



Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai'i's Landscapes: *Lechoso, Stemmadenia litoralis*

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A slow-growing small tree (to about 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide) with fragrant white flowers, lechoso is named for its milky white sap. With its non-aggressive root system, it fits nicely into a residential lawn or in the space between a sidewalk and curb.

Recommended Use in Landscapes

- Small shade tree for residences
- Street tree
- Multi-layered accent tree

Distribution

- Native to Central America

Propagation Techniques

- Fresh seed germinates in about 3 weeks
- Cuttings, rarely

Cultural Requirements and Tolerance

- Requires regular watering but well-drained soil
- Not drought tolerant
- Not tolerant of strong winds, salt spray, or saline soils
- Full sun to light shade

Flower and Fruit Characteristics

- Funnel-shaped, fragrant white flowers to 3 inches long
- Flowers are borne year round.
- Mature fruits are thick walled, orange, paired, and drop shaped, with prominent ribs, splitting open when ripe to reveal many seeds with fleshy red arils.



Lechoso leaves are dark green and obovate in shape.



Lechoso provides light shade for residences.

Leaf Characteristics

- Glossy and dark green, elliptic, to 10 inches long by up to 4 inches wide
- Opposite leaves

Advantages for Use in Landscapes

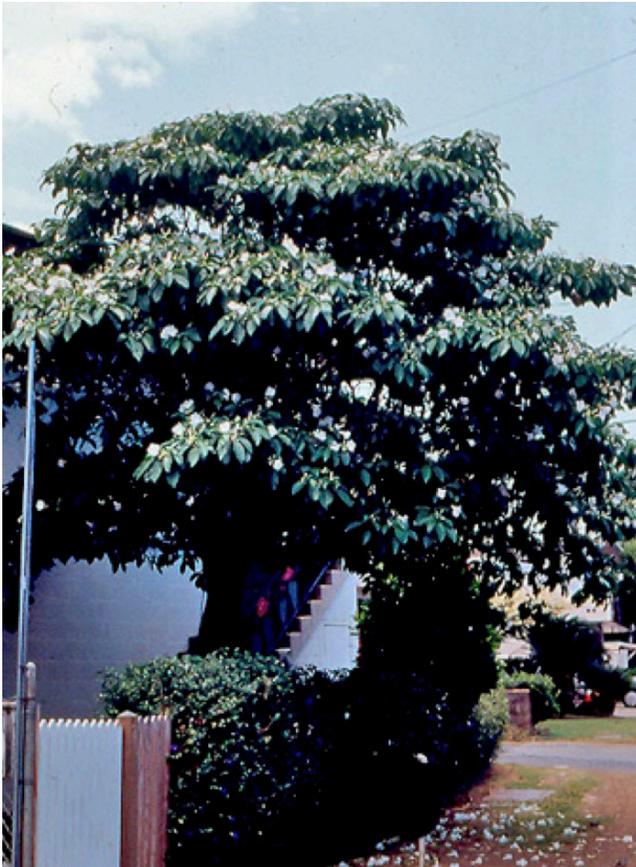
- Fragrant flowers throughout the year
- Does not achieve large stature and is amenable to pruning when needed
- WRA = -5

Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes

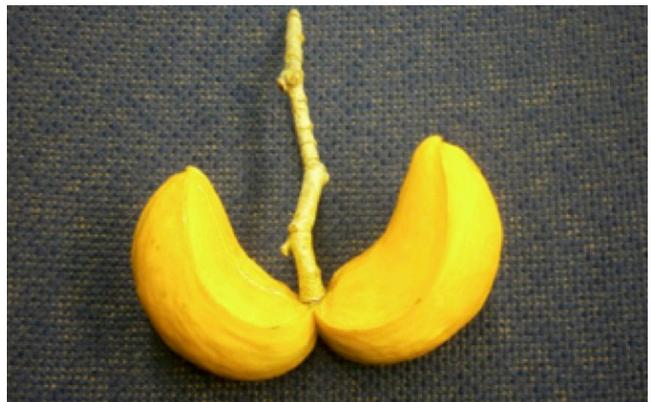
- Sticky white sap may irritate skin or eyes.
- Susceptible to spider mites in dry areas of Hawai'i
- Not for use in first-exposure seacoast



Flowers are borne year round.



Lechoso in a residential landscape



A single flower produces a 2-lobed fruit.



The orange seed pod splits open to reveal red-orange seeds.