

## Excerpt from “The Notable Trees of New Plymouth”, 2002

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Based on a review of S.W. (Bob) Burstall's Mensuration Report # 19, 1973.

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Notable Tree N° NT 36

“Puriri” p77

NATIVE TREE: 36

SPECIES: *Vitex lucens*.

COMMON NAME(S): Puriri.

B.B CATEGORY: Native Notable Tree - Local Interest.

### ORIGINAL READINGS

LOCATION: In the gully between the Bowl of Brooklands turning circle and the racecourse.

DATE MEASURED: 1973

HEIGHT: 60 ft (18.3 m)

CANOPY SPREAD: 60 ft (18.3 m)

GIRTH AT G.L: 32 ft (9.76 m) – “*diameter at G.L 3.108 m*”

BURSTALL'S NOTES: An enormous, malformed tree that George Fuller described as: “*A most irregular shaped tree, the configurations of which are very difficult to describe, but it would probably rank as the most unorthodox tree in the park*”. With one portion coming out at the base at an angle with a girth of 13 ft (4 m) at 10 ft (3.05 m). Quoting Fuller regarding this portion “... *that this monstrous trunk is able to withstand the force of gravity, is in itself noteworthy*”. Access to the spot is easy. The tree is 7 ft (2.1 m) larger in girth than “the Puriri of Reretiti Hill” in Northland, described by Bob Lawn as one of the largest puriris.

### CURRENT READINGS

UPDATED LOCATION: Brooklands Park, 22 m from the Bowl of Brooklands security fence at the entrance to the Maranui Gully there is an obscure track to the left that leads to this unusual puriri.

DATE MEASURED: 17th October 2001

HEIGHT: 20 m

CANOPY SPREAD: 26.75 m

DIAMETER AT G.L: 3.598 m

REMARKS: 40 m up this track and on the left-hand side a cluster of five relatively uniformed puriri trunks is located. The ground level circumference for this cluster is 8.3 m and the leader closest to the track has a dbh = 80 cm. Opposite and on the upside of the track is the unique and extremely large puriri (**Figs. 60 and 61**). At just above ground level two distinctive trunks arise, one reclining and overhanging the valley, the other vertical. The erect trunk has a diameter of 1.57 m at 60 cm. The trunk, which reclines is separated at its base into two sections resembling an inverted Y. The gap between these two sections is 1.4 m x 45 cm making it large enough to crawl through. Measurements were taken just below the ‘crutch’ where the two ‘legs’ join. The upper-most (Maranui Gully side) leg has a diameter of 1.242 m. The lower leg (Racecourse side) has a diameter of 1.019 m. The original measurement on the reclining trunk was taken at 10 ft (3.05 m) which can be likened to the ‘waist’ above the junction of the legs. This girth was re-measured and decreased by 21 cm, as it was 3.96 m, (diameter = 1.261 m) in 1973 and 3.75 m, (diameter = 1.194 m) in 2001. The very unusual habit of the tree makes it impossible to identify the exact point at which Burstall's measurements were taken. A kohekohe trunk is wedged beneath the reclining trunk, aiding the tree to achieve such large dimensions because it obviously helps to support the considerable load. In viewing this arboreal spectacle one is compelled to wonder firstly whether the two giant trunks are merely close neighbours or divergent trunks of the one entity. Following that quandary there is the task of working out just how a trouser-shaped trunk has been produced since it is in defiance of conventional growth patterns.

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Finally one has to wonder over the strength in bearing such a great timber mass at an angle plus a massive extra burden of profuse epiphytes.  
(Last paragraph written by G. Fuller).  
(~Fuller, 1982: Diameter at G.L = 3.232 m. Diameter at 30 cm on upright portion = 1.404 m. Diameter of upper-most (Maranui Gully side) "leg" = 1.131 m. Diameter of "lower leg" (Racecourse side) = 95.9 cm. Diameter at union "waist" just above "legs" = 1.471 m).