

Pilo kea, spatula-leaf platydesma

Platydesma spathulatum (Gray) Stone

Rue or citrus family (Rutaceae)

Native species (endemic)

This aromatic evergreen shrub or small tree has a strong odor of pepsin when crushed, paired often very large oblong to obovate leaves with gland dots visible under a lens, few large creamy white four-parted flowers at leaf bases, and four-lobed capsules. To 40 ft (12 m) high and 8 inches (20 cm) in trunk diameter, usually much smaller, 10–20 ft (3–6.1 m), with spreading branches leafy toward end. Twigs stout, greenish when young, becoming pale gray and hairless, with large raised triangular leaf scars.

Leaves opposite, with long slender leafstalk of $\frac{3}{8}$ – $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches (1–6 cm), enlarged at base, finely hairy when young. Blades oblong to obovate, 4–20 inches (110–511 cm) long and 1–8 inches (2.5–20 cm) wide, blunt at both ends, often turned under at edges, thick and leathery, with fine nearly straight side veins, above green to dark green and hairless, beneath paler and sometimes finely hairy on veins, with gland dots visible under a lens.

Flower clusters (cymes) at leaf bases, with mostly 3–5 short-stalked flowers at end of stalk of about 1 inch (2.5 cm). Flowers about $\frac{5}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (15–19 mm) long, not fragrant, composed of calyx of four overlapping rounded green sepals about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (10 mm) long, four large spreading creamy white petals $\frac{5}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (15–19 mm) long, eight white stamens united in tube of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (13 mm), and pistil with four-lobed four-celled ovary, slender style, and four-grooved stigma.

Fruits (capsules) rounded, four-lobed, about 1 inch (25 mm) in diameter, hairless, splitting into four parts, with calyx at base. Seeds 5–8, elliptical, rounded, shiny black.

Wood dull whitish yellow and soft, subject to bluestain fungi and without growth rings.

Uncommon in wet forests at 2000–5000 ft (610–1524 m) altitude.

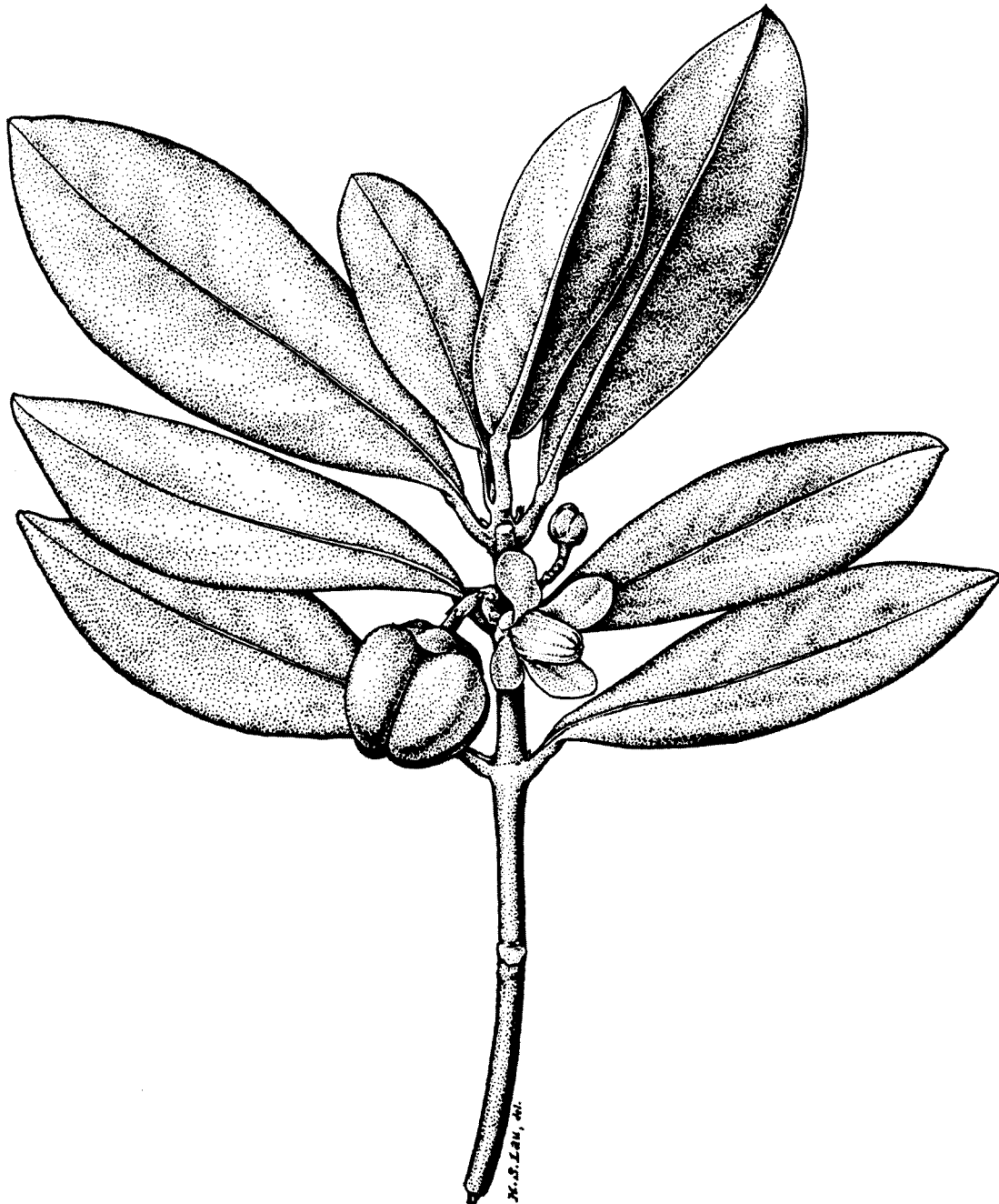
Special area

Kokee

Range

Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii only

A few additional varieties and forms of this variable species have been named. This genus is confined to Hawaii and has three other species of shrubs. Stone wrote a monograph about the genus (1962).



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Twig with flower and fruit, $\frac{3}{4}$ X (Degener).