

## Koki'o ke'oke'o, native white hibiscus

*Hibiscus arnottianus* Gray

Mallow family (Malvaceae)

Native species (endemic)

Small tree or tall shrub native of Oahu and sometimes cultivated, with showy large fragrant funnelshaped flowers about 5–6 inches (13–15 cm) across the five spreading elliptical white petals. Evergreen, 10–30 ft (3–9 m) high, with several trunks 3 inches (7.5 cm) or more in diameter, with dense crown, hairless throughout (a variety hairy). Bark gray, smooth; inner bark light green, almost tasteless. Twigs green when young, becoming gray with raised half round leaf scars.

Leaves ovate, 2–4 inches (5–10 cm) long and 1½–3 inches (4–7.5 cm) broad, thin, green, and slightly shiny on both surfaces, lower surface often finely hairy, with 5 main veins, from rounded base, apex blunt, edges finely wavy or straight; leafstalks ¾–1¼ inches (2–4 cm); stipules long-pointed, shedding early.

Flowers single on jointed stalks at one or two uppermost leaves. Calyx tubular, cylindrical, light green, 2 cm long, five-toothed and split on a side, above 5–7 narrow, curved green scales; petals five, white, sometimes pinkish, 3–4½ inches (7.5–11 cm) long, united at base into narrow tube 1 inch (2.5 cm) long; many thread-like stamens along the upper part of a long dark red or white column extending from tube ¾–4 inches (8–10 cm), enclosing pistil; ovary cylindrical, five-celled with several ovules in each cell, the slender style with five exposed erect dark red branches ending in brown dot stigmas.

Seed capsules oblong, 1 inch (2.5 cm) long, thin-walled, five-celled, enclosed by calyx. Seeds ⅜ inch (5 mm) long, brown hairy.

Native only on Oahu and Wailau Valley, Molokai, in wet forests at 1000–3000 ft (305–914 m) elevation. Originally common in mountains near Honolulu.

### **Special areas**

Lyon Arboretum, Waimea Arboretum, Maui Zoological and Botanical Gardens, Wahiawa Botanic Garden, Kapiolani Rose Garden near Honolulu Zoo, and Manuka State Park on Hawaii

### **Other common names**

Pā-makini, Punaluu hibiscus (variety with large heart-shaped hairy leaves). A common name for *Hibiscus* is pua aloalo, which refers to the flower. Aloalo refers to the whole plant.

This species named in 1854 honors its discoverer, George Arnold Walker Arnott, (1799–1868), Scottish botanist. It is mentioned in old Hawaiian songs and legends.

Several other mostly shrubby species of *Hibiscus*, with flowers of assorted colors, are native in Hawaii. *H. arnottianus* is a source of numerous horticultural varieties, which are popular ornamentals. Its flowers last longer, 2 days instead of 1.

White Kauai hibiscus, *Hibiscus waimeae* Heller, also with showy white flowers, is native to Kauai and common in Waimea Canyon at 2000–3000 ft (610–914 m). This small tree reaches 30 ft (9 m) and 1 ft (0.3 m) in trunk diameter. It is easily cultivated and can be seen at most special areas listed above.



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Flowering twig, 1 X.