



HOUHERE

Maori name.	Houhere
Common name	Lacebark
Botanical name	<i>Hoheria populnea</i>

What does it look like?

Houhere is a graceful, upright tree which grows to eleven metres. It has a lot of branches and looks rather like a poplar. The somewhat leathery leaves are 7 -12 cm long with serrated edges. The large, scented white star-like flowers smother the trees in late summer/autumn. The name "Lacebark" is derived from the pattern of the bark, which is tough and made up of several layers. The outer layers are pierced by outgrowths from the inner wood which form an attractive lacy pattern.

Where does it grow?

Houhere is found naturally only from North Cape to the Waikato and Bay of Plenty, growing in coastal and lowland forest from sea level up to 450 metres. It tolerates moderate frost, but not prolonged drought, infertile soil or excessive waterlogging.

Growing tips . . . in your plant growing unit

Trim the tops of the plant in late summer/autumn, as they approach 30 cm in height to prevent them getting leggy.

Planting out for soil conservation

Houhere is very suitable for planting as low tier shelter among taller trees. It is also good for planting along stream and river banks.

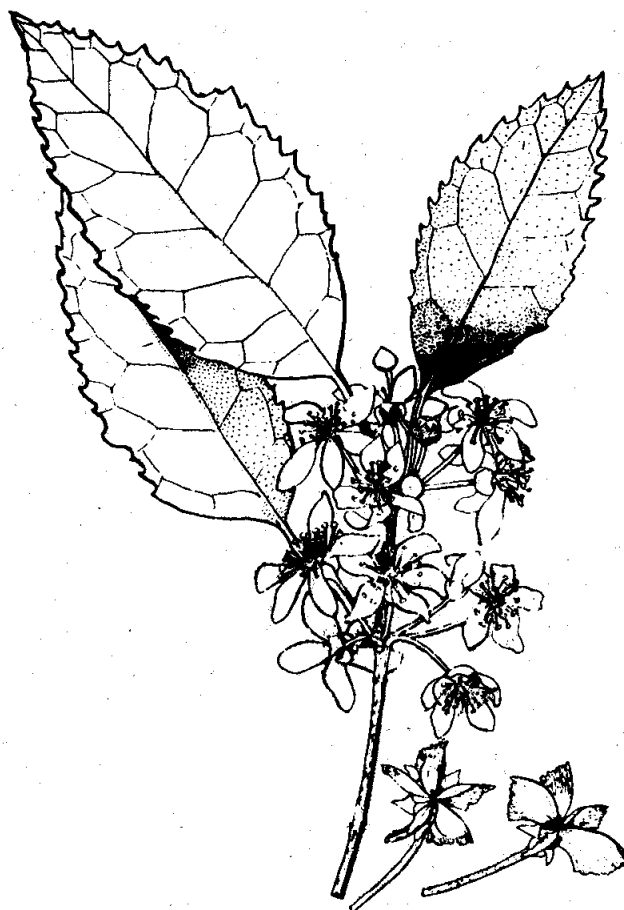
Used to ...

The inner bark was an important fibre source for the early Maori, being twisted into rope or beaten into felted bark sheets similar to tapa cloth. Maori made a jelly by soaking the inner bark in cold water and used it both externally for sore and weak eyes, and internally for soothing the digestive system.

The wood makes good firewood - and is suitable for paper making.

Did you know . . . ?

The *Hoheria* genus (group of species) consists of five species, all of which are confined to New Zealand: lacebarks aren't found anywhere else in the world. Lacebarks are in the Malvaceae family which includes cotton.



Prepared by the Trees for Survival Trust, with the help of the Lotteries Grants Board. Schools may copy this material and use it for educational purposes.

Picture from Lindsay Poole and Nancy Adams, 1990, *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand*, DSIR Publishing.