

Caring for your Pu'uka'a



Photo: David Eickhoff

Pu'uka'a (*Cyperus trachysanthos*), also known as sticky flatsedge, is a rare one! This native Hawaiian sedge is federally listed as endangered and is now only found on O'ahu, where it is quite rare in the wild. But you can help it survive! The plant you bought is from commercially-available nursery stock and can be planted legally in your garden. It makes a very special addition to any landscape and is a delicate but very easy to grow species.

This sedge is excellent for beginners and experts interested in adding a very rare native Hawaiian plant to their garden or collection. Your pu'uka'a will do best in partial to full sun and do even better in pots, where they will eventually reseed to nearby pots

They need to be kept fairly moist so if you want to plant them in the yard make sure it is a sunny spot around the edge of a pond or water feature or in another area that gets watered and does not dry out for long. If you have invasive umbrella sedge, take them out and replace them with this native beauty! Pu'uka'a were part of the low elevation wetland ecosystems, which have now mostly disappeared. Pu'uka'a is very well-behaved and is much easier to manage than most of the ornamental grasses from elsewhere which require constant trimming and can become aggressive or weedy.

Pests are generally not an issue. The plants will live for several years and produce attractive seed heads that you can collect and use to grow more, or use in bouquets. The seeds will disperse across the pots on your lanai and sprout up in places that are frequently wet but never get weedy.



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