THE FACTS ON KAURI DIEBACK

1. What is kauri dieback?

Kauri dieback is a fungus-like disease specific to New Zealand kauri. This disease can kill seedlings and trees of all ages. In 2008, kauri dieback was formally identified as a distinct and previously unknown species of phytophthora.

The phytophthora genus is a group of water moulds which can cause plant disease in both crops and natural ecosystems. As the cause of the Irish potato famine in the 1840s, *Phytophthora infestans* is the most well known of this group.

2. What does PTA stand for?

PTA stands for *Phytophthora taxon Agathis*.

- Phytophthora (meaning 'plant destroyer'in Greek) is a genus of plant diseases.
- taxon Agathis – simply means, the kauri genus.
- So PTA means 'a plant disease that affects the kauri genus'.

PTA is only the temporary 'tag' name that has been given to this species until we learn more about the genetics, biology and morphology of this organism. Within the next year a formal scientific description should be completed and submitted with a new official name to the Code of Botanical Nomenclature. "Kauri dieback" will continue to be used as the common name for this disease.

3. What does kauri dieback do to kauri trees?

Microscopic spores in the soil infect kauri roots and damage the tissues that carry nutrients within the tree. Infected trees show a range of symptoms including yellowing of foliage, loss of leaves, canopy thinning, dead branches and lesions that bleed resin at the base of the trunk extending to the major roots and sometimes girdling the trunk as a "collar rot". Some infected trees can show canopy dieback and even be killed without any bleeding resin on the trunks.

4. Where is it?

Kauri dieback has been found in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park, on private land throughout the Auckland region, in the forest plantations of Omahuta, Glenbervie and Russell in Northland, Department of Conservation reserves at Okura, Albany, Pakiri, Great Barrier, Trounson Kauri Park and Waipoua Forest in Northland, home of our most iconic kauri - Tane Mahuta.

At this stage, the disease has not been detected in many areas of Northland forest, the Hunua Ranges, Hauraki Gulf Islands (excluding Great Barrier) and bush in the Coromandel peninsula. It is imperative that we protect these uninfected areas.

5. How is it spread?

The spores of kauri dieback are found in the soil around infected kauri. Any movement of contaminated soil can spread the disease. Human activity causing soil movement (on footwear, machinery or equipment) is thought to be the greatest cause of spread. Kauri dieback can also spread through ground water, underground root-to-root contact and soil on animals.

6. What can we do to stop it spreading?

Make sure shoes, tyres and equipment are cleaned to remove all visible soil and plant material before AND after visiting kauri forest.

Please use cleaning stations where available installed on parks. Keep to defined park tracks at all times: any movement of soil around the roots of a tree has the potential to spread the disease. Keep your dog on a leash at all times: dogs can inadvertently spread the disease if they move soil around infected trees.

7. Will parks or reserves be closed?

Boot cleaning stations with track upgrades and temporary closures of tracks will effectively manage the spread of kauri dieback in many cases.

However, the closure of parks or reserves is another option to minimise the spread of this disease via humans that may be used by individual landowners, land managers and/or mana whenua. They will make this decision on a case by case basis, balancing recreational requirements, kauri density and ecological value, disease status and management resources. The programme endorses track closures as one strategy in preventing the spread of the disease.

8. What should I do if I have kauri on my land?

Ensure all visitors to your property (friends, family, and contractors) know to arrive with clean footwear, equipment and tyres especially if they are anywhere near kauri trees.

Do not walk on kauri tree roots or compact soil around them. Keep dogs and animals away from kauri.
Fence off kauri in rural situations to prevent damage and disease spread by stock.

Download a warning sign and put it up to alert visitors to the dangers of spreading the disease. This can be laminated to make it more durable, or for a more permanent sign please contact the Kauri Dieback Hotline on 0800 NZ KAURI (69 52874).

9. Will composting kill the spores of kauri dieback? What should I do with weeds removed from around my kauri?

The compost process may not kill spores of kauri dieback in soil attached to plants. Any weeds removed from areas of kauri should be left on site – not placed in community weed bins or green waste for composting.

10. Can I use the timber from my dead kauri?

No. All timber from trees affected by kauri dieback is considered a biohazard and must not go into greenwaste or chipped up.

It is not known how far the disease goes within kauri. Until this is known the whole tree must be treated as a potential source of contamination and left on site where possible. Research is underway to determine how much of this wood is salvageable.

CONTACT US

For more information, or to report any suspect sightings of diseased kauri on public or private land, phone the Kauri Dieback Hotline on 0800 NZ KAURI (695 2874) or visit www.kauridieback.co.nz

KAURI DIEBACK PROGRAMME PARTNERS: TĀNGATA WHENUA | MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES | DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION | NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL | AUCKLAND COUNCIL | WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL | BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL

KEEP KAURI STANDING
STOP KAURI DIEBACK DISEASE SPREADING
KIA TOITU HE KAURI