

# John Edgerley (1814 – 1849)

John Edgerley was born in about 1814, probably in Upper Arley, Staffordshire (now Cheshire), England, and worked as a gardener at Arley Hall. He migrated to New Zealand on the sailing ship *Emma* in 1834, travelling out with Lieutenant Thomas McDonnell, who was returning as a newly appointed additional British resident (additional to James Busby), after a visit to England. They stopped en route at Sydney and reached the Hokianga in July 1835. McDonnell's Horeke enterprise was the principal timber trading station on the Hokianga at that time, and Edgerley stayed there as his gardener and botanist until 1841. Edgerley had brought plants with him from England, and he soon had a flourishing garden established.

McDonnell had promised to send specimens of New Zealand plants to Aylmer Bourke Lambert, a friend of Sir Joseph Banks, and this was one of Edgerley's tasks. From his explorations of the Kaipara with McDonnell at the end of 1835, Edgerley sent a plant now known as *Pomaderris edgerleyi* to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Other similar explorations yielded more live plants and dried specimens to send, or later be taken by Edgerley, to Britain. *Raukaua edgerleyi* was collected with missionary printer and botanist, William Colenso.

In 1842, when Edgerley went back to England and Arley Hall, he took with him a collection of living New Zealand plants and also fruits in spirits, which he sold to Kew. On 27 December 1842 he married Sarah Newnham at Upper Arley. He returned to New Zealand in 1843 with his wife and a collection of trees for sale, given by Sir William Hooker in exchange for further New Zealand plants. He bought six acres of land in Newmarket, Auckland, in the locality of present-day Edgerley Avenue, Epsom, where they lived in a raupo hut while Edgerley established his Eden Nursery, one of the earliest in Auckland. By 1846 he was advertising a large variety of fruit trees, including twelve varieties of apples, for sale, and had become a well-known nurseryman and friend of the governor, Sir George Grey. The addition of an adjacent five acres the next year made the Newmarket land holding a substantial one, which his descendants were to occupy for more than a century.

John Edgerley died suddenly in 1849, after a full and eventful life of only 35 years, leaving his wife, two sons and a daughter. His widow Sarah sold the fruit trees in 1852, put cows on the land and ran a milk supply. She died in June 1895, at the age of 83.



## *Raukaua edgerleyi*

*Raukaua* (from raukawa, the Māori name for the species) is an endemic genus with three species of trees that hybridise when they occur together. In the seedling stage they have single, more or less ovate, leaves; these quickly pass into a 3–5 foliate juvenile stage; the adult leaves are mostly unifoliate. *Raukaua edgerleyi* is a tree up to 10 metres tall, with a trunk to 40 cm in diameter. The juvenile leaves are 3–5 foliate and deeply lobed, the lobes decreasing with age, the upper surface bright green and glossy, and underside pale green. The adult leaves are predominantly simple. Yellowish-green female and male flowers, 4–5 mm diameter, form in separate clusters on the same umbel. The round 4–5 mm fruit are dark purple. *Raukaua edgerleyi* is a lowland and lower montane forest tree, south of 35° S in North, South and Stewart Islands.