



MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS

November 2008 . Newsletter . Volume 25

Kukui – Tree of Light

by Robert Hobby

Kukui – Tree of Light

The kukui (*Aleurites moluccana*) is a tree that has stood by the side of Polynesian peoples for thousands of years and is one of the foundations of their cultures. Of the nearly thirty species of “canoe” plants that they carried with them during their epic migrations from the Western Pacific out into the vastness of the Central Pacific, no cultural plant has had a greater diversity of uses than has kukui. It is no coincidence that the kukui is our State tree.

Kukui is a very distinctive tree that is easily recognized in Hawaiian forests. Its large, pale-green leaves are of a color like no other tree and they can be recognized from great distances. Kukui are most common in lowland, windward valley bottoms where they tend to form dense groves. Large trees can grow to 80 ft. tall with 4 ft. diameter trunks, although they are often smaller in drier or more exposed sites.

The name kukui is derived from an older name *kuikui* and thus appears to be a contraction of that word. *Tuitui* is the name for this tree in such South Pacific islands as Tonga and Rarotonga. This shows that the name has a common and likely ancient Polynesian origin. A second meaning for kukui in the



Photo by Forest & Kim Starr

Hawaiian dictionary is lamp, light or torch, which is descriptive of its primary and most outstanding use in Hawaiian life. It is interesting to note that the Samoan name for this tree is *lama*, another word meaning light (with connotations also of enlightenment).

Some of the many uses of kukui include:

Dyes

- The husk of the nut yielded a grayish-beige color that was used to dye fishing nets so that they were less visible to fish when cast.
- The inner bark of the trunk yielded a brownish-red dye, and the inner bark

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NEW MNBG EMAIL !!!!
info@mnbg.org

Layout Editor
U'i Naho'olewa

Kukui – Tree of Light *Continued*

by Robert Hobdy

of the roots yielded a reddish-brown dye. Both of these colors were used to dye kapa.

-The soot of burned kukui nut shells was used to make a black dye that was used in tattoo work, for creating designs on kapa and for painting designs on canoes.

Medicine

-The sap from the green nuts was used to treat 'ea or thrush disease of the tongue and throat of babies. This sap was also used to seal wounds to promote healing without infection.

-The oily nuts were used as a cathartic.

Varnish

-Gum from the bark was mixed with water to create a clear varnish with which kapa was sealed and waterproofed.

Condiment

-The oily nuts were roasted, pounded and mixed with pa'akai or sea salt to create a rich and delicious condiment called 'inamona.

Adornment

-The nuts of the kukui are used to make striking leis. The nuts are polished and strung whole or the half shells are strung in an overlapping pattern.

Fishing

-The oil from crushed nuts was blown from the mouth over the surface of the sea to produce a glassy, clear surface so that the fisherman could see more clearly what was below.

Wood

-The wood of the kukui is soft, weak and decays or rots fairly rapidly so it was used sparingly and usually only for temporary items or carvings. This quality, however, made it ideal for growing the pepeiao akua or edible ear fungus. Decaying tree trunks or large branches lying on the ground in damp forest quickly became covered with these fungi which were then harvested. Sometimes kukui trees were felled for the express purpose of growing a crop of pepeiao-akua.

Light

-Kukui, however, was most famous throughout Polynesia as a source of light.

The extremely oily nuts were shelled, roasted and pierced on a nī'au or coconut leaf midrib which was then stood upright and the top nut lit. As the nuts burned downward they produced hours of light in the Hawaiian hale at night. These nuts, in a denser arrangement, fixed on the top of a wooden

handle and protected within a funnel-shaped fascicle of kī leaves, made a serviceable lamakū or torch. These torches were used for lamalama fishing or torch fishing at night on the reef flats.

Kukui are beautiful trees. When they are young and vigorous they have large and distinctly 3 or 5-lobed leaves and an attractive spreading crown. As they mature the branches become more angular and the leaves become less lobed and develop an almost whitish-green color.

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Photo by Forest & Kim Starr

MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens is to foster an appreciation and understanding of the Hawaiian Islands of today, emphasizing the plants of Maui Nui (Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i and Kaho'olawe), and providing a center for environmental education, Hawaiian cultural expression, conservation, biological study, and recreation.

Arbor Day Lawn & Garden Fair & Hawaiian Tree Giveaway 2008

On **November 8th, 2008 from 9am-2pm** Maui Nui Botanical Gardens (MNBG) in partnership with the Maui Association of Landscape Professionals (MALP) will for the second year combine their efforts to create a must-attend event full of educational activities and demonstrations. In addition to the annual free 1,000 Hawaiian tree give-away there will be plant sales, lectures, demonstrations, green industry representatives, and great food.

