

## Kōpiko

*Psychotria hawaiiensis* (Gray) Fosberg

Madder or coffee family (Rubiaceae)

Native species (endemic)

The genus *Psychotria* (including *Straussia*) is represented in Hawaii by about 11 species of evergreen shrubs and small trees distributed in wet forests through the islands. They have paired elliptical leaves with paired elliptical broad blunt stipules, terminal erect longstalked branched flower clusters with many small white flowers, and many small rounded orange fruits. This species is distinguished by short reddish brown hairs on leaf-stalks, lower leaf surface, and flower clusters.

Shrub or small tree reported to reach 33 ft (10 m) high and 1 ft (0.3 m) in trunk diameter. Bark smooth, blackish. Twigs stout, light green to gray, hairless except at ringed nodes, with large half-round leaf-scars.

Leaves opposite, with large paired light green hairless stipules or scales about  $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$  inch (10–15 mm) long, rounded at apex, falling early and leaving ring scar, and with long stout light green leafstalks  $\frac{3}{4}$ –1½ inches (2–4 cm) long. Blades elliptical or obovate, 4–7 inches (110–18 cm) long and 2–3½ inches (4–9 cm) wide, widest beyond middle, slightly thickened or leathery, blunt or rounded at apex, short-pointed at base, with edges straight, upper surface slightly shiny green and hairless, with midvein and many curved side veins light yellow, lower surface slightly shiny light green with scattered pressed rusty brown hairs especially on the raised veins.

Flower clusters (panicles) terminal, erect, 3–6 inches (7.5–15 cm) long, branches with rusty brown hairs. Flowers many, stalked or nearly stalkless,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (6 mm) long, composed of green hairy basal cup (hypanthium) with calyx forming wavy border; white corolla with short tube and 4–6 spreading lobes longer than tube; 4–6 short stamens in notches of corolla; and pistil with inferior two-celled ovary, short style, and two stigmas.

Fruits (drupes) elliptical,  $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{5}{16}$  inch (6–8 mm) long, with calyx at apex, two-seeded.

The hard whitish wood of this and related species was used by the Hawaiians as the anvil or *kua kukukapa* for beating bark into tapa or bark cloth, and also for fuel.

Scattered in understory of moist to dry forests to about 500–5000 ft (152–1524 m) elevation.

### **Special areas**

Volcanoes, Kipuka Puauulu

### **Champion**

Height 45 ft (13.7 m), c.b.h. 4.9 ft (1.5 m), spread 30 ft (9.1 m). Hoomau Ranch, Honomolino, Hawaii (1968).

### **Range**

Hawaii, Molokai, and Maui

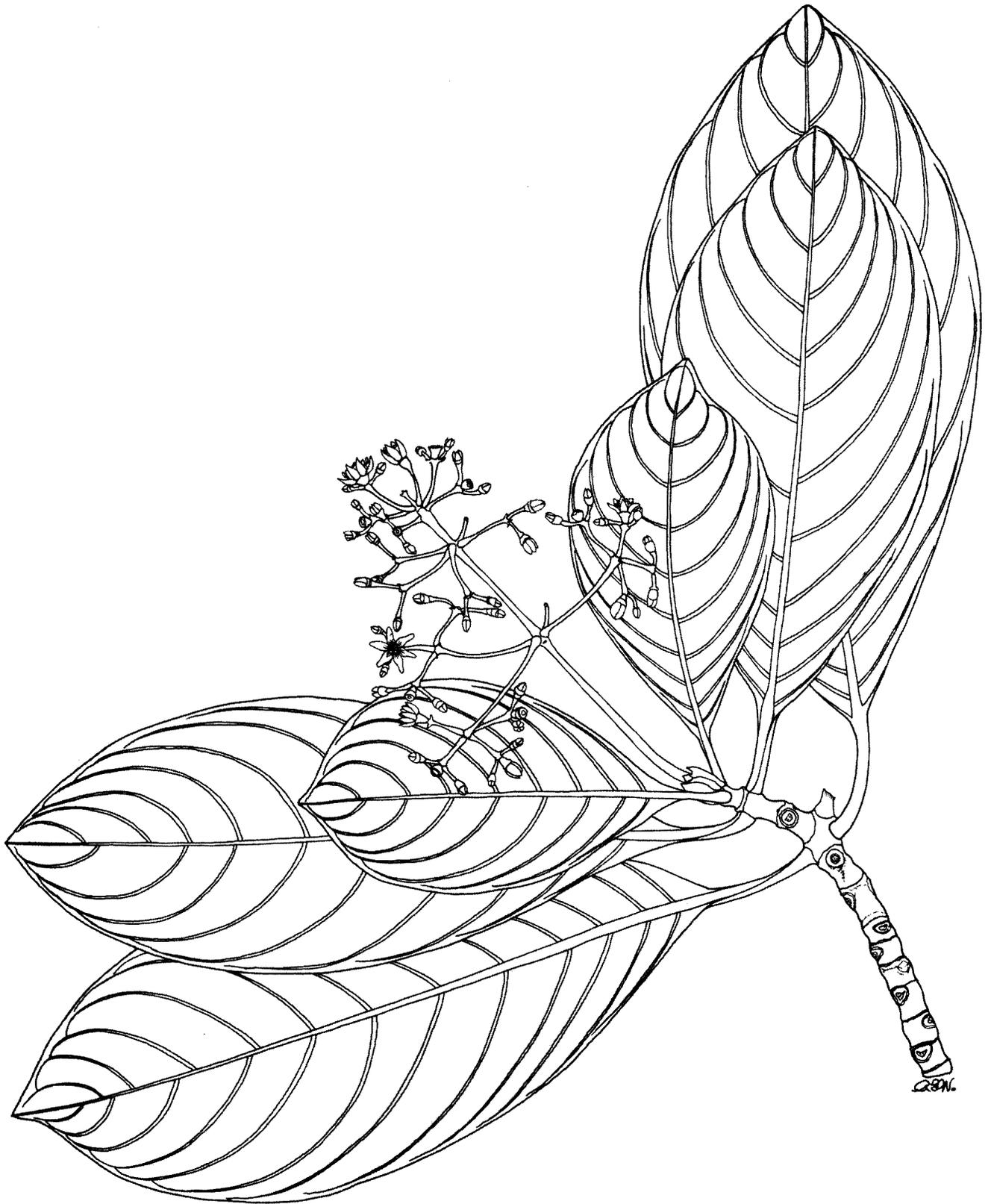
### **Other common names**

opiko, kōpiko ‘ula

### **Botanical synonym**

*Straussia hawaiiensis* Gray

The Hawaiian small genus *Straussia* with about eight species has been united with the large widespread tropical genus *Psychotria*, which has about 1500 species.



**Kōpiko**

*Psychotria hawaiiensis* (Gray) Fosberg  
Flowering twig,  $\frac{2}{3}$  X.