

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MATARIKI

What is Matariki?

It is a small cluster of stars known as Pleiades. Translated it means tiny eyes, or eyes of God. It appears in the western dawn skies from late May and stays until the end of June.

Why we celebrate it and when?

The first new moon after the rise of Pleiades signalled the end of the harvest. At this time food was plentiful and harvested for shortage to be eaten during the winter months. Kahungunu gathered to celebrate and give thanks for the harvest and to welcome the New Year planting season with ceremonial ritual, singing and feasting.

What traditions has Kahungunu revived for Matariki?

The blessing of fertility stones for food producers to bury in their fields, vineyards and orchards.

The making and flying of traditional Maori kites.

Maori games and tournaments including whai (string), kai makamaka (knuckle bones), tititorea (throwing sticks), mahi ringaringa (hand games) and poi and Ki-Orahi.

What traditions has Kahungunu revived within a modern context?

Kahungunu members return home for kinship.

Give thanks for the harvest by sharing a meal with the whanau, hapu, marae, school and workplace.

We honour the achievements of young and old.

A large outdoor celebration in Kahungunu's six taiwhenua, Wairoa, Te Whanganui A Orotu (Napier area), Heretaunga, Tamatea (Central Hawke's Bay), Tamaki Nui A Rua and Wairarapa.

Do other iwi celebrate Matariki?

Each iwi celebrates Matariki with their own rituals and on different dates. Ngati Kahungunu celebrates Matariki from the first weekend in June to the first weekend in July.

What is the actual New Year day?

June 14, 2010; June 4, 2012 and June 21, 2012.

For more information, contact Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated promotions manager Te Rangi Huata: (06) 876 2718 or 027 5118 052.