The Maui County Arborist Committee has selected Buddy Nobriga as the Honorary Chairperson for Arbor Week. At 12:15 the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) will be presenting their 2007 Mālama i ka 'Āina Award to a landscape professional that promotes and aids in the use of non-invasive plants on Maui.

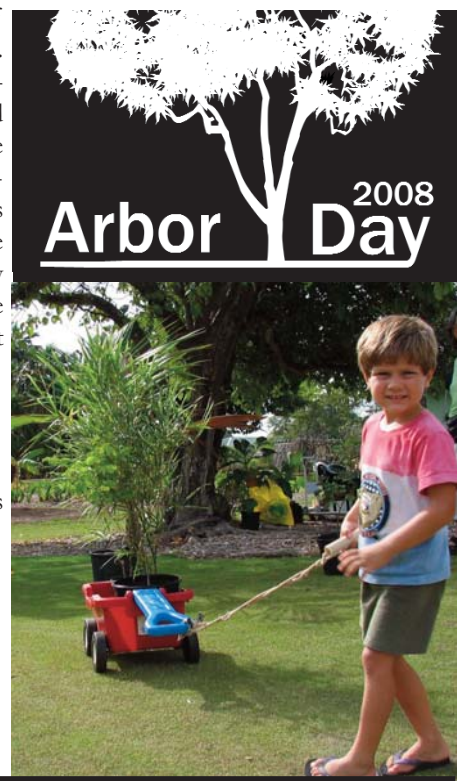
In addition to MNBG & MALP this event is sponsored by DLNR Kaulunani Program, the Maui County Department of Water Supply, Maui County Farm Bureau, and the Maui Electric Company.

Experts will be available to answer most of Maui's landscape, gardening and tree questions.

There will be booths representing the landscape industry, tree-friendly organizations and non-profits to answer questions and provide demonstrations on landscape equipment, fertilization, pests, diseases and soil testing. MALP's goal is education and elevation of landscape practices on Maui, and MNBG's Arbor Day Celebration serves to beautify our island home and helps to promote the right tree in the right place.

Activities and demonstrations will include:

- 1,000 Hawaiian Tree Give-away
- Educational speakers, and booths
- Plant Sales of Fruit trees, Succulents, and Native Plants
- Tree Planting & Pruning Demonstration
- Soil pH Testing & Education by M.C.C. Agriculture Department
- Plant Pest Identification and Education
- Landscape Industry Trade Show
- Ono Food Vendors
- Green & Garden Door Prizes
- Silent Auction



Ten Reasons We Plant Trees

1. Trees save energy and money. Just three trees strategically planted around your home can cut your air conditioning bill in half.
2. Trees save tax dollars. Trees in a city slow storm water runoff and reduce the need for storm sewers. Tree shade also help cool municipal buildings, lowering electricity bills.
3. Trees cool our cities. Urban "heat islands" are directly related to massive tree-cutting for development.
4. Trees clean our water and air. From low level ozone in our cities to pesticide and fertilizer runoff from our farms, trees absorb harmful pollutants.

5. Trees help community life. Tree planting and community based forestry can add significantly to a local community's sustainable economy while restoring the environment.
6. Trees protect soil. By holding soil in place with their root systems, by deflecting pounding rain with their canopies, and by adding nutrients each fall with their leaves, trees are crucial to keeping and improving our soil.
7. Trees provide habitat for species of many kinds -- including endangered species. A key project of American Forests is "Trees for Tigers" in the Russian Far East that is restoring habitat for the endangered Siberian tiger.
8. Trees can pay your "carbon debt". Planting just

30 Global ReLeaf trees will absorb the amount of carbon dioxide that is generated in the production of energy for the average American lifestyle each year.

9. Trees provide clean water and natural flood control. Forests act as natural reservoirs, and they protect watersheds, providing clean water for cities, bays and rivers.
10. Trees are a beautiful part of our lives. From striking individual trees that are of historic significance or are simply large and majestic, to a grove of trees in a city park, trees enrich our lives by simply being there. Trees are not just a key to the natural ecosystem -- trees are an essential part of community life.

