



Akia

Wikstroemia uva-ursi A. Gray.

Common names: akia, dwarf akia, Molokai osmanthus

Native habitat: Hawaiian islands including leeward Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, and Maui

Characteristics

Akia is a densely branched, prostrate or sprawling shrub. It grows to 2–4 ft high and spreads up to 10 ft wide. Its opposite, waxy, ovate, ½-inch long leaves are dark to grayish green on the upper surface and lighter green on the underside. Leaf texture is fine to medium. Young branches may be gray, yellow, or reddish brown. The small, tubular, yellowish-green flowers are produced during most of the year, usually in clusters. The round fruits are small (¼–½ inch diameter) and reddish to dark crimson, but other colors have been noted. They contain a single seed. The fruits are reasonably effective in landscapes.

Location

Akia tolerates a wide variety of soils and conditions but is best planted in full sun in moist, well drained soils. It will tolerate some shade. It has excellent salt, wind, heat, and drought tolerance, once established.

Landscape uses

Akia is a useful groundcover or small shrub. Its flowers and grayish foliage are attractive. It can be particularly effective when sprawling over a stone wall, embankment, or rocks. It is useful for erosion control and in beach landscapes. The recommended spacing is 24 inches for gallon containers; closer for smaller sizes.



Culture

Akia is easily transplanted and grown and is an excellent small shrub or tall groundcover for beach or dry landscapes. It has a moderate growth rate and is relatively pest-free.

Propagation

Akia may be started from cuttings or seeds, or by air-layering. Cuttings respond to auxin treatment. Propagation from nursery-grown plants is more effective than from plants in the landscape.

Additional notes

The flowers and fruits are prized for making haku leis, and the fruits are strung like beads.

Fred D. Rauch and David Hensley
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