

Media Release

NOT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. PUBLICATION DATE: Sunday 5 June 2022 (NZ Arbor Day)

Sacred Pōhutukawa winner on NZ Arbor Day

New Zealand Arboricultural Association | 3 June 2022

The inaugural Rākau o te tau Tree of the Year Aotearoa winner is the Sacred Pōhutukawa Tangi Te Korowhiti, receiving 1,736 votes from tree lovers around the country.

Named Tangi Te Korowhiti the Waikato Pōhutukawa holds a special place in New Zealand history. According to Tainui tradition, the Tainui canoe was hauled ashore at the end of its voyage from Hawaiki and moored to the tree as its final destination. This tree remains as one of the most culturally significant living tāonga for all New Zealand.

Susan Turner Chair Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo says “Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo are pleased that Tangi Te Korowhiti has been recognised as tāonga of such national importance as the ‘Inaugural Rākau o te tau Tree of the Year Aotearoa.’ Tangi Te Korowhiti and Te Papa o Karewa rākau are tightly weaved in the history of Tainui waka and the people of Kawhia. Ngāti Hikairo thank those within our community and across Aotearoa that voted to recognise Tangi te Korowhiti te tau tree of the year in Aotearoa where our tāonga is recognised and held in such high esteem.”

Delta arborist and founder of the competition, Rimu Tane, says that the first year has established the groundwork for next years expanded competition where New Zealanders will be able to nominate and vote for their favourite trees.

“Trees play such a formative role in our lives, we want people, families and communities to start thinking about these trees and their future. Next year we’ll open up open up the competition so that our communities can nominate their own special trees”.

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For more information: [Sacred Pōhutukawa Tangi Te Korowhiti](#) – Tree of the Year story

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About NZ Arb: The New Zealand Arboricultural Association (NZ Arb) is the national body representing professional and non-professional people involved in New Zealand tree care and the tree industry. Their mission is to encourage, foster, improve and educate in all aspects of arboriculture throughout New Zealand

About Arbor Day: Arbor Day is a day where people are encouraged to plant trees. Many countries observe the holiday, but the date varies depending on climate and season. The world’s first documented arbor festival took place in the Spanish village of Mondoñedo in 1594 and the first dedicated Arbor Day was held in Nebraska in 1872. New Zealand celebrated Arbor Day for the first time in Greytown in 1890 and has celebrated it annually on June 5 since 1977.