

## **Frequently asked questions**

**What is kauri dieback disease?** Kauri dieback is caused by a microscopic fungus-like organism called *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* (PTA).

**How does it spread?** Microscopic spores in soil and water.

**What does it do to kauri?** This disease infects kauri roots and damages the tissues that carry nutrients and water within the tree. This basically starves the tree to death. Symptoms include yellowing leaves, canopy thinning, dead branches and bleeding gum at the base of the trunk. Nearly all infected trees die.

**Where is it?** Testing of soil samples taken from the base of kauri trees has confirmed that kauri dieback has infected trees at sites in Northland, Auckland and on Great Barrier Island. There has been widespread surveillance on the Coromandel and this is the first time kauri dieback has been detected on the Peninsula.

**What can we do?** Keep to tracks and off kauri roots, clean shoes, tyres and equipment before and after visiting kauri forests. Spread the word (not the disease)! The more people who know about this disease and understand the need to prevent soil movement, the more likely we are to contain it and save our kauri forests for the future.

**Where did it come from?** When and where this disease came from is still unknown, but it is possible it was introduced from overseas.

**How long has it been here?** We're not sure. Scientists realised kauri dieback was "a new disease to science" in 2008. However, spores of kauri dieback were first discovered along with sick kauri on Great Barrier Island in the 1970s. Identification methods at the time led to these samples being misclassified.

**So why is it a problem now?** Soil microbes can take a long time to build up in the soil before any effect is seen in the environment. It may be that we have been spreading it around kauri forests for the last 50 years without realising it. It's only recent science that provided us with an understanding of the disease and the impacts it causes.

**What is being done?** Since 2008 tāngata whenua, the Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Auckland Council and the Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty regional councils have joined forces in a coordinated programme to manage this disease. Scientists are conducting research to increase our knowledge of how the disease spreads and develop effective control methods. Work is also going into improving track construction, drainage and other man-made influences that will help reduce the spread of the disease.

**We encourage everyone to help "Keep Kauri Standing."** We all can help – tourists, hunters, trappers, trampers, runners, bikers, walkers. When you are around kauri:

- 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 installed on major tracks: scrub to remove all soil and spray with disinfectant;

- Stay on the track and off kauri roots;
- Keep your dog on a leash at all times.

More information on kauri dieback is available at:

<http://www.kauridieback.co.nz>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheKauriDiebackManagementProgramme>