

Hō'awa

Pittosporum confertiflorum Gray

Pittosporum family (Pittosporaceae)

Native species (endemic); some introduced

This variable species is an example of its genus, which has about 10 Hawaiian species known as hō'awa, also two naturalized species. Small evergreen shrubs or trees with large narrow leathery leaves on stout twigs, many small whitish flowers crowded at base of leaves, and large rounded or four-angled deeply wrinkled fruits that split open into two parts.

To 30 ft (9 m) in height and 8 inches (0.2 m) in trunk diameter, with open crown of few stout, stiff erect branches. Bark gray, smooth to fissured. Inner bark orange or light yellow within green outer layer, bitter. Twigs stout, gray, with pressed brown hairs when young, smoothish, with clustered large half-round leafscars and long portions without leaf-scars.

Leaves alternate, many crowded near end of erect twigs, with stout light yellow leafstalks of $\frac{3}{8}$ –2 inches (1–5 cm). Blades obovate to oblong, mostly $2\frac{1}{4}$ –4 inches (6–10 cm) long and 1–1½ inches (2.5–4 cm) wide, the largest to 8 inches (20 cm) by 4 inches (10 cm), thick, stiff, blunt at apex, widest beyond middle and gradually narrowed toward base, curved under at edges. Upper surface dull green, densely gray hairy when young, becoming nearly hairless, with sunken light yellow midvein and network of prominently sunken veins; lower surface densely brown hairy, with raised veins.

Flower clusters (corymbose racemes) mostly terminal at leaf bases, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) long. Flowers many, fragrant, crowded on short brown hairy stalks, perfect or male and female, about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1 cm) long, composed of cup-shaped five-lobed brown hairy calyx about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long; white corolla with cylindrical tube about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (10 mm) long with five spreading lobes $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long. Male flowers have 5 alternate stamens attached at base of tube and extending beyond. Female flowers have five minute nonfunctioning stamens and narrow pistil with hairy slightly two-lobed ovary, two-celled and containing many ovules, and slender style.

Fruits (seed capsules) usually single (sometimes 2–3), rounded or four-angled, $\frac{3}{4}$ –1½ inches (2–4 cm) long, brown, with point at apex, hard and thick-walled, the

surface finely hairy, rough, deeply wrinkled, splitting into two parts, one-celled, inner wall orange, resinous or mucilaginous within. Seeds many, elliptical, flat, more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long, shiny black.

The most widespread and common species of this genus in Hawaii, occurring from dryland forests to moist forests at 600–7200 ft (183–2194 m).

Special areas

Haleakala, Volcanoes

Range

Oahu, Lanai, Maui, and Hawaii only

Other common name

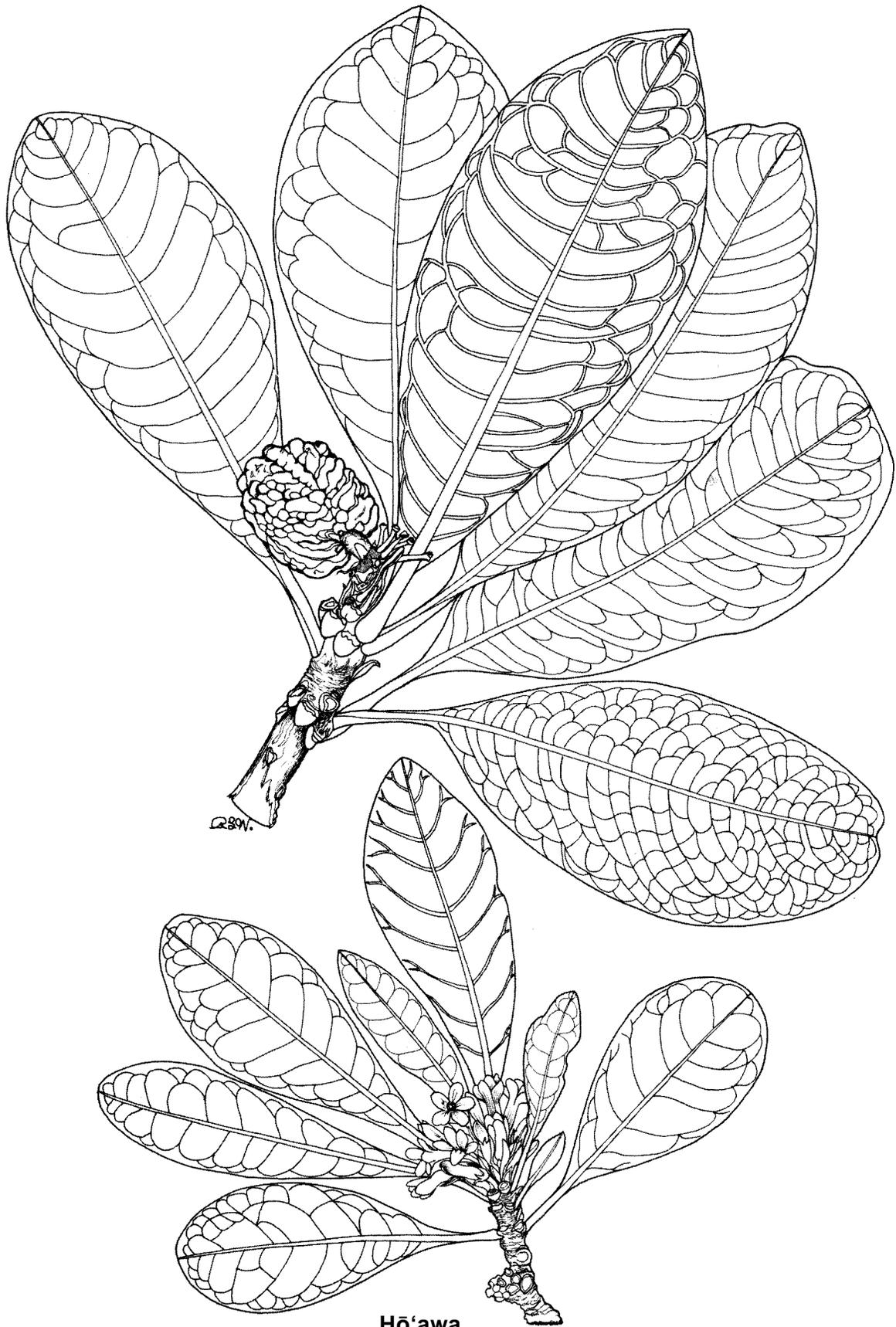
hā'awa

Botanical synonyms

Pittosporum cauliflorum Mann, *P. cladanthum* Sherff, *P. confertiflorum* Gray, *P. halophiloides* Sherff, *P. halophilum* Rock, *P. lanaiense* St. John

Rock (1913) observed that the trees in this genus are very variable and that it is difficult to render the exact limitation of each species. He found capsules of three different "species" on a single twig on the island of Lanai, where the genus is exceedingly well represented. As there are as many different forms as trees, one would be naming individual trees. Insect pollination is a factor, he concluded.

One native and a few introduced species are planted as ornamentals. In Hawaii, a home remedy was obtained from the pulp of the pounded fruits. Plants of another native species, *Pittosporum hosmeri* Rock, can be seen on the grounds of the Bishop Museum.



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Twig with fruit (above) and twig with flowers (below), $\frac{2}{3}$ X.