

# Morella faya

## Fayatree

*Morella faya* (Aiton) Wilbur

Family: Myricaceae

The common name fayatree is preferred to fayabush, firetree, and firebush because “fire” is probably a corruption of “faya” and the plant is a tree rather than a bush.

**Description:** Evergreen tree, branched, dense foliage. Leaves simple, alternate, leathery, narrow, 4 inches long by 1 inch wide, smooth, aromatic when crushed; margins serrate in upper half, slightly curled under. Flowers not showy. Fruits on branch tips, red maturing to black, 0.25 inches diameter. *Myrica* means *myrike*, or tamarisk; *faya*, to fit closely or tightly, meaning unknown. [*M. cerifera*, southern waxmyrtle, with waxy, tan-whitish fruits, is also naturalized in Hawai‘i. A large infestation was discovered along the recently constructed Moho‘uli Street extension in Hilo. *Cerifer*, wax-bearing<sup>(19)</sup>]<sup>(59, 69, 70)</sup>.

**Distribution:** Occurs in mesic to high-rainfall, higher elevations such as Pa‘auilo mauka, Mt. Hualālai, and Volcano on Hawai‘i, and Kōke‘e on Kaua‘i. Also on O‘ahu, Lana‘i, Maui. Native to the Atlantic isles of the Canaries, Azores, and Madeira. Introduced by Portuguese immigrants as an ornamental and for making wine. First collected in Hāmākua, Hawai‘i, in 1926. Planted by the Board of Agriculture and Forestry in 1940 in Hāmākua in forest recovery programs<sup>(32)</sup>, and by 1944 required control measures<sup>(59)</sup>.

**Environmental impact:** Seeds spread by birds. Forms dense stands under which nothing grows. Fixes nitrogen from the atmosphere; this ability favors plant species capable of responding to the added nitrogen over natives unable to do so. Leaves usually chlorotic because of the twospotted leafhopper, *Sophonia rufufascia*, which attacks many plant species.

**Management:** Leaf-spotting fungus *Septoria myricae* being evaluated at HAVO. Goats will control fayatree



(An Peischel). Saplings susceptible to foliar applications of triclopyr. Susceptible to cut-stump treatments of imazapyr 9% product in water, 10% triclopyr amine product, 100% glyphosate; metsulfuron (concentration not disclosed), and to frill application of 50% triclopyr amine product (HAVO). Trees and saplings susceptible to cut-surface applications of picloram, triclopyr, and glyphosate, and tolerant of dicamba. Saplings susceptible to basal bark application of triclopyr<sup>(53)</sup>. Soil-applied hexazinone, tebuthiuron ineffective.



*Morella cerifera*, southern waxmyrtle