

# Āulu

*Pisonia sandwicensis* Hillebr.

Four-o'clock family (Nyctaginaceae)

Native species (endemic)

Small to medium-sized native evergreen tree of dry forests, recognized from a distance by the dark green color of the large oblong leathery leaves. To about 50 ft (15 m) high with up to three trunks 1–2 ft (0.3–0.6 m) in diameter. Bark dark gray, smoothish to finely fissured. Inner bark whitish, slightly bitter. Twigs light gray, with large raised half-round leaf-scars.

Leaves alternate, hairless, with slender leafstalks of 1¼–2 inches (3–5 cm). Blades large, oblong, 4–12 inches (10–30 cm) long and 2¼–6 inches (6–15 cm) wide, leathery, blunt, rounded, or slightly notched at apex, broad and rounded at base, not toothed on edges, upper surface shiny dark green with inconspicuous side veins, paler beneath.

Flower clusters rounded on stalks of 1¼–5¼ inches (3–6 cm) at leaf bases. Male and female flowers many, on different trees (dioecious), with 2–3 scales or bracts at base and narrow greenish tubular calyx about ¼ inch (6 mm) long, finely hairy, fragrant. Male flowers many, stalkless in rounded head about 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter, consisting of deeply 5–6-lobed tubular calyx with five short lobes, about 20 minute sterile stamens inside tube, and pistil with narrow ovary, slender style, and enlarged fringed stigma.

Fruit (anthocarp) cylindrical, about 1½ inches (4 cm) long and very narrow, widest below middle, composed of enlarged calyx with lobes at apex and many faint lines and enclosing the narrow one-seeded fruit (achene) with style at apex.

Wood whitish, soft, very lightweight and porous, brash, not used. Tends to separate or “honeycomb” when dried. Highly susceptible to fungal stain. Branches brittle and easily broken.

Widespread in dry forests through the islands, especially at 2000–2500 ft (610–762 m) altitude.

## **Special areas**

Kokee, Waimea Arboretum

## **Range**

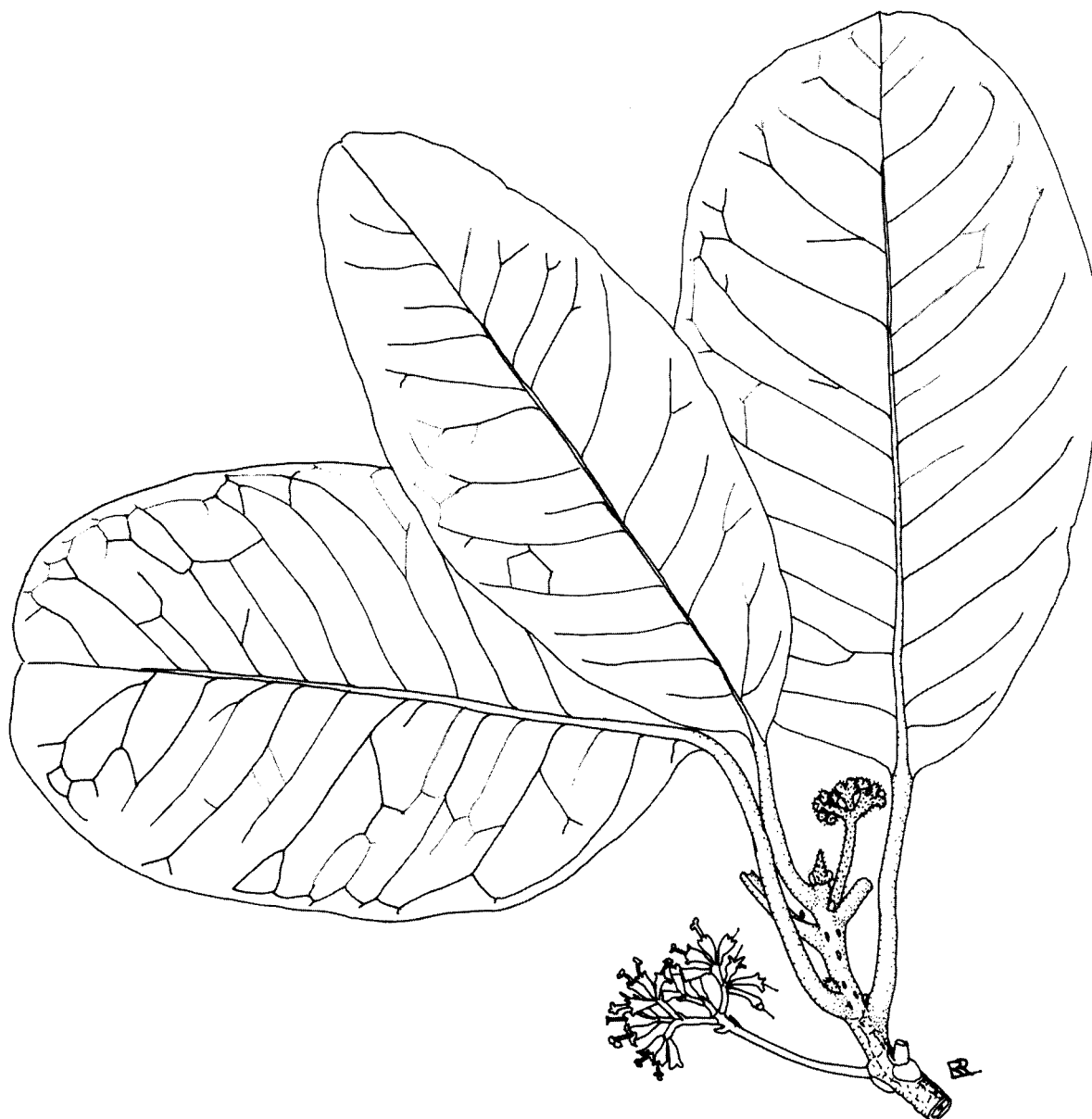
Hawaiian Islands only

## **Other common name**

pāpala kēpau

## **Botanical synonym**

*Rockia sandwicensis* (Hillebr.) Heimerl.



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Twig with female flowers,  $\frac{2}{3}$  X.