

'Ohe'ohe

Tetraplasandra hawaiiensis Gray

Ginseng or aralia family (Araliaceae)

Native species (endemic)

The genus *Tetraplasandra*, known as 'ohe'ohe, has about six species in Hawaii. They are small evergreen trees with few branches, recognized by alternate pinnate leaves turned under at edges, many small greenish flowers spreading on slender equal stalks, and many small rounded blackish juicy fruits. The example described here is easily distinguished further by the leaflets densely whitish or grayish hairy beneath and by the flower clusters branching along an axis.

Small to large tree recorded to 40–80 ft (12–24 m) high and 1–2 ft (0.3–0.6 m) in trunk diameter, with broad flat crown. Bark gray, smoothish, becoming fissured, rough, and scaly. Inner bark light brown and whitish streaked, slightly spicy and gritty. Twigs very stout, 1¼ inches (3 cm) in diameter, gray, finely hairy, with very large half-round leaf-scars.

Leaves several, alternate, crowded at ends of twigs, very large, pinnate, 12–18 inches (30–46 cm) long, with very stout gray hairy axis enlarged at base. Leaflets five or seven, paired except largest at end, on stout gray hairy stalks of about ½ inch (1.2 cm), oblong or narrowly elliptical, 3–7 inches (7.5–18 cm) long and 1½–3 inches (4–7.5 cm) wide, blunt at apex, short-pointed and unequal-sided at base, turned under at edges, thick, leathery, and stiff, upper surface slightly shiny green and hairless, hairy when young, and lower surface densely whitish or grayish hairy.

Flower clusters (umbellate panicles) terminal large, 9–12 inches (23–30 cm) long and 6–10 inches (15–25 cm) wide, with spreading stout gray hairy branches, bearing many flowers, mostly 2–3 together, erect on stout stalks, from gray hairy buds. Flowers about ¾ inch (1 cm) long, gray hairy. Cup-shaped base (hypanthium) ⅜ inch (5 mm) high, bears calyx of 5–8 tiny teeth, 5–8 gray hairy pointed petals more than ¼ inch (6 mm) long, and 20–32 stamens. Pistil has inferior rounded ovary with 7–13 cells and ovules and rounded stigmas.

Fruits (berries or drupes) rounded, nearly ⅝ inch (8 mm) in diameter, with ring of calyx and pointed stigma, blackish, juicy, aromatic, with ridges when dry. Seeds (nutlets) 7–13, elliptical, more than ⅛ inch (3 mm) long, flattened, brown.

The wood in this genus is white with a silvery luster, without distinct heartwood. It is lightweight, finetextured, straight-grained, and of moderate hardness.

Scattered in wet and dry forests, mostly in rain forests at 500–2600 ft (150–792 m).

Special areas

Foster, Wahiawa, Volcanoes

Champion

Height 67 ft (20.4 m), c.b.h. 14.2 ft (4.3 m), spread 69 ft (21 m). Hoomau Ranch, Honomalino, Hawaii (1968).

Range

This species with varieties is recorded from Hawaii, Maui, Lanai, and Molokai.

Other common name

'ohe

A related endemic tree, *Munroidendron racemosum* (Forbes) Sherff, is rare and found only on Kauai, in lowland dry forests, but can be seen also in cultivation at Wahiawa Botanic Garden and Waimea Arboretum on Oahu. It is usually 12–15 ft (3.7–4.6 m) tall, to 40 ft (12 m). It has a straight trunk, smooth gray bark, and spreading branches. Leaves, similar to *Tetraplasandra*, are hairy. The long flower clusters (racemes) bear many drooping cream-colored flowers with deep red stigmas and ovary tops.



'Ohe'ohē

Tetraplasandra hawaiiensis Gray

Twig with mature and young leaves and flowers,
and fruits (lower right), $\frac{2}{3}$ X.