

ALL FLAX

Kete and other Harakeke Objects
by Wendy Naepflin

10th October 2014 onwards



ALL FLAX exhibits how flexible this humble plant is. It is intrinsically Kíwi and was used for food storage and clothing. Happily it still finds a place in our society today from useful kete to decorative wedding flowers.

ALL FLAX is a tongue in cheek reference to our famous sporting teams, as a weaver I'm equally obsessed with tackling flax projects!

"Weaving with harakeke is calming and exciting all at the same time, just the sight of the leaves and the smell of it inspires me to want to create something."



About flax weaving

New Zealand flax (*phormium tenax*) is unique to New Zealand. When Maori first arrived from warmer Polynesia it was very important for their survival, harakeke (flax) was used in countless forms (clothes, housing, ropes, traps, nets, storage, medicine, toys etc.).

This collection of kete (bag/basket) is representative of my harakeke weaving journey over the last couple of years. Starting off with simple forms in natural colours then progressing to more complicated colour and pattern combinations, each kete is unique and has its own story.

Weaving was an expert's task, performed under a spiritual tapu –ancient practices which myself and other weavers still adhere to today (e.g. no harvesting during rain, no food while weaving etc.)

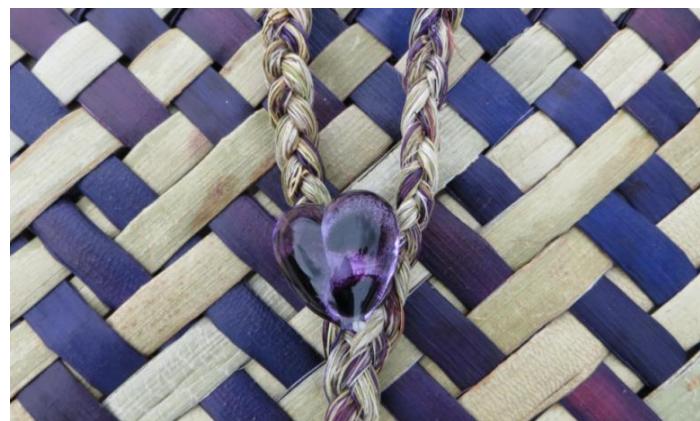
The green flax blades can be woven, so too the white fibre (muka) after extraction.



Harakeke can be dyed with traditional or modern dyes, and enhanced by many different weaving patterns.

Preparation is a time consuming process, but is essential to avoid shrinking, curling and to create the desired colours.

My pieces are made for everyday use and are tougher than they look, a kete should be usable for many years if kept out of strong sunlight and high humidity.





About me

I was curious that flax growing in the garden could be woven. I started my learning from books and friends, but I was hooked after attending my first weaving wananga (place of learning) at Pa Te Aroha marae in Whirinaki, Hokianga. There Mandy Sunlight taught me how to weave parou and kete. I now weave 4 times a year in Hokianga, have attended my first national weaving hui (meeting) in Kawerau and meet other keen weavers every few weeks to try out new techniques, colours, finishes etc.

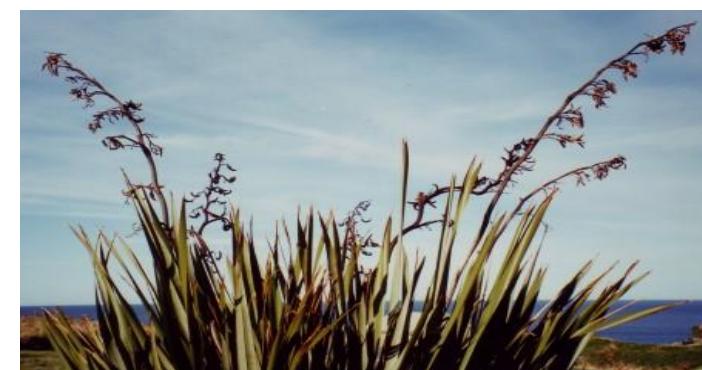
I love learning about Maori tikanga (protocol) around the usage of harakeke and am continually surprised at how versatile this humble plant is. I hope to weave for many years to come and I thoroughly enjoy producing beautiful things from something that I can grow in my garden.

Nga mihi nui ki a kouto, Wendy



Exhibitions and memberships

- ❖ Kohukohu Village Art Gallery, Pa te Aroha group, May 2011
- ❖ Te Karanga Gallery, Auckland, with Pa te Aroha group, September 2011
- ❖ Member of Te Roopu Raranga Whatu o Aotearoa
- ❖ Pa te Aroha weaving group, Whirinaki Marae, Hokianga



Flax weaving (kete, wall hangings, flower arrangements, wedding or Christmas decorations) can be made to order, please contact me via wendy@whangareitours.co.nz or 09 437 6238. Thanks!