

HOW TO DECOLONISE KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES

NEW ZEALAND'S
BIOLOGICAL
HERITAGE

Ngā Koiora
Tuku Iho

We asked forest pathologists, microbiologists, kaupapa Māori researchers, and biosecurity practitioners what hindered and/or enabled their work protecting native trees and forests. We mapped their answers and saw some patterns emerge. The first four categories in our coding system describe problematic colonial legacies. The next two are opportunities for change and improvement.



COLOUR CODE

Colonial legacies in biosecurity practices

RACISM
REDUCTIONISM
EXTRACTIVISM
COMPETITION

Opportunities for decolonising biodiversity protection
WORKING WITH MĀORI
WORKING WITH OR WITHOUT MĀORI

1. We used the theme of **reductionism** when our participants spoke of the fragmentation of responsibilities, tasks, and processes, or expressed they couldn't see a link between their biosecurity practices and the protection of native trees.

2. We used the theme of **systemic racism** when our participants spoke about power imbalance, unequal distribution of resources and decision-making capacities, or acknowledged the dominance of science over mātauranga Māori and other place-based knowledge systems.

3. We used the theme of **competition** when our participants expressed their inability to collaborate with colleagues or local communities, often due to funding structures.

4. We used the theme of **extractivism** when our participants talked about private and property rights being prioritised at the expense of the common good, or referred to the historical tendency to use Māori as free repositories of data, botanic samples, or workforce for monitoring and management.

5. The theme of **working with Māori** includes practices of reconnecting humans and nature, welcoming community input, acknowledging the benefits of iwi/hapū leadership in biodiversity protection, and valuing mātauranga-based solutions.

6. Finally, the theme of **working with or without Māori** incorporates reflections about the need to adopt decolonising practices in biosecurity, but not only when our Māori colleagues and collaborators are watching.

With all this information, we looked for a way forward. We thought about how to transform systemic issues through conscious attempts to do things differently. To assist you in this process, we created a set of cards which can be held in your hands and shared with others to trigger discussions and ignite collective imagination.

Colonial legacies in biosecurity practices

RACISM
REDUCTIONISM
EXTRACTIVISM
COMPETITION

Opportunities for decolonising biodiversity protection and biosecurity

WORKING WITH MĀORI
WORKING WITH OR WITHOUT MĀORI

Better work practices for biodiversity protection

CARE
Te Manaakitanga
ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRUST
Te Papanga me te Whakapono
RELATIONSHIP AND REGENERATION
Te Hononga me te Whakahaumanu
REFLECTION AND REFLEXIVITY
Te Whaiwhakaaro
INCLUSION
Te Whakawhāitanga
SHARED DIRECTION
Te Ahunga Ngātahi



Government agencies and research institutions, supported by our own daily practices, continue to reproduce colonial legacies embedded in their processes and structures. These legacies are so deeply internalised that they largely go unnoticed and continue to harm Aotearoa and its inhabitants (humans or not). Tackling systemic issues requires awareness of them. This tool has been designed to assist you to focus on the little things that you and your team can reimagine and start doing differently today.

Dare to dream of better research practices for biodiversity protection.

Take a set of cards!

POSTCOLONIAL BIOSECURITY POSSIBILITIES

Maria Blanca Ayala, University of Canterbury [PhD candidate]
Will Allen, Learning for Sustainability
Susanna Finlay-Smits, Manaaki Whenua | Landcare Research
Andrea Grant, Scion Research
Alison Greenaway, Manaaki Whenua | Landcare Research
Sara MacBride-Stewart, Cardiff University
Liz O'Brien, UK Forest Research
Katja Soana Ehler, Victoria University of Wellington [Master's student]