<http://www.americanforests.org/resources/10reasons/>

2008 - 2009 Event Dates at Maui Nui Botanical

November 8, 2008 9:00 am -2:00 pm

Arbor Day

Maui Nui Botanical Gardens & Maui Association of Landscape Professionals Arbor Day Tree Give-Away and Lawn & Garden Fair

January 24, 2009 9:00am -12:00 pm

Plant Sale

Native Hawaiian Plant Sale offering `Ōhia Lehua, `Uki`uki, `Ilima papa, Mai`a, Ma`o hau hele, māmakī, `Āhinahina, Hibiscus sp.,

Hō`awa, Nehe, Wauke and much more. Participating nurseries: MNBG, Native Nursery, Kulamanu Farms, New Moon Enterprises, and Ho`olawa Farms.

April 18, 2008 9:00 am -3:00 pm

Earth Day

Celebrating Maui's conservation, Hawaiian cultural preservation and recycling organizations with cultural demonstrations and games.

From the President

As you can see from the other parts of this Newsletter, the Director and staff at MNBG continue to actively work toward the protection and conservation of Hawaii's native plants. Plant sales, educational tours, participation in workshops—all enhance and advance the message and work of the Gardens.

The Board of Directors is very proud of the work done at the Gardens and hopes that many people in our community take advantage of the opportunities offered by our garden and our staff. We have active volunteers and encourage participation by many more. We have community/public support through grants, but with the growing costs of supplies and materials, we need gener-

ous donations from all those receiving this Newsletter. MNBG will also be sending an Annual fund appeal letter soon so please respond to the best of your ability.

The Board will participate in its first (and certainly not last) “work day” at the Gardens on October 24th. We are all hoping to learn a great deal about the day to day operations and activities of the Gardens. The Board is also working with our Director, Lisa, in developing plans for new Gardens exhibits and educational spaces. So watch for more information about these things as the year progresses.

See you all at the Arbor Day fair on November 8th!
Dorothy Pyle



On September 5th, Lisa Raymond and Stephanie Seidman flew to Moloka'i for the day to collect rare kalo (taro) varieties from the College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources, Moloka'i Cooperative Extension Service Agriculture Research Center.

Moloka'i Extension Agent Alton Arakaki and his terrific, helpful and knowledgeable staff hosted an annual Hawai'i Taro Variety Field Day, Sept 6th. Attendees were able to collect different huli varieties from the field and taste the taro and kulolo that came from the different varieties.

For more information about the event and other taro resources go to:

http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/ctahr2001/Research/Downloads/ResearchNews/CTAHR_Research_News_September_08.pdf

With Gratitude from Our Garden

Weed & Pot Club

Mahalo to our Weed & Pot Club for the outstanding job they have been doing. This group of amazing individuals contribute their time, expertise, and aloha every Wednesday. They have worked hard in the nursery, picnic and playground areas, and plant beds. They have also helped prepare lauhala ornaments and kapa wrapping paper for the upcoming Arbor Day. The Weed & Pot Club members are an integral part to the good health and beauty of the Gardens.

Special Gifts from Special People

Mahalo to the County of Maui Department of Finance for the donation of the office desk; Michele Fujiyama and Baldwin High School for lockers; the Dept. of Aquatic Resources for donating limu compost; Richard Langford and Asplundh for the mulch; Janet Allan for the mosquito fish for the makaloa ponds; Terence Thomas for our Dymo labeler; and a special mahalo to Ron and Becky Lau for conducting the hala weaving classes; Eko Compost for mulch donation; Billy Medeiros of Mauka Landscape for the mulch deliveries; Joe DeRego for the donation of cinder to the makaloa pond project.

Kukui – Tree of Light *Continued*

by Robert Hobdy

Occasionally one will come across an ancient tree that dominates the surrounding forest. These venerable trees often have a gnarly aspect with impossibly angled branches which zigzag through the canopy. The ground beneath old trees is usually carpeted with an accumulation of many years worth of unopened nuts waiting for the right conditions to germinate.

Rarely kukui can grow to immense sizes. I recall a grove I saw in the 1960s in Hanakoa Valley above the Kalalau Trail on Kaua'i. Six trees growing on rich alluvial soil in a small side gulch were estimated to be 120 ft. tall. These trees were as straight as arrows and had no branches below a height of 60 ft. I estimated their dimensions but was so impressed that I vowed to return to get accurate measurements of their heights and diameters. Surely they would be the tallest kukui on record. About a year later I was able to come back to the area, but was shocked to find that the entire grove was gone, and where the alluvial soil had been there was a gaping gulch 30 ft. deep. After my initial disbelief that so profound a change could have occurred, I recalled that about four months prior to this a massive rain event had dropped 34 in. of rain in one day along the Nāpali Coast which was recorded at the Kalalau Lookout rain gauge. The catastrophic flooding over these canyon cliffs would have been awesome to behold. The great kukui were reduced to shattered remnants in the gulch below, but the vision of these majestic trees lives on in my memory.

