Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai‘i’s Landscapes: Naio, Bastard sandalwood, *Myoporum sandwicense*

John Edward Montoya¹, Richard Criley¹, and Alberto Ricordi¹

¹Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences

Native to the Hawaiian islands, naio has variable growth forms, including a prostrate shrub, a small tree up to 30 ft. tall, and in upland areas a medium tree up to 50 ft. tall; thus it can fit multiple landscape needs. Its diameter varies widely, reaching 12 feet or more. This relatively fast-growing evergreen species has small white, fragrant flowers that bloom sporadically throughout the year. It thrives in dry, well-drained soils and full sunlight, which makes it ideal for xeriscaping.

**Recommended Use in Landscapes**
- Dry areas of all Hawaiian islands
- Any elevation with xeric conditions
- Residential areas as windbreaks, hedges, and screens

**Distribution**
- Native to all Hawaiian Islands
- Elevation: <150–5,000 feet
- Precipitation: 0–100 in.
- Naturally occurs in a wide range of habitats

**Propagation Techniques**
- 3- to 5-inch semi-hardwood cuttings easily root; use 0.05% IBA rooting hormone.
- To propagate from seed, remove fruit pulp and soak in hot water for up to 2 days.
- Fertilize young trees every 6 months with a balanced slow-release fertilizer.
- Foliar feed monthly with a water-soluble fertilizer (fish emulsion or kelp) diluted to 1/3 of recommended dose.
- Needs good drainage
- Let soil dry out between watering.
Cultural Requirements and Tolerance
- Full sun, arid conditions
- Grows well in a wide range of well-drained soils
- Tolerates wind, drought, and salt spray
- Pruning is required to develop and maintain tree form.

Flower and Fruit Characteristics
- Small, white to purplish-pink flowers arise in clusters from the leaf axil
- Blooms year round
- Fragrant, with a sweet smell like honey
- Small, fleshy green fruits that vary in color

Leaf Characteristics
- Medium to dark green
- Relatively thick
- Evergreen
- Elliptic
- Glossy

Advantages for Use in Landscapes
- Easily pruned and maintains desired shape
- Drought tolerant
- Low maintenance
- Various growth forms
- No messy fruits
- Fragrant flowers and wood
- Long-lived
- Can be used as alternative to oleander (poisonous)

Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes
- Does not tolerate poor drainage
- Susceptible to ants, aphids, mealybugs, scale, and spider mites
- Susceptible to black sooty mold growth
- Host plant of naio thrips, a non-native pest found on the island of Hawai‘i, which causes damage to leaves and new growth

Acknowledgements
The authors thank Amanda Birnbaum for the many photographs she contributed to this publication.