

# Compare a rākau (tree) to the giant kauri Tāne Mahuta.



1. Find **he rākau toa** - a mighty tree - in your backyard, your school grounds, your neighbourhood, or in your wider region.  
*Your mighty tree will be called **te rākau toa** in the following activities.*
2. Read the facts about Tāne Mahuta and then get to know **te rākau toa** using the activities below - greet, compare and grow.
3. Take photos. Share your comparisons on your social media. Use **#bewithatree**.

## Tāne Mahuta

**Tāne Mahuta**  
“Lord of the Forest”  
is New Zealand’s largest  
known living tree.  
**He rākau kauri.**

**Tāne Mahuta**  
stands tall in the  
Waipoua Forest located in  
Te Tai Tokerau - Northland,  
in the tribal area of  
Te Roroa Iwi.

**Tāne Mahuta**  
is estimated to be  
between 1250 and  
2500 years old.

**Tāne Mahuta**  
measures:  
Trunk girth: 13.77 m  
Trunk height: 17.68 m  
Total height: 51.2 m

**Tāne Mahuta is named  
after the atua Tāne.**

**In Te Ao Māori, a Māori  
world view, Tāne is one  
of the many sons of  
Ranginui, the sky father,  
and Papatūānuku, the  
earth mother.**

**Tāne was the child that  
separated his parents to  
create Te Ao Marama, the  
world of light. Tāne then  
set about clothing his  
mother with the forests.**

**All living creatures of the  
forest are regarded as  
ngā tamariki o Tāne,  
his children.**

Activity 1  
Greet

He mihi ki te rākau toa.  
Be with and acknowledge te rākau toa.

Mihi with te rākau toa.

If you know the tree species, eg. rimu, say..

**Tēnā koe e te rimu.**

If you don't know the tree species say..

**Tēnā koe e te rākau toa.**

**Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.**

eg. the clean air we breathe / being a home for birds / sheltering me from the sun / your beauty / your seeds / your fruit / letting me swing



Awahi te rākau toa.

Give te rākau toa a hug.

Hōngi with te rākau toa, sharing the breath of life.

Share a waiata with te rākau toa.

Activity 2  
Compare

He aha te rahi o te rākau toa?  
What is the size of te rākau toa?

How could you compare the height of te rākau toa with that of Tāne Mahuta?

Tāne Mahuta is approximately 51 m tall.

Make a good 'guesstimate' for te rākau toa or work it out [using this link](#).



**Measuring the girth of a tree.**  
How many tamariki are needed?  
Visit this rimu tree - 800+ years old - he rākau toa of Otari-Wilton Bush in Wellington City.

How could you compare the girth of te rākau toa with that of Tāne Mahuta?

Tāne Mahuta has a trunk girth of 14 m.

[Use this link](#) to find ideas on how to measure the girth of te rākau toa.

Activity 3  
Grow

Whakatinanatanga!  
Take action!

Looking for new growth.

Notice any seeds, fruits or seedlings underneath or nearby te rākau toa.

How could you look after te rākau toa and encourage other trees to grow to be as mighty?



*He whakatauki :  
Kia tipu ai ēnei tipu hei rākau nui.  
May these tender seedlings grow into majestic trees.*

Grow your own te rākau toa.

Collect some leaf litter and create a Biodome for growing new seedlings.

Here is a link to a [KCC Biodome activity](#).