



Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai'i's Landscapes: Na'u, Nanu; Forest Gardenia; *Gardenia brighamii*

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The Hawaiian gardenia is one of three native gardenia species and is federally listed as endangered. It is a small tree, up to 20 feet tall and 10–15 feet in diameter, with fragrant white flowers and attractive, glossy foliage. Being native to dry forest habitats, this beautiful, fragrant tree is an excellent choice for any landscape with relatively xeric conditions.

Recommended Use in Landscapes

- Leeward side of all Hawaiian islands
- Lower elevations with xeric conditions
- Commercially and in residential areas as hedging, screening, to provide shade or accents, or used as a container plant

Distribution

- Native to dry forests on all main Hawaiian islands but now extinct on Kaua'i and extremely rare on the other islands
- Elevation range: 1,000–2,000 feet
- Precipitation range: 0–50 in.

Propagation Techniques

- Propagated from seed, cutting, and air-layering
- Germination can be expected in 1 to 8 months.
- Cuttings can be slow to root, taking up to a year. Take cuttings from hard- and semi-hardwood material; use rooting powder No. 16.
- Air layering is best done in spring or summer. Roots begin to appear after approximately 4 months; use rooting powder No. 16.



Cultural Requirements and Tolerance

- Prune to develop tree form
- Full sun and supplemental watering promote flowering
- Water until established in landscape
- Accepts arid conditions
- Grows well in a wide range of well-drained soils
- Drought and wind tolerant

Flower and Fruit Characteristics

- Flowers are strongly fragrant (some say a slight smell of coconut).
- Blooms sporadically year round.
- Fruits are ping-pong ball sized.

Leaf Characteristics

- Glossy, medium to dark green
- Medium sized, simple, oval
- Opposite arrangement
- Thick with a smooth texture
- Deciduous

Advantages for Use in Landscapes

- Native
- Long-lived (at least 15 years)
- Thrives in full sun and partial shade
- Requires little water
- Minimum pruning required
- No messy fruits
- Fragrant flowers

Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes

- Susceptible to ants, aphids, green coffee scale, black twig borer, thrips, mealybugs, and spider mites, but typically does not need treatment
- Slow growing
- Requires pruning to maintain tree form

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