



Matariki - Maori New Year -- has been celebrated for hundreds of years. 2022 is significant as the NZ Government has now recognised it as a Public Holiday.

"Matariki will be a distinctly New Zealand holiday; a time for reflection and celebration, and our first public holiday that recognises Te Ao Māori," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

Matariki is the [Māori](#) name for the cluster of stars known to Western astronomers as the [Pleiades](#) in the constellation [Taurus](#).

The word *Matariki* is the name of both the star cluster and one of the 9 stars within it: Each star is named and has a traditional meaning in Maori culture.

In the Maori Lunar calendar the Matariki stars can be seen in the early morning sky during June/July and brings the past year to a close and marks the beginning of the new year. It is also a time of harvest. Historically, the stars of Matariki were also closely tied to planting, harvesting and hunting. If the stars appeared clear and bright, it signified an abundant season

- **Matariki** is the star that signifies reflection, hope, our connection to the environment, and the gathering of people. Matariki is also connected to the health and wellbeing of people.
- **Waitī** is associated with all fresh water bodies and the food sources that are sustained by those waters.
- **Waitā** is associated with the ocean, and food sources within it.
- **Waipuna-ā-rangi** is associated with the rain.
- **Tupuānuku** is the star associated with everything that grows within the soil to be harvested or gathered for food.

- **Tupuārangi** is associated with everything that grows up in the trees: fruits, berries, and birds.
- **Ururangi** is the star associated with the winds.
- **Pōhutukawa** is the star associated with those that have passed on.
- **Hiwa-i-te-rangi** is the star associated with granting our wishes, and realising our aspirations for the coming year

Mātauranga Māori (ancestral knowledge and wisdom) is at the heart of celebrations of the Matariki public holiday and it will be a time for;

- Remembrance - Honouring those we have lost since the last rising of Matariki,
- Celebrating the present - Gathering together to give thanks for what we have.
- Looking to the future - Looking forward to the promise of a new year.



Pōhutukawa



- This star is the star associated with those that have passed on.
- It is also a beautiful native tree known as the New Zealand Christmas Tree as it flowers brilliant red during our summery Christmas.

On a personal note - last Friday was the first anniversary of my brother Peter's death. He would have chuckled over the fact that the country had a public holiday to mark it - the 24th June. It was very meaningful to me as his favourite tree was the Pohutukawa and the star with the same name is the one associated with those we have lost over the past year. At his outdoor funeral in a scene very like the picture above (except the tree wasn't in flower), we were all given a piece of Pohutukawa to farewell him.

Another connection to me was the star Ururangi (Merope) It was on the good ship Merope that my great grandmother travelled to NZ as a nine year old with her family in 1875. I guess association with the wind was good for a sailing settler ship.

Let's remember with fondness and love our children who have gone too soon and look towards a New Year.

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