

Growing kōwhai

Kōwhai are easy to grow and can take as little as two years to develop from seedling to a plant large enough to put in the ground. They can flower within seven years.

They're easily grown from seed as long as the seed coat is abraded with sandpaper.



Cromwell School student preparing kōwhai seeds for planting

Caring for kōwhai

Kōwhai more or less look after themselves. Protect young plants from frost and pests like slugs, snails, possums and rabbits. Take care using herbicides as kōwhai are sensitive and easily damaged.

Local plants like local conditions

Locally-sourced kōwhai have the best chance of survival. There are eight species of kōwhai in NZ but only one is a tree that grows naturally in Otago – *Sophora microphylla*. Young trees of this species have a more tangled form than the others.

Myth buster

Kōwhai seeds have a reputation for being poisonous but there's no evidence to show that they are poisonous at all.

We need your help

Plant a kōwhai and ensure a golden future for Otago. You could join a volunteer group and take part in mass kōwhai plantings in your school grounds, parks, reserves or along tracks. Or you could plant small groves in your backyard or on your farm or station. There are many sites around Otago where you could get involved.



Find out more

www.doc.govt.nz/projectgold

or your local Department of Conservation office:

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Te Papa Atawhai

project gold

celebrating & cherishing kōwhai



The new gold

Golden kōwhai could once again flourish in Otago. Project Gold is the first step in re-establishing native forest and attracting tūi and bellbird/korimako.



Planting at Clyde rail head

When the gold ran out

Native forest once covered Otago and kōwhai made up a large part of that woodland. Humans came along and cut down and burned trees to make way for farms and houses. Only small groves of kōwhai and isolated lone trees now remain. They're threatened by pests, and old age.



Flat Top Hill, Alexandra



Cromwell Gorge



Leith Valley, Dunedin

Kōwhai are a treasure

Kōwhai have undergone a massive decline. Here are a few reasons why we should protect and cherish them.

- Kōwhai are unique to New Zealand.
- They are one of our few deciduous trees.
- Their flowers attract nectar-feeding birds like tūi, bellbird and kākā.
- They are valued by Māori for their medicinal properties.
- They offer a spectacular sign of spring.
- They are not hard to grow – they are tough and tolerate many soil types.
- They feature as a loved New Zealand emblem on coins and stamps.