</i>	Flax up to 1.5m	Dry to semi-moist	Sun	✓	✓	+++	

+ use sparingly ++ use commonly +++ use plentifully ✓ yes • categorised