

‘Āla‘a

Pouteria sandwicensis (Gray) Baehni & Deg.

Sapodilla family (Sapotaceae)

Native species (endemic)

Medium-sized native evergreen tree of dry forests mainly, with milky sap, recognized by the bronze or reddish brown lower surfaces of the leathery oblong or elliptical leaves. To 50 ft (15 m) high and 16 inches (0.4 m) in trunk diameter. Bark gray, thick, fissured to furrowed; inner bark orange with dark red outer layer, gritty and slightly bitter, with milky sap. Twigs with minute pressed brown hairs when young, with raised half-round leaf scars.

Leaves alternate, with leafstalks $\frac{3}{4}$ –1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (2–4 cm) long, finely brown hairy. Blades oblong or elliptical, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (6–14 cm) long and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ –2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (3–6 cm) wide, thick and leathery, rounded at apex, short-pointed at base, not toothed on edges, with many fine straight parallel side veins almost at right angle with slightly sunken midvein, upper surface shiny green and nearly hairless, lower surface dull with bronze or reddish brown pressed hairs or becoming nearly hairless.

Flowers 1–4 at base of leaf on straight or curved brown hairy stalks of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm), bell-shaped, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long. Calyx of five broad rounded light brown hairy sepals; corolla with short tube and five broad rounded lobes, light green and hairless; five short stamens attached within tube and opposite lobes and five small sterile stamens (staminodia) in notches; and pistil with hairy conical five-celled ovary and short style.

Fruit (berry) elliptical, rounded, or pear-shaped, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ –1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (3–4 cm) long, yellow, orange, or purplish black, dry. Seeds 1–5, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) long, elliptical and flattened, with long scar, shiny yellow brown.

Wood yellow with black streaks, hard, straight-grained, and with faint growth rings. Formerly used for house construction, o‘o (digging sticks), and spears.

The milky sap was used by the Hawaiians as bird-lime for catching small birds.

Dry forests mainly, in dry gulches to moist ridges at 600–4000 ft (182–1219 m) elevation throughout the islands.

Special areas

Kokee, Wahiawa

Champion

Height 38 ft (11.6 m), c.b.h. 5.3 ft (1.6 m), spread 29 ft (8.8 m). Puuwaawaa, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii (1968).

Range

Hawaiian Islands only

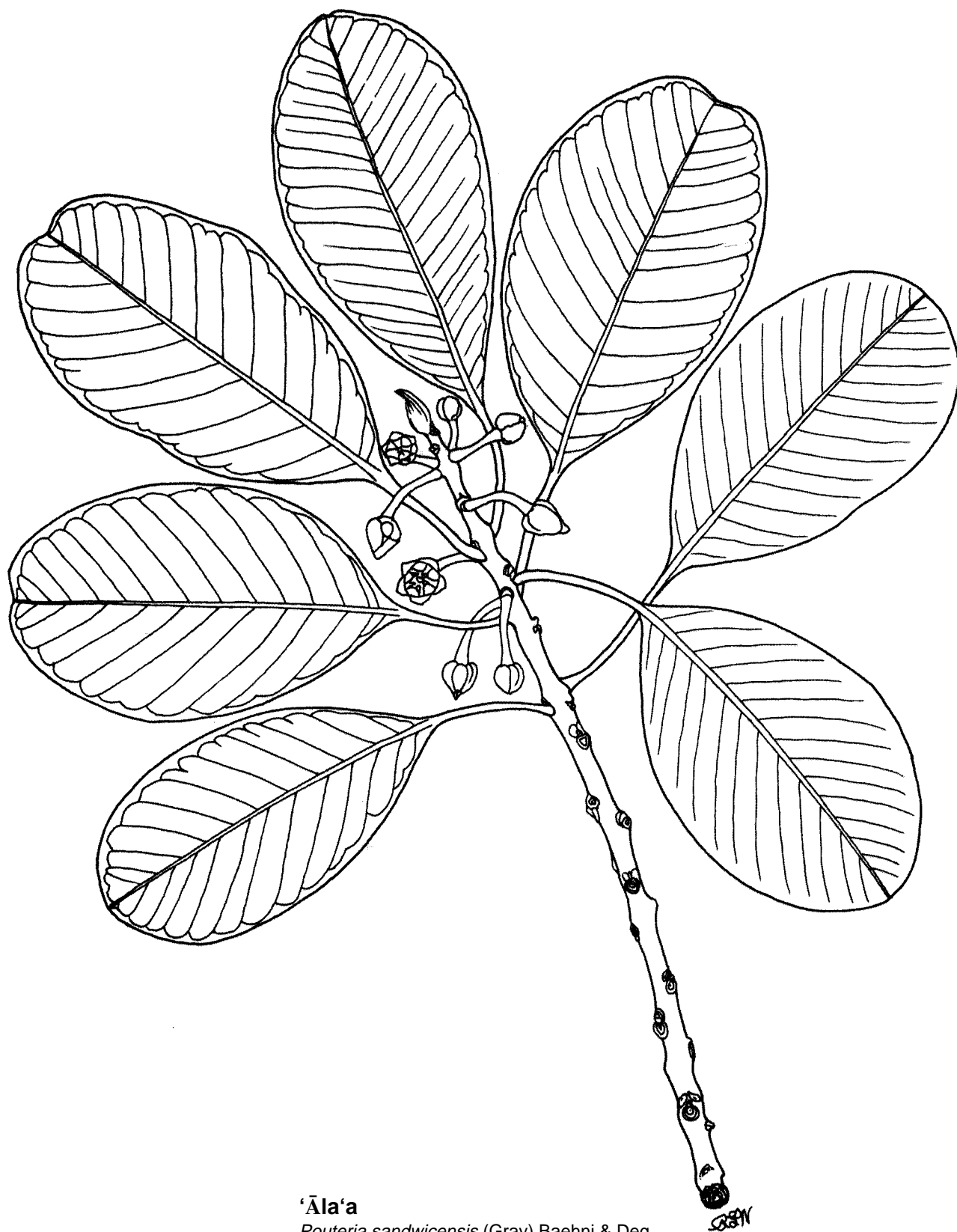
Other common names

kaulu, āulu

Botanical synonyms

Sideroxylon sandwicense (Gray) Benth. & Hook. f., *Planchonella sandwicensis* (Gray) Pierre, *P. puulupensis* Baehni & Deg., *Pouteria auahiense* Rock, *P. ceresolii* (Rock) Fosberg, *P. rhynchosperma* (Rock) Fosberg, *P. spathulata* (Hillebr.) Fosberg.

This species, treated here as the only Hawaiian representative of its genus, includes five or more variations formerly accepted as species.



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Pouteria sandwicensis (Gray) Baehni & Deg.
Flowering twig, 1 X.