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Plants

Alani

Melicope degeneri

SPECIES STATUS:

Federally Listed as a Candidate Species

Genetic Safety Net Species

Hawai'i Natural Heritage Ranking - Critically Imperiled

Endemism – Kaua'i

SPECIES INFORMATION: A shrub or a tree. Leaves opposite. Inflorescences with about 3 flowers. Capsules cuboid. *Melicope degeneri* is a small, long-lived perennial shrub found in mesic to wet forest on Kaua'i, Hawai'i. *Melicope degeneri* was thought to be extinct, having only been collected from the type location along Kokee Stream on the island of Kaua'i.

DISTRIBUTION: Ten individuals of this species were discovered in Hanakoa Valley in 1993, at a site 4 mi (6 km) from the type location, one individual in Koaie Canyon, and one individual at Pohakuao.

ABUNDANCE: About 15 plants are currently known.

LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT: Wet and mesic forests.

THREATS:

- Pigs;
- Goats;
- Alien plants.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: The goals of conservation actions are not only to protect current populations, but also to establish new populations to reduce the risk of extinction. In addition to common statewide and island conservation actions, specific actions include:

- Survey historic range for surviving populations;
- Establish secure ex-situ stocks with complete representation of remaining individuals;
- Augment wild population and establish new populations in safe harbors.

MONITORING:

- Continue surveys of population and distribution in known and likely habitats;
- Monitor plants for insect damage and plant diseases.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- Develop proper horticultural protocols and pest management;
- Survey ex-situ holdings and conduct molecular fingerprinting;
- Conduct pollination biology and seed dispersal studies;
- Map genetic diversity in the surviving populations to guide future re-introduction and augmentation efforts.

References:

Hawai'i Natural Heritage Program, 2005. Hawaii Natural Heritage Program Search, <http://www.hinhp.org/printpage.asp?spp=PDMAL0H0A0>.

Wagner, W.L.; Herbst, D.R.; Sohmer, S.H., 1999. Manual of the flowering plants of Hawai'i-- Revised Edition. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press and Bishop Museum Press. 1853p.