

Aloha,

As a person of Hawaiian ancestry, I entered into this AmeriCorps internship with a limited background in plants and their connection with *ola* (life).

Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) is a program that protects the native Hawaiian ecosystem from invasive plants and wild life. I desired to learn more about the plants that we help protect. I chose several plants that were a part of the NARS program and researched them to gain information.

The Hawaiian people were an oral culture. They shared their wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation by teaching them numerous values. Such as, how to pick the right tree for a surfboard (*papa heʻenalu*), which plant could be used for healing, or how to weave a basket to catch fish for their family. In years since, this knowledge slowly has become lost. Hopefully when you read this, you could share this with whomever you come across, and bring back what our *kupuna* (ancestors) used to do.



Authors:

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Special Thanks

Mike Wysong - NARS Program Manager - Kauai  
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Additional Resources:

-[www.canoplants.com/wauke.html](http://www.canoplants.com/wauke.html)

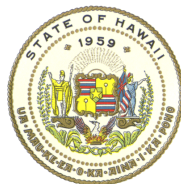
-[www.nativeplants.edu](http://www.nativeplants.edu)

-<http://hawaiihistory.org/>

-Abbott, Isabella Aiona.

“La’au Hawai’i: traditional Hawaiian uses of plants”  
copyright 1992.

-Krauss, Beatrice H., “Plants in Hawaiian Culture”  
copyright 1993.



## KAUAI NATURAL AREA RESERVE ETHNOBOTANICAL GUIDE: HAWAIIAN FLORA

“*Ua lehulehu a manomano ka’ikena  
a ka Hawai’i.*”

~  
“*Great and numerous is the  
knowledge of the Hawaiian people.*”

“*Inā akahele  
kou ne’e, a mālie  
kou na’au.  
Hiki ke lohe ka ulu  
lā’au o ka na’auao.*”

“*If you slow your steps and  
quiet your mind. You can hear  
the wisdom of the forest.*”

# Native Hawaiian Plants and their Uses...

## LIFESTYLE

### *‘Anapanapa*

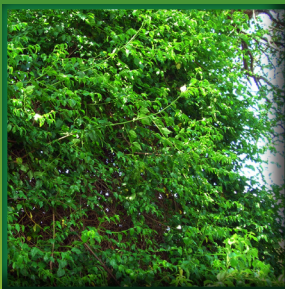
Scientific name: *Colubrina asiatica*

Common name: latherleaf

Distribution status: indigenous



Forest & Kim Starr - USGS



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It is commonly called “lather leaf” because of the soapy-like substance that is produced when the leaves are crushed and added to water. It was used by Hawaiians for bathing.

## LIFESTYLE

### *Wiliwili*

Scientific name: *Crythrina sanwicensis*

Common name: n/a

Distribution status: endemic



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Bishop Museum Archive

The lightweight wiliwili wood was the preferred choice for large surfboards (*papa heʻenalu*) called *olo*. Since large trees may have been difficult to find, these surfboards were probably reserved for the nobility, including the chiefs.

## MEDICINE

### *‘Ōhiʻa Lehua*

Scientific name: *Metrosideros polymorpha*

Common name: n/a

Distribution status: endemic



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NARS Kanai

A mixture of mashed ‘ohiʻa flowers with the inner bark of the hau tree and water were given to women who were in labor when the pain of childbirth became intense.

## CLOTHING

### *Wauke*

Scientific name: *Broussonetia papyrifera*

Common name: paper mulberry

Distribution status: indigenous



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*Wauke* is the principle plant used in the making of a cloth called *kapa*. *Kapa* means “the beaten thing”. In early Hawaiian culture, *kapa* was made into a knee length skirt (*pāu*) for women, a loin cloth (*malo*) for men, and capes (*kihei*) for chiefs (*Aliʻi*). The quality of this cloth is prized and valuable even today.

## FISHING

### *‘Ieʻie*

Scientific name: *Freycineta arborea*

Common name: n/a

Distribution status: indigenous



NARS Kanai



Bishop Museum Archive

The strong roots of the ‘ieʻie vine were fashioned into basket-like fishing traps (*Hinaʻi* Hoʻoluʻolu) to catch small fish. Women also used these traps to catch shrimp in streams.

## MUSIC

### *Kauila*

Scientific name: *Alphitonia ponderosa*

Common name: Hawaiian olive

Distribution status: endemic



NARS Kanai



Bishop Museum Archive

The ‘ukeke was a stringed instrument made from the hardwood of the *Kauila*. The body of the ‘ukeke was about two feet long, with the strings (‘aha) stretched across its frame. One end of the frame was held between the lips while the player simultaneously chanted and rapidly stroked the strings with a midrib from a small leaf. The resulting sound resembled indistinct speech, which is why the ‘ukeke was commonly used by lovers and others who did not want their messages overheard.