

## Lama, Hillebrand persimmon

*Diospyros hillebrandii* (Seem.) Fosberg

Ebony family (Ebenaceae)

Native species (endemic)

This species of lama is confined to Oahu and Kauai. It has large dark green leaves which have a network of fine veins on upper surface and also the calyx lobes short-pointed. The pink flushes of new foliage on red twigs over a tree are showy.

A small evergreen tree to 30 ft (9 m) high and 5 inches (13 cm) in trunk diameter, with horizontal branches. Bark blackish gray, smoothish; inner bark light brown, slightly bitter. Twigs gray, hairless, with raised dots. Buds about ¼ inch (6 mm) long, of spreading pointed nearly hairless scales.

Leaves alternate in two rows, hairless, with short leafstalks less than ¼ inch (6 mm) long. Blades oblong, 3–6 inches (7.5–15 cm) long and 1¼–2½ inches (3–6 cm) wide, blunt at apex, rounded at base, not toothed on edges, slightly thickened, the upper surface shiny dark green with a prominent network of fine veins when dry, the lower surface dull light green.

Flowers male and female on different plants (dioecious), single and stalkless at leaf bases, ⅜ inch (10 mm) long with overlapping scales at base. Male flowers have green narrow tubular calyx of ¼ inch (6 mm) with three shortpointed lobes hairy at end, tubular bell-shaped pink hairy corolla with three spreading lobes, and nine short stamens. Female flowers have calyx, corolla, and pistil with hairy ovary and three-forked style.

Fruits (berries) elliptical, ¾–1 inch (20–25 mm) long, slightly curved on 1 side and widest beyond middle, hairy toward blunt apex with point from style, orange, and at base the enlarged calyx ¼ inch (6 mm) long with 3 short-pointed lobes, nearly dry, edible but insipid. Seeds elliptical, ⅝ inch (15 mm) long, shiny brown black.

Sapwood whitish yellow (heartwood color unknown), hard, similar in appearance and uses to *D. ferrea*.

Scattered in wet forests of Koolau and Waianae Ranges of Oahu to 2000 ft (610 m) altitude. In mountains near Honolulu and not uncommon on Kauai at Kokee and in Kipu Range.

### **Special area**

Wahiawa

### **Range**

Oahu and Kauai only

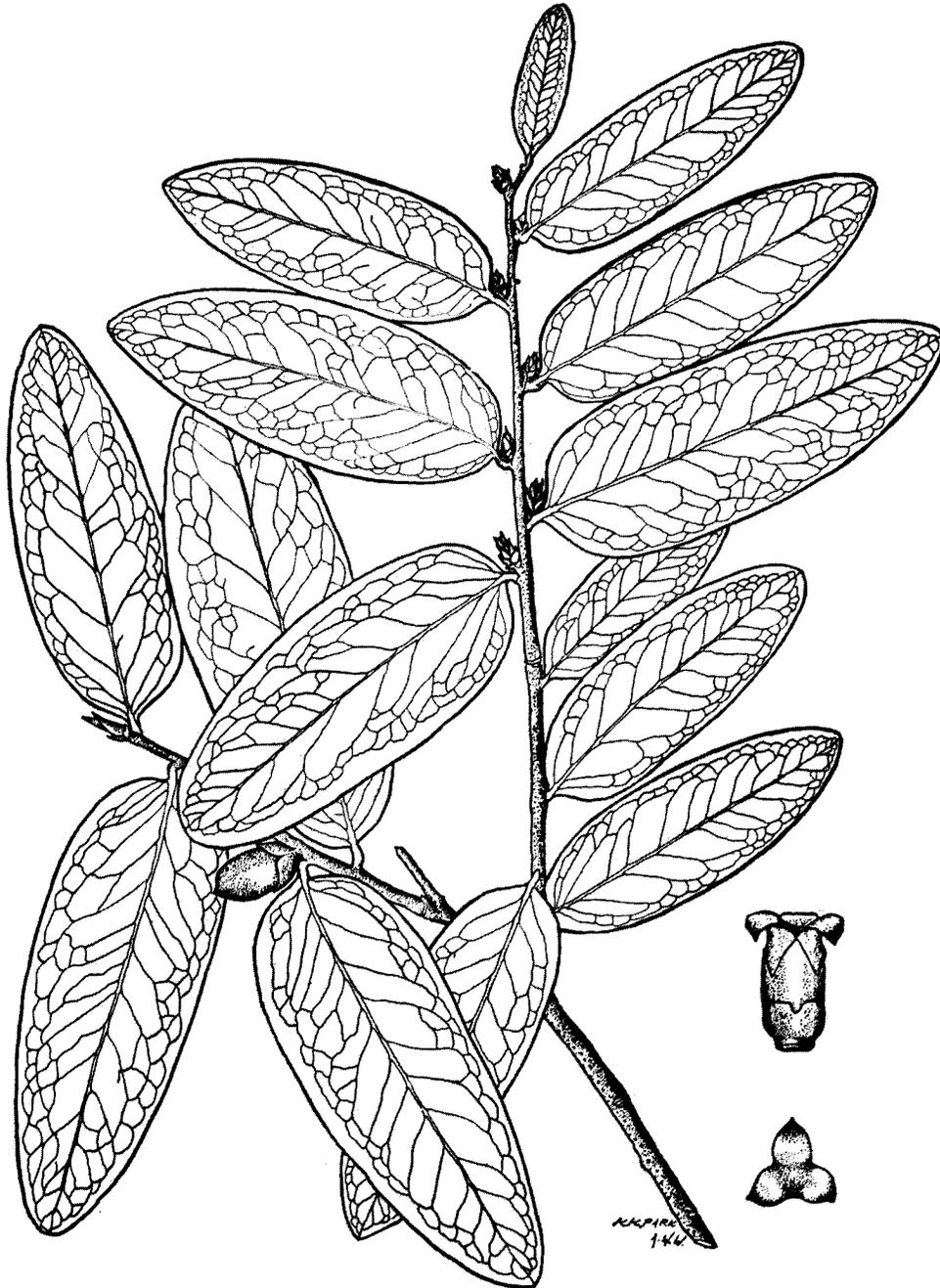
### **Other common name**

ēlama

### **Botanical synonym**

*Maba hillebrandii* Seem.

This species honors William Hillebrand (1831-86), German-born physician and botanist, who lived in Honolulu 20 years. His classic “Flora of the Hawaiian Islands” (1888) remains a very useful reference a century later.



**Lama, Hillebrand persimmon**

*Diospyros hillebrandii* (Seem.) Fosberg

Twig with flowers, twig with fruit (lower left), 1/2 X;  
flower (lower right), 2 X (Degener).