



MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS



Conserving Hawaiian Plants & Cultural Heritage | Fall 2021 Newsletter | Volume 55

Native Plants that Drink Responsibly

by **Tamara Sherrill,**
Executive Director

*Written for Hawai'i
Landscape Magazine*

Many people who have landscaped with native Hawaiian plants conclude that they have awfully specific needs. The plant you thought would be perfect declines from a nearly invisible scale insect or being planted just outside its comfort zone. Hawai'i's endemic plants evolved in a geography with widely variable soils, moisture regimes, and temperatures, and many less pressures from pests and diseases. Some are generalists adapted to many elevations, and others only like certain conditions.

There is a cohort of native Hawaiian plants that truly thrive in dry landscapes. These drought tolerant superstars evolved on the leeward low to mid elevation areas, or on windward mountaintops above the inversion zone, which excludes orographic rainfall. Repurposing them for landscaping takes experimentation, but it is absolutely worth the extra effort to create landscapes that preserve Hawaiian cultural heirlooms, conserve fresh water, and reflect the unique beauty of each island's environment. Maui Nui Botanical Gardens is a low elevation former coastal dune system with an average annual rainfall of 18 inches. The soil is a pale sand, a highly alkaline Jaucus series soil that can dissipate hundreds of gallons of water in minutes. We have experimented with hundreds of native species and varieties in the past



Ko'oloa'ula (*Abutilon menziesii*); Image by Emmely Felipe

two decades to see which can create a beautiful landscape on a nonprofit budget. Low maintenance? Not quite; but below are a few examples of our favorites. All are long lived, relatively pest free in Kahului, Maui, and extremely water conservative.

Succulents & Other Pot Subjects

Because native Hawaiian plants can be picky as to soil type, we maintain many large planters in our paved areas. These areas are less than ideal for irrigation lines but some plants look good even when we forget to hand water for weeks at a time.

'Ihi (*Portulaca molokiniensis*) is a rare endemic that will bloom and grow beautifully if you keep the soil very dry, grow it in full sun, and fertilize regularly. The flowers draw many different pollinators, and though we don't have much success growing it directly in our sandy soil, it lives many years in pots. Although all native *Portulaca* are drought tolerant, *P. molokiniensis* is relatively pest and disease resistant compared to others we grow.

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'Ala 'ala wai nui (*Peperomia leptostachya*) is indigenous (formerly *P. blanda* var. *floribunda*) and can survive severely dry soils as well as shade. This native of the black pepper and 'awa family has dozens of native Hawaiian species that live both as ground dwellers and as epiphytes on trees. *P. leptostachya* therefore thrives in filtered light or partial sun, and still looks fresh in a drought. It is a perfect first native plant to give a friend in a small pot, as it does not mind root crowding.

Groundcovers

Commonly used native groundcovers or low shrubs such as 'ilima (*Sida fallax*), pōhinahina (*Vitex rotundifolia*), and 'ākia (*Wikstroemia monticola*) are fabulous but there are more species to add to this list with proven drought tolerance.

'Ilie'e (*Plumbago zeylanica*) is more of a beautiful green background than a flowering plant, but it is fantastic at straddling the line between suppressing weeds and not taking over the world. 'Ilie'e was used in traditional Hawaiian kākau or tattooing. Probably because the juice from the roots causes a temporary chemical burn if applied to skin for several minutes, deer and other ungulates do not browse on this plant. It is not picky as to sun or shade and can be sheared regularly if you want to be fancy and keep it a certain shape. It is perfect to sprawl in dry shady areas, and the 'ilie'e at MNBG that were planted under mature trees in 2001 have never needed pest control or any special attention.

Pōhuehue (*Ipomoea pes-caprae* ssp. *brasiliensis*) is common on sandy beaches on leeward coasts, but it was once found up to 1,380 feet elevation. It does not

need extra water after getting established. A single vining plant can cover a huge area with attractive leaves and purple morning-glory flowers, but it is courteous and does not twine or climb. Try wrapping fresh stems of the endemic kauna'oa (*Cuscuta sandwicheana*) around established pōhuehue vines for an easy lei material source and a beautiful pop of orange each year as it grows and fades; although kauna'oa is parasitic on pōhuehue, it will not hurt it one bit.

