

‘Ōhi‘a ha

Eugenia sandwicensis Gray

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Native species (endemic)

Evergreen native tree of wet forests (except on the island of Hawaii), characterized by four-angled twigs, paired elliptical to oblong leaves, small white or pinkish flowers with many tiny stamens and small rounded shiny red edible fruits. A large forest tree to 60 ft (18 m) high and 3 ft (0.9 m) in trunk diameter or shrubby on exposed ridges. Bark gray to reddish brown, smoothish to slightly fissured; inner bark light brown, slightly as-tringent. Twigs four-angled and slightly winged, slightly enlarged at ringed nodes, hairless, greenish when young, turning brown.

Leaves opposite, hairless, with short leafstalks of $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (3–13 mm). Blades variable in shape, elliptical to oblong, 1–4 inches (2.5–10 cm) long and $\frac{3}{4}$ –2 inches (2–5 cm) wide, rounded and usually notched at apex, blunt at base, often widest beyond middle and turned under at edges, slightly thick and leathery, curved up on sides, upper surface shiny green with side veins inconspicuous, beneath light green, with gland-dots visible under lens. Crushed leaves emit a distinctive odor.

Flower clusters (cymes) $1\frac{1}{2}$ –3 inches (4–7.5 cm) long at bases of upper leaves, with four-angled branches. Flowers several to many on stalks of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm), about $\frac{5}{16}$ inch (8 mm) long and wide, composed of funnel shaped greenish base (hypanthium), four pinkish rounded calyx lobes on rim, four rounded fringed white or pinkish petals less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) long, many tiny white stamens, and pistil with inferior two-celled ovary and short style.

Fruits (berries) rounded and slightly flattened, $\frac{5}{16}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (8–10 mm) in diameter, with calyx at top, shiny red, with slightly sour edible white pulp. Seeds 1–2, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) long. Fruits often abundant in late summer.

The wood is described as reddish brown, hard, and durable; it was used as fuel and for house construction by the Hawaiians. The bark furnished a black dye for tapa or bark cloth.

Common and widespread in lower and middle wet forests to 4000 ft (1,219 m) altitude.

Special area

Kokee

Range

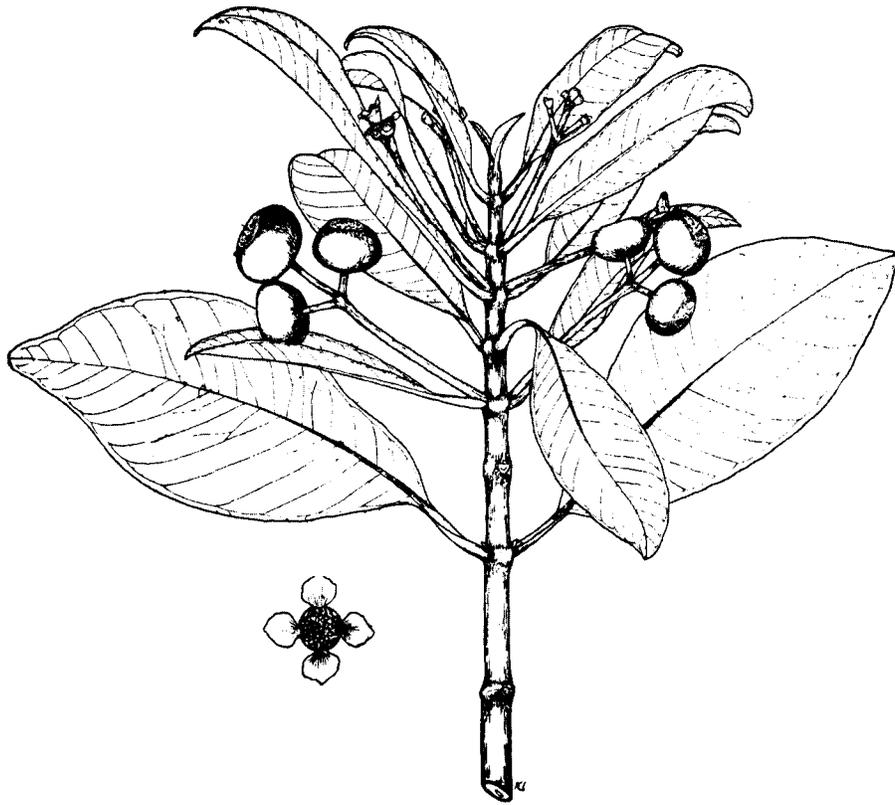
Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Lanai, and Maui

Other common names

hā, pā‘ihi (Maui), Hawaiian syzygium

Botanical synonym

Syzygium sandwicense (Gray) Ndz.



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Twig with flowers and fruits, 1 X;

flower (lower left), 3 X (Degener).