

BULLRUSH - Raupo

Typha orientalis

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Traditionally, raupo stalks were used for thatching the walls and roofs of whare (homes) and storehouses, and their fluffy seed heads were used to stuff bedding. Leaves were used for canoe sails and kites, while stalks made good temporary rafts. The yellow pollen was gathered and baked into a sweet, light cake.



Growth form

Upright, belt-shaped leaves up to 2 m long and about 2–3 cm wide are clustered on unbranched upright stems. It grows up to 4 m tall, usually in large colonies, in shallow, fresh, or slightly brackish water.

Flowers

Distinctive flower spikes are 'hotdogs' of tightly packed flowers surrounding the stem. Lots of yellow pollen is produced by the male flower spike in summer.

Water purification

Dense stands of raupo help to make it a good water purifier. Water flow is slowed down, letting sediments to sink to the bottom of the water, they also absorb large quantities of nutrients and pollutants. Raupo roots provide sites for microbes to attach to, which break down organic wastes and improve water quality.

raupo fun fact

Traditional material used for making poi.

Raupo provide habitat for wildlife, including eels, birds spawning whitebait and other fish.