

## Rose-apple, 'ōhi'a loke

*Eugenia jambos* L

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Naturalized tree with handsome foliage and edible fruits, distinguished by paired shiny dark green lanceshaped leaves, few large yellowish white four-petaled flowers 3–4 inches (7.5–10 cm) across numerous threadlike stamens, and pale yellowish or pinkish tinged, rounded or elliptical fruits 1¼–1½ inches (3–4 cm) long, with odor and flavor like rose perfume.

Small evergreen tree 15–30 ft (4.6–9 m) tall, often with several crooked trunks 4–8 inches (0.1–0.2 m) in diameter, and spreading dense opaque dark green crown of many branches. Bark brown, smoothish with many small fissures. Inner bark whitish or light brown, astringent. Twigs green when young, becoming dark brown, hairless.

Leaves opposite, hairless, with short leafstalks of 3/16–3/8 inch (5–10 mm). Blades lance-shaped, 3½–8 inches (9–20 cm) long and 5/8–1¾ inches (1.5–4.5 cm) broad, long-pointed at apex, short-pointed at base, not toothed on edges, leathery, shiny dark green on upper surface, dull green beneath, and with tiny gland-dots visible under a lens.

Flower clusters (corymbs) terminal, commonly with 4–5 large flowers. Conical pinkish green tubular base (hypanthium) about ½ inch (13 mm) high and wide, enclosing ovary and bearing other parts; calyx of four rounded broad lobes ½ inch (13 mm) long, persistent on fruit; four rounded concave whitish petals about 5/8 inch (15 mm) long, faintly tinged with green, coarsely gland-dotted; numerous threadlike stamens; and pistil consisting of inferior two-celled ovary and persistent whitish slender style 1¾ inches (4.5 cm) long.

Fruits (berries) have four calyx lobes at apex, pale yellow firm flesh with little juice. Seed single (sometimes two) rounded brown, 3/8 inch (1 cm) diameter in large cavity.

Wood dull brown, hard, and heavy (sp. gr. 0.7). Not durable in soil and very susceptible to attack by drywood termites. Seldom used. Elsewhere, coarse baskets and barrel hoops have been made from young branches and poles from larger limbs.

Planted in the tropics for ornament, primarily for the showy flowers and handsome foliage. Sometimes used for windbreaks and shade. Occasionally, the insipid fruits are made into jellies, preserves, and salads; it is a good honey plant. Elsewhere seeds and roots utilized in home remedies. Trees reproduce naturally from seeds and sprout vigorously when cut. Shade beneath pure thickets generally kills out all vegetation.

Planted and sparsely naturalized through the Hawaiian Islands in moist areas such as pastures, waste places, and stream banks, from sea level to 1600 ft (488 m), rarely to 4000 ft (1,219 m) altitude. Usually found as an understory tree in mixture with guava (*Psidium guajava*). Classed as a weed.

### **Special areas**

Waimea Arboretum, Tantalus

### **Range**

Native of southeastern tropical Asia but now widely cultivated and naturalized through the tropics, including Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. Planted also in Florida and southern California.

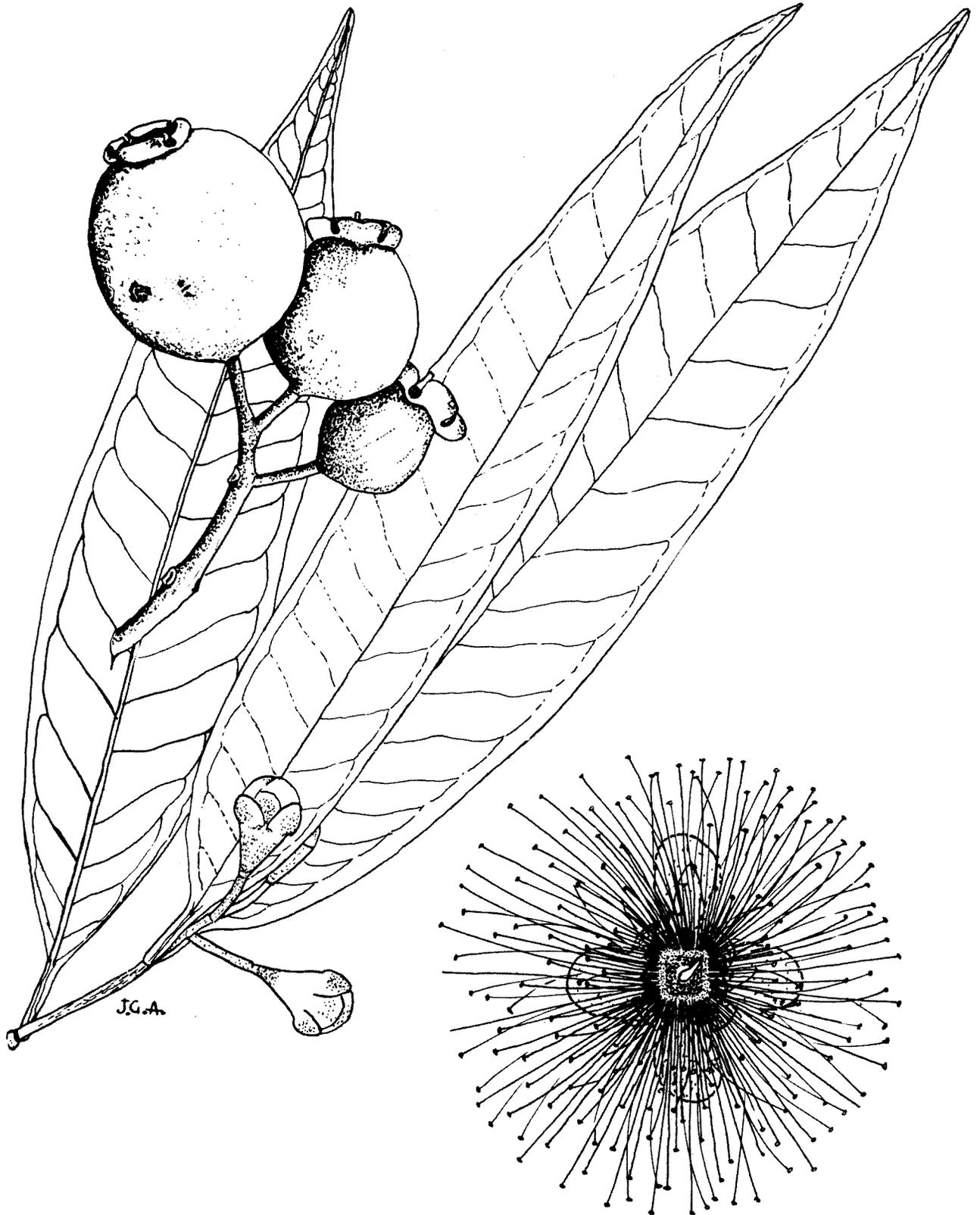
Introduced into Hawaii about 1825, apparently for the edible though insipid aromatic fruit.

### **Other common name**

pomarrosa (Puerto Rico, Spanish); youenwai (Pohnpei)

### **Botanical synonyms**

*Jambosa jambos* (L.) Millsp., *Syzygium jambos* (L.) Alston



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Fruits, twig with flower buds, flower (lower right), 1 X (P.R. v. 1).