

'Ohe makai, Hawaiian reynoldsia

Reynoldsia sandwicensis Gray

Ginseng or aralia family (Araliaceae)

Native species (endemic)

This distinctive deciduous tree of dry forests is easily recognized by its stout smooth, light gray trunk with spreading crown of stout crooked branches, clear yellow brown tasteless resin, and large pinnate leaves with 7–11 ovate wavy margined leaflets heart-shaped at base. Also, many small greenish flowers in large branched clusters are conspicuous mostly in early spring while the tree is leafless.

A tree 15–50 ft (4.6–15 m) high with stout trunk 1½–2 ft (0.5–0.6 m) in diameter, leafless from late fall until after spring rains. Bark light gray, smooth, becoming slightly warty and fissured. Inner bark light brown or whitish streaked, slightly bitter, yielding yellow brown tasteless gum. Branches stout but easily broken. Twigs few, stout, ⅝–¾ inch (1.5–2 cm) thick, light gray, with broad crescent-shaped leaf-scars, powdery hairy when young. End bud conical, less than ¼ inch (6 mm) long, covered by overlapping scales.

Leaves alternate, crowded at end of twig, 10–12 inches (25–30 cm) long, powdery hairy when young, becoming hairless, with slender light green axis enlarged and almost clasping at base and ringed at base of leaflets. Leaflets mostly 7–11, paired except at end, hairless, on slender stalks of ⅜–1 inch (10–25 mm), broadly ovate, 2–4 inches (5–10 cm) long and 1¼–3¼ inches (3–8 cm) wide, blunt at apex, heart-shaped at base, wavy margined, slightly thickened and fleshy, dull light green above, paler beneath.

Flower clusters (panicles) 1–3, terminal, 3–8 inches (7.5–20 cm) long, with stout axis and many slender spreading branches, resinous. Flowers many, greenish, on short slender stalks, from elliptical green resinous buds more than ¼ inch (6 mm) long, composed of conical base (hypanthium) ⅛ inch (3 mm) high, five tiny calyx teeth, 8–10 narrow petals ¼ inch (6 mm) long, 8–10 spreading stamens alternate with petals, and pistil with inferior ovary of 8–10 cells, very short style in thick disk, and 8–10 dot stigmas in conical mass.

Fruits (berries) rounded about ⅝ inch (8 mm) in diameter, with stigmas at apex, purplish, juicy, bitter, becoming dry with ridges. Seeds (nutlets) 10 or fewer, elliptical, flattened, ⅜ inch (5 mm) long.

The soft whitish wood is not presently used. The Hawaiians made stilts from it for a game. The resin or gum was also used.

Scattered in dry lowland areas, especially aa or rough lava fields, to 2600 ft (792 m) elevation; becoming rare.

Special areas

Waimea Arboretum, Wahiawa, Volcanoes.

Champion

Height 48 ft (14.6 m), c.b.h. 6.7 ft (2 m), spread 23 ft (7 m). Puuwaawaa, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii (1968).

Range

This genus is found on Niihau, Oahu, Molokai, Lanai, Maui, and Hawaii, but is absent from Kauai.

