



## Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai'i's Landscapes: *Lignum Vitae, Guaiacum officinale*

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Slow-growing and evergreen, with a rounded crown and beautifully mottled bark, lignum vitae is underutilized in Hawai'i landscapes because of its slow growth rate. Branching can be irregular, so careful pruning is required to develop a tree form. Typically about 15 feet tall and wide, mature trees can reach 35 feet with a spread of about 25–30 feet. The wood is very hard and very heavy.

### Recommended Use in Landscapes

- Courtyard
- Park
- Coastal areas
- Specimen tree
- Street tree

### Distribution

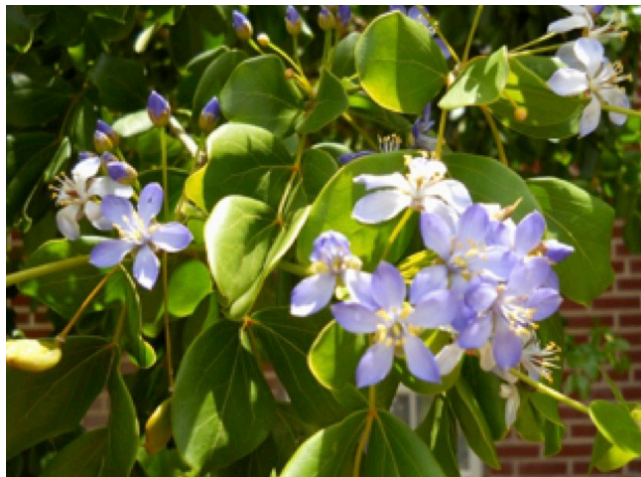
- Tropical Americas, Caribbean islands
- Dry and humid coastal woodlands
- National tree of Jamaica

### Propagation Techniques

- Seed

### Cultural Requirements and Tolerance

- Tolerant to diverse soil types
- Drought resistant once established
- Good degree of salt tolerance
- Full sun



**Flower and Fruit Characteristics**

- Five-petaled light blue flowers ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) develop after good rainfall.
- Fruit capsule about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long, yellow at maturity
- Fruits split open to reveal seed with red aril.

**Leaf Characteristics**

- Six broadly elliptical, leathery leaflets pinnately arranged on golden petiole; leaf about 9 inches
- Evergreen

**Advantages for Use in Landscapes**

- Adaptable to many uses
- Compact
- Can be used under power lines
- No major pest or disease problems

**Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes**

- Capable of producing many seedlings
- Slow growing

