

Compost Bugs — Mū Onepōpopo

Lots of mū live in the garden, they have important roles. A good place to find mū busy at work is in the compost/Onepōpopo. Certain mū like the onepōpopo because there is lots of kai and shelter there. Let's take a look at what lives in our onepōpopo.

Key learning words

Insects Mū

Compost Onepōpopo

Specific bugs: Ngarongaro, Noke, Noke mā, Pāpapa, Peketua, Pōpokoriki, Pūngāwerewere, Putoko.

What you'll need

Trays

Trowels

Paper and colouring pencils

Questions to start off the activity with:

What do we notice about the māra/garden today?

What bugs/mū can we find in the garden?

Why are mū important?

What do mū eat?

Activity

1. Go to your onepōpopo or worm bin.
2. Using a trowel, ask children to dig some of the soil into trays for observation.
3. Match the mū you find to the descriptions.
4. Colour in your mū pictures, you could also draw what they eat or where they like to live.
5. At the end of the session identify the mū you found and share what you have learned about them.

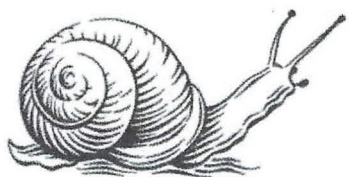
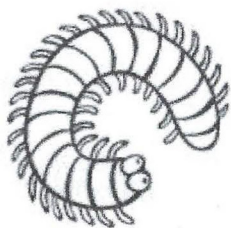
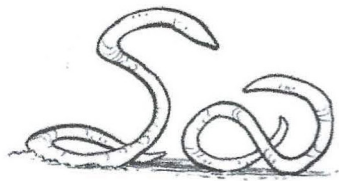
Closing circle

How do mū help the onepōpopo?

Which mū would we find eating very fresh veggies added to the onepōpopo?

Which mū likes already rotting kai?

Which mū likes eating other mū?



Noke mā

White Worm

I look like a frayed piece of thread.

I am a skinny white worm. I am 1 to 2.5cm long.

I am related to the noke.

I like to eat rotting kai after the other mū get to it.

You might think of me as the one who likes to finish off the job.

Pōpokoriki

Ant

I am a mū with six legs.

I help to decompose by breaking down materials into smaller particles. I create tunnels, and move soil into clumps.

Some people would rather not have me around their homes because I'm quite fond of sugary kai.

I am black, brown or red.

Peketua

Millipede

I have so many legs you would have a hard time counting them all.

My name means "thousand legs", but I don't have that many.

I am very shy and roll up in a ball to avoid danger.

I am a vegetarian and eat soft, moist, decaying plants.

I am dark red in colour and am 2.5 -6cm long.

Peketua

Centipede

I move quickly on many legs.

I have 15-137 segments with pairs of legs on each.

I am a fierce hunter. I love to eat noke.

I use my pair of poison claws to help keep my prey from getting away. I am about 2 - 4cms long.

I am usually reddish brown.