In a more contemplative vein, kukui forests can provide special moments that are unforgettable. Early one morning many years ago I was walking up Pi'ina'au Valley above Ke'anae through a kukui forest with an understory of 'awapuhi and kī.

The forest was cool and still with dappled light illuminating the forest floor. The scene was so peaceful and beautiful that I stopped to admire and enjoy it. After a few moments this meditative state was punctuated when a kukui leaf high in the canopy detached from its twig and began to glide, like a perfectly designed paper plane, slowly and silently in a broad arc. The leaf circled me where I stood until, after about 20 seconds, it came lightly to rest on the forest floor nearby. It was as though this display was a hō'ailona, a sign or a token of recognition, and a makana aloha, a gift of love, acknowledging and reciprocating my appreciation of the moment and the place. It is no wonder that Hawai'i has a special relationship with kukui. Kukui is indeed a tree we can all appreciate and cherish.



Photo by Forest & Kim Starr

SAVE A TREE!

If you would like to receive your newsletters via email, please email us at info@mnbg.org beginning November 1st. You may also view them online on our website at www.mnbg.org.

Garden News

Maui Nui Botanical Gardens was honored to be recognized on August 7th, by the Hawaii Tourism Authority at the 17th Annual “Keep It Hawaiian” Awards. MNBG received the Lehua Maka Noe award for demonstrating a commitment to the growth and development of the Hawaiian Culture. Mahalo to the Hawaii Tourism Authority for the award!



New MNBG Video

A great big mahalo to Lisa Fitkin and husband Andrew Wright owners of Premier Images for their creation of a promotional and education video featuring Maui Nui Botanical Gardens staff & Board members. Premier Images is located in Orinda CA., and Lisa (daughter of Janet Allan), and Andrew have received several prestigious awards for their work including an Emmy! You can see this video on our new website at www.mnbg.org. Thank you Lisa and Andrew for doing such a fantastic job!

MNMG welcomes new Program Administrator Maka Pico to our ‘ōhana. Maka is a Maui girl who brings great experience to her position. She is a Licensed Massage Therapist and student of la'au lapa'au. I hope you will get a chance to meet her and welcome her at our Arbor Day event.



- Wish List**
- ELECTRIC GOLF/UTILITY CART
 - KŌKUA TO BUILD OUR COMPOST BINS
 - KŌKUA TO FIX RUSTY SPOTS ON OUR STORAGE CONTAINERS
 - PICNIC TABLES FOR OUR PLAYGROUND
 - STURDY OUTDOOR FURNITURE
 - NEW PUSH MOWER
 - ACCESSION LABELS

Weed & Pot Club: Front Row L-R: Duncan Stenzel, Gloria Adlawan, Maka Pico, Stephanie Seidman, Velma Nakamura, Richard Nakagawa, Row 2 L-R: Phyllis Sato, Paul Kastner, Owen Sarsona w/ Kawelo, Diana Schulte, Heather Sarsona, Janet Allan, Gwen DeRego, Terry Thomas.

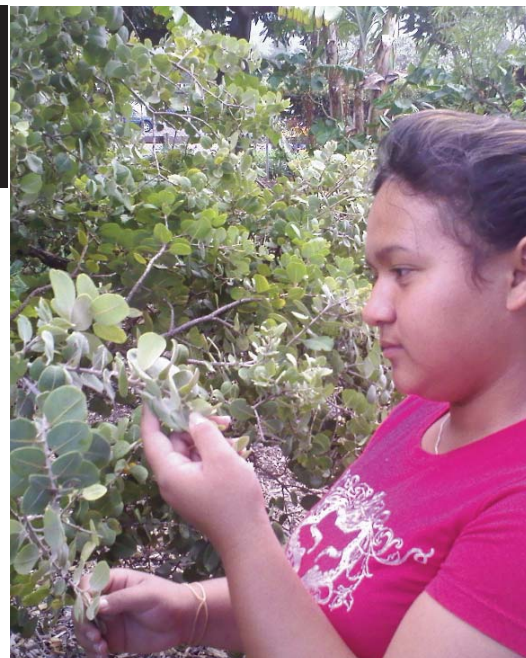
MNMG CONTRIBUTIONS

We have been fortunate to work with and share the special gifts of the Gardens with some wonderful groups in our community. MNMG has made donations to the Neighborhood Kupuna, Mānoa Heritage Center, Hālau Hula o Wai Lehua, Old Maui High School Organization, County of Maui Water Department and Simply Healthy Café, Hālau Hula I Kona Mau Lima.

