

# Kōwhaiwhai Patterns



Kōwhaiwhai patterns are most often found on the ridgepole - tāhū, or the rafters - heke, in a meeting house - whareniui.

The Kōwhaiwhai patterns are Māori history recorded by Māori. The tāhū Kōwhaiwhai tell the tribal genealogy, and ancestors. The heke Kōwhaiwhai represent branches of the family - whanau.

Kōwhaiwhai patterns differ between tribes as they are derived from the environment where the tribe exists.

The Kōwhaiwhai represent the mana of the house, ancestors and people.

Traditionally, Kōwhaiwhai were red, black and white. Red represents warmth, blood and life. White represents purity, promise for the future and awakening. Black represents the earth. Some believed that the amount of red or black in a pattern related to the amount of prosperity an ancestor brought to the tribe.

Kōwhaiwhai are shapes or symbols that are repeated over and over. A long repeated pattern is called a frieze.

Below are some examples of patterns used in Kōwhaiwhai:



Koiri



Kōwhai Ngutukākā