

Mr. Nairn, of Pourerere, Hawke's Bay, says there are four kinds of flax, named by the Natives in his neighbourhood, the *Tapoto*, the *Wharanui*, the *Kauhangaroa*, and the *Wharariki*.

The *Tapoto* is the flax principally used by Natives for dressing. It gives a strong lustrous fibre, and is readily dressed in their way. It is often planted by them. It luxuriates in very rich vegetable soil with plenty of moisture. It will grow, in favourable situations, to the height of four feet. The leaves are narrow and stand erect, have a deep-purple margin, and this kind is planted by the Natives in rows twenty feet apart.

The *Wharanui* is the other kind used by the Natives for the same purpose, and is planted in the same way. This variety grows much better, and has a much wider leaf with a red margin, and is found in the same localities as the *Tapoto*.

The *Kauhangaroa* is a dark green and very tall growing variety, with a black margin to the leaves. The leaves bend outwards. It is dressed by the Natives only for baskets and matting. It is never planted by them, and is very easily broken with a jerk.

The *Wharariki* is very broad and tall in its leaf, and is used by the Natives for the same purpose as the *Kauhangaroa*. The fibre is also very tender, and never used by Natives except for kits, &c. This variety is found in the richest of the soils—bottoms of small valleys, by the sides of streams, and is never planted by the Natives.

In the Province of Nelson there are two or three recognized varieties, distinguished by the colour of their borders—brown or red, black or blue, and green. The red-edged is said to be the best for all purposes. These kinds grow on a great variety of soils, though they thrive best on river banks or drained swamps.

The Rev. Mr. Taylor, of Wanganui, enumerates ten varieties of flax, several of which are cultivated and used by Natives for their own purposes; and Mr. Armstrong, of Christchurch, also enumerates twelve varieties, which, he says, are cultivated in the Government Domain. He says the most distinct varieties are—

- (1.) The *Oue*.—Leaf narrow, very strong, edges of leaves orange-coloured.
- (2.) The *Atirankawa*.—Leaf broad, light green, abrupt at the points, edges light brown.
- (3.) *Huhiroa*.—Leaf very long, tapering at the point, edges light brown.
- (4.) *Tihore*.—Leaves linear, very strong, edges dark red.
- (5.) *Tapoto*.—Similar to *Tihore*, tapering at the points, edges red.
- (6.) *Kauhangaroa*.—Leaves very large, coarse-looking, edges and base of leaf dark brown; and two variegated forms.

Mr. Armstrong has furnished the Commissioners with the weights of several of these varieties, both before and after being dressed, viz. :—

		Weight before dressing.		Weight after dressing.	
		lb.	oz.		oz.
<i>Kauhangaroa</i>	...	0	14	...	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
<i>Kuroa</i>	...	1	12	...	5
<i>Oue</i>	...	1	6	...	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Tihore</i>	...	1	13	...	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
<i>Rataroa</i>	...	1	6	...	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
<i>Tapoto</i>	...	3	4	...	9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Variegated kind	...	3	5	...	10

But this does not show the relative market value of each variety, so as to show which sort it is most advisable to cultivate, and it may be that Mr. Armstrong's experiments have been performed on several specimens of these plants not indigenous to this Province, and but recently introduced there.

Mr. Jenkins, already named, says, on the authority of Natives around him, that the best kinds of flax for producing good fibre by machinery are—

Ngaro.—Bluish green, with black edge at base.

Ngaro waaka.—Bright green, red edge.

Pupu.—Yellowish green, brown butts, red edge.

Poi Tamuha and *Ngutu Kaka*.—Dark green.

Tumara.—Dark green, red edge, and a kind of wave on the leaf.

He says, too, that all the above have large long leaves, and are very much alike, and that the Natives distinguish them by the base of the leaf plant.

Mr. Kelly, of New Plymouth, gives the names of twenty-two supposed varieties known in his Province, viz. :—

Atiraukawa, *Huhiroa*, *Parekoritawa* (variegated), *Oue*, *Tihore* (I have not been able to satisfy myself whether this is the name of a plant or of a variety), *Ngutunui*, *Atewhiki*, *Korako*, *Taiore*, *Takaiapu*, *Oue*, *Rataroa*, *Raumoa*, *Manunu*, *Tipuna*, *Huruhuruhika*, *Ngutuparera*, *Tito-o-moe-wai*, *Ngaro*, *Tarariki*, *Warariki*, *Pato*.

He says, "I cannot give a description of the whole of the above, the following are the only plants of which I can give any reliable description :"—

Atiraukawa.—This plant is said by the Natives to produce the best and most abundant fibre; it is not large, as compared with *Huhiroa*, but it is said to be a quick grower. The leaf is inclined to bronze colour when at maturity, when young of a light olive-green; the young leaf is Gothic pointed, and the edge of a dull dark brown, a shade lighter on the inner margin; sometimes leaves are seen with the brown relieved by a bright red line.

Huhiroa.—This plant has a bluish green coloured leaf, which narrows gradually to the point, and a narrow edge of black or very dark brown; the keel has a reddish chocolate colour; it grows very luxuriantly and produces good fibre; it is easily separated from the green gummy matter by the Native process of stripping.

Oue.—This leaf is narrow, of an olive green, and the edge and keel orange-coloured. (In the enclosed papers this description applies to *Tihore*, but I think erroneously so.)

Parekoritawa.—This is a very beautiful plant; the leaf is of a bright green, striped longitudinally by a