

# ◆ History of Harvesting

## What is Matariki?

During the time of Matariki, there are three major principles that represent unity. These are: Reflection, Celebration and Planning for the future.

Reflection is the action of going back and observing your past and using that knowledge for a good purpose. Reflection is the ability to acknowledge the past.

Celebration is to commemorate the present and honour your whanau and friends. Celebration is an important principle to have because it keeps people together and unites them as one in order to rise for lengths. Planning for the future is to look forwards and arrange goals for the next years in order to build knowledge.



## What is harvesting?

Harvesting is the action of collecting or gathering things. When it is Matariki, people usually gather food in order to celebrate. Maori usually harvest crops and food before Matariki and store all the food in a pātaka kai (storage house).

## What is the significance of harvesting during Matariki?

Harvesting holds a great significance in the eyes of Maori as it is a symbol of uniting and sharing the kai (food) that they had gathered. Matariki served as a marker for the upcoming winter. Maori would harvest their food before Matariki in order to share the food during Matariki. The foods Maori harvest are: kumara, shellfish, kamo kamo, meats and more.



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## How is food harvested?

The harvesting of food varies depending on the nourishment. These days we use big tractors that harvest much faster than back then. Going back about 300 years ago, Early Maori were harvesting by hand, picking kumara straight from the ground and finding and picking herbs from the bush.

It was a very physical dutie back then but it was an task which aided in bringing people together, for after the harvesting had been done, the Maori would feast upon the bounties of the sustenance which had been gathered.

## Tools of Harvesting

The tools Maori had used in order to harvest were usually the adzes (toki) and the chisels (whao). An adze is a type of tool which looks similar to an axe. Adzes have been used since the Stone Age and is used for agriculture and woodwork. It shares the same purpose as a hoe when harvesting. Chisels are cutting tools with sharp edges. The purpose of a chisel is to loosen and aerate hard soil while leaving crop residue for future crops to grow.

## Storing food

The food was stored in pātaka kai (storehouses) or rua kūmara (underground pits). The Maori had stored food by drying and sealing the food inside whāriki (flax matting). This is the process of preserving.



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