Ngata

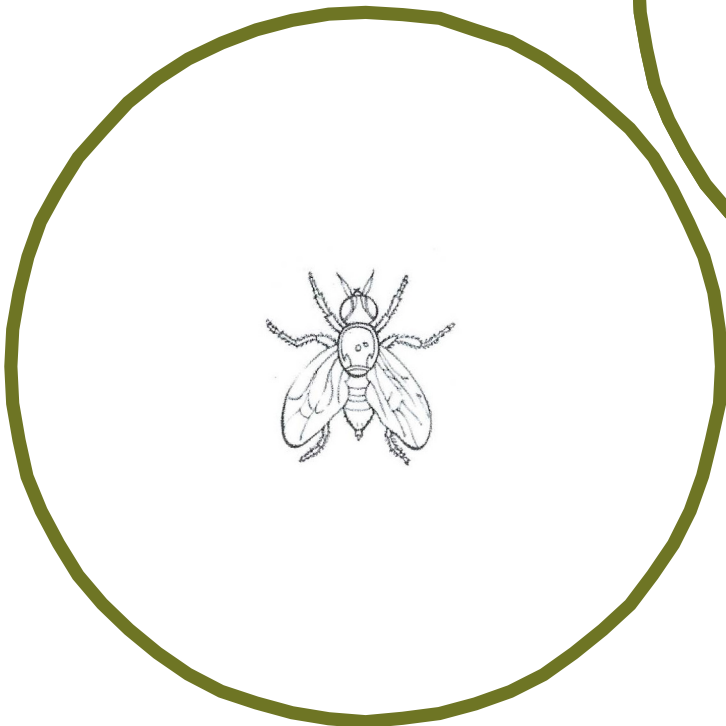
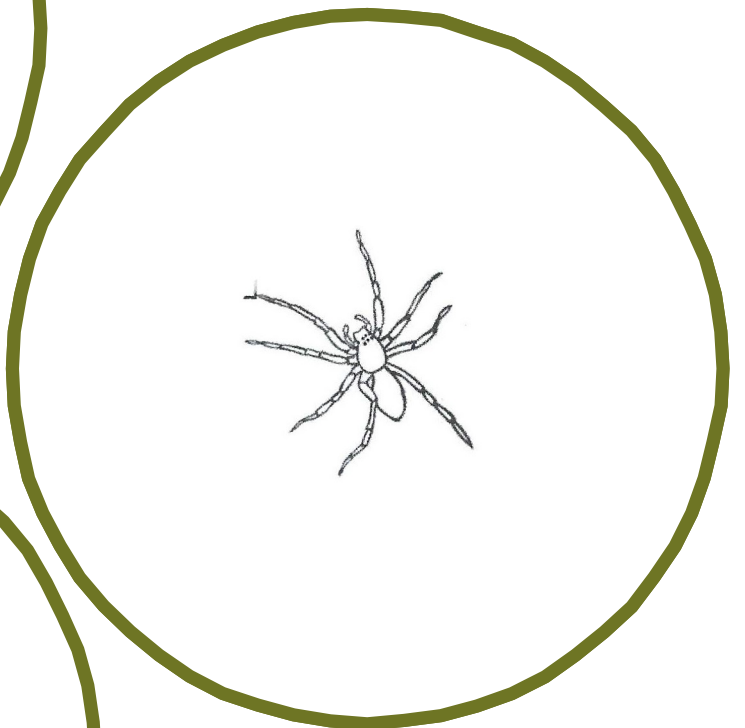
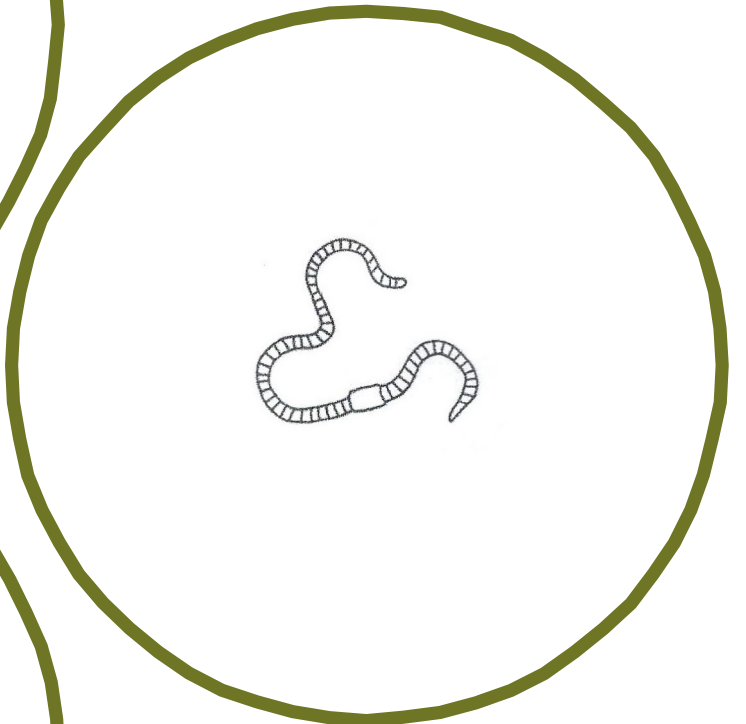
Snail

Like my friend Putoko, I am a mollusk and creep around on my muscular belly.

I carry on my back a spirally curved shell.

I also have a broad retractable foot and a distinctive head.

Like slugs I prefer to eat living material, but I will show up in your compost pile or worm bin from time to time for lunch.



Putoko

Slug

I have muscular discs on my underside that are adapted for creeping and crawling.

I lay egg masses that look like jelly.

I eat living material, but will make an appearance from time to time in your compost pile to eat fresh veggies and garden trimmings.

Noke

Earthworm

I am a long thin, soft bodied animal.

My body is made up of little segments.

I do not have legs or eyes. I sense light and I breathe through my skin.

I eat bacteria, fungi, and other decaying materials. I like dark moist places.

Pāpapa

Beetle

I am a mū with shiny, black, tough wings.

I am about a centimeter long. I am a predator and eat putoko, ngata and soft mū such as caterpillars.

I live beneath stones, boards, and other moist places.

Pūngāwerewere

Spider

I am related to mites and have eight nifty legs.

I am one of the least appreciated animals in the onepōpopo.