Student Volunteers

Honeygirl Duman, Kahele Sing, Daniel Rodriguez, Isabella Powell, Jacob Iniba, and Tiffanie Moyer brought their skills and new ideas to the Gardens as part of the Service Learning Program at Maui Community College. These hardworking students cleaned the sugar cane collection, cut and harvested hala for cordage, prepared wauke for kapa making, renovated the restroom garden beds, organized the office, and are producing PowerPoint presentations on how to prepare `ulu.

Kamehameha Schools student intern Nick Harders is interested in native Hawaiian plants and their uses. He hopes to learn and share information about the Gardens with others. Nick has volunteered 40 hours and his hard work and dedication has helped keep the grounds beautiful.



Our youngest volunteer this year is Cymry Pico of The Isaiah Academy for Excellence. She volunteers her time after-school in our nursery and with seed collection. Cymry enjoys learning about native plants and how to care for them from our Nursery Supervisor/Curator Stephanie Seidman.

Volunteering

Maui Nui Botanical Gardens offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. You can have a fulfilling experience for yourself while helping serve the Garden's mission. As a volunteer, you also reap many benefits, enhancing your personal growth. If you are interested in plants and people, join our Weed & Pot Club every Wednesday from 8:30am-10:30am.

LOCATION & HOURS

150 Kanaloa Avenue
Keōpūolani Park, Kahului
Across from the War Memorial Sports Complex
Monday-Saturday
8:00 am—4:00 pm*
Closed Sundays & Major Holidays
*Weather permitting & staff availability.

GROUP RESERVATIONS

Reservations are required for group activities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing: P.O. Box 6040
Kahului, HI 96733
TEL: (808) 249-2798 FAX: (808) 249-0325
Email: info@mnbg.org
Website: www.mnbg.org



Mahalo to Our Weed & Pot Volunteers

Angela Rainone	Justin Manuel
Anudeva Stevens	Kody Joslin
Becky Lau	Lilinoe Joslin Nakamoto
Carol Hanson	Linda Anderson
Cymry Pico	Mālie Sarsona
Darren Espirito	Maura Seeley
Deborah Kremins	Mike Dahlem
Diana Schulte	Owen Sarsona
Duncan Stenzel	Paul Kastner
Easter Seals	Percy Mather
Eva Mix	Rita Seeley
Gloria Adlawan	Ron Lau
Gwen DeRego	Terry Thomas
Heather Sarsona	Trisha Spencer
Janet Allan	Velma Nakamoto

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Stephanie Seidman

Program Administrator

Maka Pico

Development Director

Kathy Kaohu

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Mahalo to our new & returning donors! (Since June of 2008)

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Tamara Sherrill

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Plant Extinction Prevention Program

Maui Coastal Land Trust

Maui Association of Landscape Professionals

Maui Invasive Species Committee

Native Hawaiian Plant Society

Ma'o Hau Hele (\$5,000+)

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Hālau Hula I Kona Mau

Lima

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Hālau Hula Nā Hanona

Kūlike 'o Pi'ilani

Hālau Hula Wehiwehi o

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Wendi Adamek
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Acia
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Donnie Alamazon
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Ku'ulei Alcomindras-Palakiko
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Lanihuli Freidenburg
Laurel Murphy
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Marsha Bishop
Melvin & Gail Hayashi
Mike Nishimoto
Mona Harris
Nā Leo Kāko'ō
Nancy Snow
Nancy Weaver Chesick
Nani Fay Paglinawan
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Oralani Koa
P. Quentin Tomich, Ph.D.
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Suzanne Fields
Tanya Raymond & Jamie
Gentry
Theresa Maluhia Coelho
Tish Holt
U'i Nahoolewa
Ulu Kepani
Vicki & J. Richard McCarty
William Garcia

In Memoriam

Max & Rosemary Agather

We apologize if your name was omitted.

Contact us at info@mngb.org

MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS

P.O. Box 6040
Kahului, HI 96733

Visit us on the web at: www.mnbg.org



Kukui

Aleurites moluccana

Candlenut Flowers

Polynesian Introduced

Photo by Forest & Kim Starr



MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS ANNUAL DONOR PROGRAM

(January 1-December 31, 2008)

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___ \$35 Hala (*Family*)

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