

Hibiscus tiliaceus

Hau

Hibiscus tiliaceus L.

Family: Malvaceae

Description: Large shrub with long, woody intertwining stems; forms tall, dense thickets in wet lowlands and along streams and rivers. Leaves broad, heart-shaped, 8 inches long, upper surface green and lustrous, fine whitish hairs beneath. Flowers yellow, maroon in base. Fruits roundish, beaked capsule, 1 inch long, dry when mature. Hawaiians used the plant for fiber, for the spars of outriggers, as fishnet floats, for starting fires, and for medicine. Greek, *hibiscos*, mallow; *tiliaceus*, Tilia-like, Tiliaceae being a closely related family^(5, 59, 70).

Distribution: Occurs along waterways and in humid areas on all the main islands except Ni‘ihau and Kaho‘olawe. It is uncertain if hau, a pantropical plant, is native or was introduced to Hawai‘i by the Polynesian settlers. Also on Midway and French Frigate Shoals⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Environmental impact: Forms impenetrable thickets along streams, roads, and in pastures and forests.



Management: Very difficult to control because of the many tall, intertwining woody stems. Sensitive to triclopyr applied to drilled holes. Sensitive to 2,4-D, glyphosate, and triclopyr applied by notching or drilling. However, basal bark application of 2,4-D was ineffective.