

This putiputi (flower) is very simple and is made using one flax blade.

The flax blade is green and glossy on one side. The underside has a white-ish sheen. You'll also notice that the blade has two halves joined in the middle by a hard brown spine which runs down to a stiff butt at the base of the blade. It will also have a thin dark strip along each outer edge.



Preparing the blade

Fold the flax blade in half. The glossy green side of the blade should be on the inside. This may cause it to split down the middle but this is okay.



Using your thumbnail, make a small incision a few millimetres from the outside edge of your flax. You should go through both layers of your folded blade.



Pulling on the edge will make a larger hole.



Eventually this hole will should run the length of the blade. Pull the edge all the way off and discard. Repeat this process on the other side of your blade (at the fold). The aim is to be rid of the hard brown-coloured spine of the blade and the dark strip on the outer edges.

You should now have one blade separated into two strips. These strips will come together towards the bottom of the blade. Below this point the leaf will be harder and less flexible. This will be the stalk of our putiputi.



Fold the left-hand strip as shown.



It should look like this.



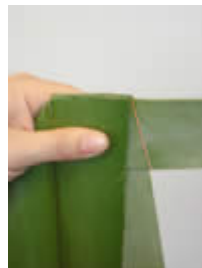
Now fold the second strip as shown. (Making this putiputi will always require you to alternate the strips that you fold so if you find yourself folding the same strip twice then you have gone wrong somewhere!)



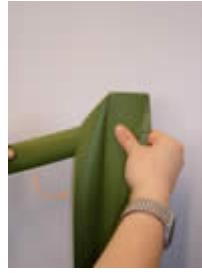
After your second fold your flax should look like this.



Fold the first strip again as shown.



It should look like this.



Now take this same strip and bring it forward so that it sits in front of your main stem. You may have to bend or manipulate your flax a little to get it to do this.



It should now look something like this.



Fold the second strip again as shown.



Make sure that you feed this strip through so that it sits in front.



It should look like this.
(It may help at this point to start turning the putiputi so that you have a better hold on it.)



Fold the first strip again as shown.
(Try and make your folds sharp and tight as the flax will shrink as it dries and will loosen a bit.)



It should look like this.



Fold the second strip again as shown.



It should look like this.



Fold the first strip again as shown.



Continue working your way around the putiputi with alternating folds creating "petals" as you go.



Depending on the length of your flax blade you may work your way around three or four times.



As you fold the leaf you have left will get shorter and shorter.



Keep folding until you run out of leaf to fold. There is no need to secure the ends as the folds will keep them in place. Congratulations! You've made a flax putiputi.



It is traditional to give away the first putiputi that you make. You will find that the second one that you make will be nicer anyway!



WARNING - After handling harakeke/flax make sure that you wash your hands! If you ingest flax you may become sick!

Other Resources:

[Making Flax Flowers](http://www.wave.co.nz/~pukete/mso73B1_files/page0005.htm)

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