Other common names

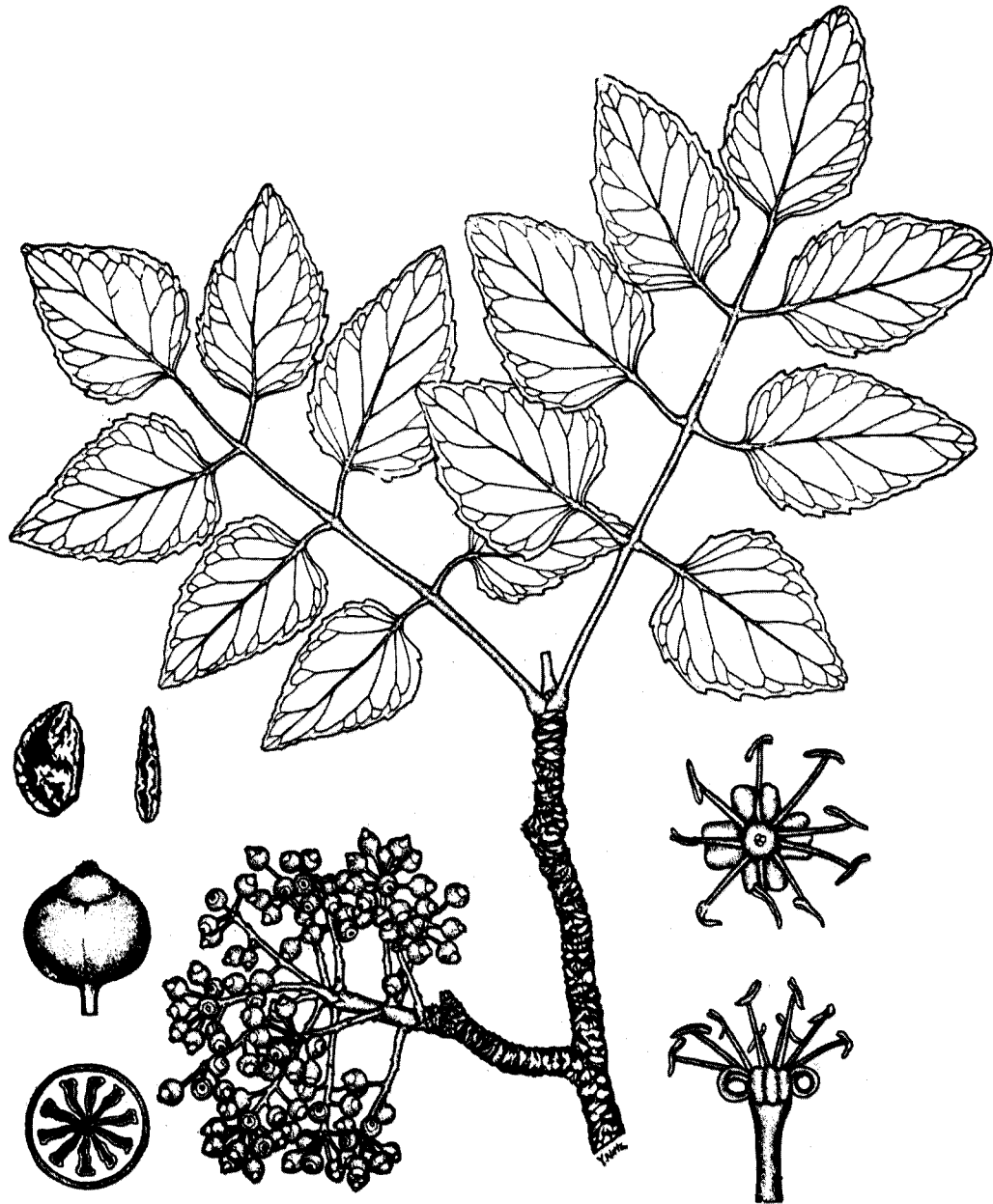
'ohe-kukuluae'o, 'ohe

Botanical synonyms

Reynoldsia degeneri Sherff, *R. hillebrandii* Sherff, *R. hosakana* Sherff, *R. huehuensis* Sherff, *R. mauiensis* Sherff, *R. oblonga* Sherff, *R. venusta* Sherff

In the broad sense this genus in Hawaii has a single variable species, though once divided into eight. A few others are found in Polynesia.

The genus *Reynoldsia*, discovered by the United States Exploring Expedition under Capt. Charles Wilkes, was named by Asa Gray in 1854 with this explanation: "I dedicate the genus to J. N. Reynolds, Esq., who merits this commemoration for the unflagging zeal with which he urged upon our Government the project of the South Sea Exploring Expedition, and also for having made, under trying circumstances, an interesting collection of dried plants in Southern Chili, many years ago [1837]."



'Ohe makai, Hawaiian reynoldsia

Reynoldsia sandwicensis Gray

Twig with fruits, $\frac{1}{2}$ X; seeds, 3 X, and fruits 2 X (lower left); flowers (lower right), 2 X (Degener).