

Plant succession

When one group of plants gradually replaces another.

If you clear the soil in your garden it won't be too long before the ground is covered in fast-growing weeds.

Wait a little longer and the weeds will be overtaken by woody shrubs then slowly, over time, these shrubs will be replaced by trees that will live for a long time.

That's plant succession!



Mt Tarawera is a good example of plant succession. Draw your own diagrams to show how it worked.

The eruption in 1886 buries vegetation under a thick layer of ash and scoria.

The area is bare for 10 years.

Toetoe, bracken fern and tree tutu appear on the lower slopes.

Moss, lichens and mat-forming daisies appear at higher levels.

A young forest of pōhutukawa, rewarewa and kāmahī grows on the lower slopes, just 30 years after the eruption and tree tutu is spreading up the volcano's sides.

A kāmahī forest cloths the lower slopes by the 1990s.

Some kāmahī grows in tree tutu shrublands on the upper slopes. Tree tutu has spread upwards to the flat summit and closes a canopy over the low-growing mats of mosses, lichens and daisies.