I feed on other mū and work hard to control other pests that will hurt the garden.

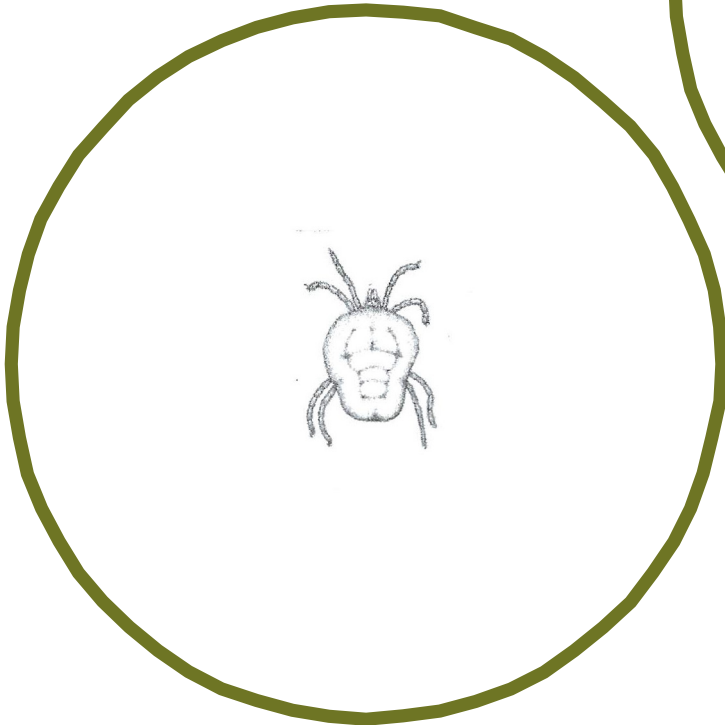
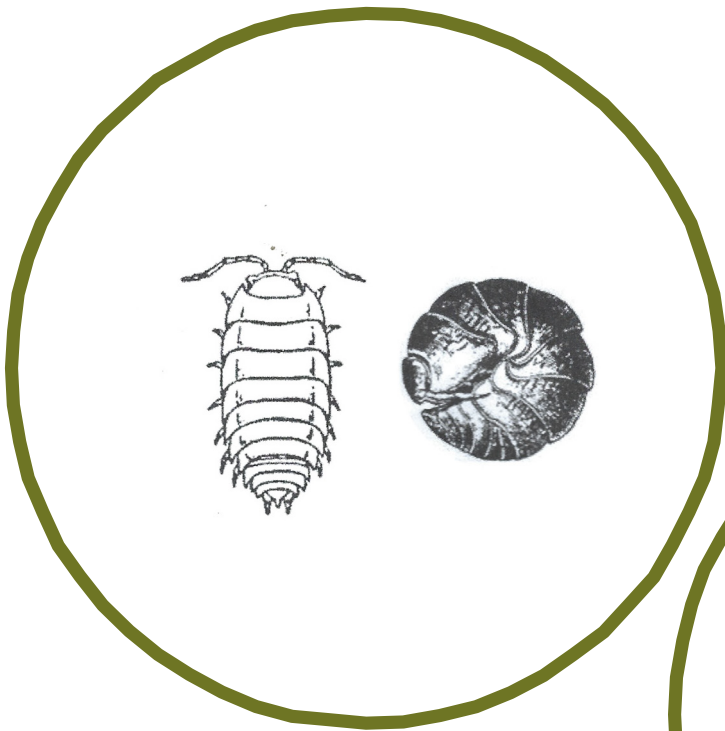
Ngarongaro

Fruit flies

I am a very small fly. People don't like me, but I don't bite, sting or make buzzing sounds. I don't harm noke either.

Sometimes you will see me around a worm bin if a person forgot to bury their kai.

I like to lay eggs where it's moist and warm.



Pāpapa

Slater

I am an isopod, which means I have ten pairs of legs that look very similar to each other.

I eat old leaves and veggies scraps. I am about 1 cm long and roll up in a ball if I am disturbed.

Some people think I look a little like an armadillo.

I am a grayish, dark colour.

Mū Teo

Collombola

I am a close relative of the springtail, but I can't jump. I am tiny and less than 2mm long. I eat molds and decaying matter. I am a white colour.

Mū Teo

Mite

I am tiny! It would take ten of us to cover a centimeter line.

My body is round and fat so it's hard to see my eight legs.

I eat plant materials such as mold and soft tissues of leaves. Some of us eat manure of other organisms.

I am usually white or brown.

Mū Teo

Springtail

I am a tiny mū less than 2mm long.

I eat molds and decaying materials.

I have a little spring that helps me jump high into the air. I am a white colour.