Shrubs & Trees

Woody native Hawaiian plants don't keep their foliage in serious drought, but many mature inhabitants of leeward areas spring back in winter even if stems die back. Some are summer deciduous and need the cycle of losing their leaves in the dry season to be healthy and set flowers, which pairs nicely with summer water restrictions.

Naio (*Myoporum sandwicense* ssp. *sandwicense*) is unusual in that it can thrive at nearly every elevation. The wood, called 'a'aka, was valued for hale construction and for firewood. It can be sensitive to drought at juvenile stages but very tolerant when a mature small tree or tall shrub. There is a Big Island coastal variety with a dwarf habit that is sold as "naio papa" or groundcover naio, which maxes out at several feet tall despite the name and shares all other qualities.

Ko'olua'ula (*Abutilon menziesii*) is an endangered endemic species in the Hibiscus family that once were common in sugar growing areas. Some know it as "red 'ilima" and the flowers are beloved for lei. Like 'ilima and other species with grey or silvery leaves, it has minute hairs that help it retain water. As water becomes more restricted, leaves tend to get smaller. Not all endangered species are harder to grow. Some,

Top: 'Ala ala wai nui (*Peperomia leptostachya*); 'Ilie'e (*Plumbago zeylanica*); and Pōhuehue (*Ipomoea pes-caprae* ssp. *brasiliensis*). **Bottom:** Naio (*Myoporum sandwicense* ssp. *sandwicense*); Wiliwili (*Erythrina sandwicensis*), photo by Forest and Kim Starr; and Māmane (*Sophora chrysophylla*), photo by Jupiter Nielson.

like ko'olua'ula and our logo plant dwarf naupaka (*Scaevola coriacea*), were pushed out of their habitats by people but do fine in cultivation.

Wiliwili (*Erythrina sandwicensis*) and other low elevation summer deciduous trees such as native *Polyscias* sp. are drought tolerant even at juvenile stages. Though they do lose leaves in summer, wiliwili have a gorgeous bloom along the bare branches. The wood was sought after for surfboards.

These plants grow easily at low elevations, but don't forget there are also high elevation superstars.

Māmane (*Sophora chrysophylla*) is an essential food source for native birds and maintains its leaves even in drought. This native shrub must grow at 1,500 feet or above. Michelle Smith of Maui Native Nursery says that even the seedlings don't wilt when they dry out in small pots.

As the global human population grows, fresh water becomes increasingly scarce. Global warming means we need plants in urban areas now more than ever to reduce heat, manage pollution, and create a healthy environment for people. Hawai'i is no exception, and in addition Hawai'i has a unique cultural and natural heritage to protect. Our landscapes can include natives while being low maintenance and water conservative if we are willing to experiment and learn.

Garden News



Kalo Huli Giveaways

Heritage Hawaiian varieties of crop plants like kalo (taro) only persist when people grow them. Since January, MNBG has given away more than 1,750 Hawaiian kalo huli (starts) to residents, a huge increase from previous years. A big chunk of this increase is because several farmers and home growers are donating starts. Farmers who contributed to the public giveaways so far in 2021 include Darlin Kaya and Kaiea Medeiros, the University of Hawai'i Maui College Kauluwehi program, Kory Kahalekai, Janai Kealoha, Bobby Pahia, Joel Helge, the Kamaunu 'Ohana, and Penny Levin of E Kūpaku ka 'Āina. Some of these folks are key partners who helped build MNBG's kalo collection and others are growers who got their start picking up free huli from MNBG in the past. The pandemic has grown public interest in home grown Hawaiian crops, and we are tremendously grateful to these residents for keeping track of which Hawaiian cultivars they grow and sharing them with the rest of the community.

Atherton Family Foundation Grant to Improve Audio Tours

A grant from the Atherton Family Foundation through the Hawai'i Community Foundation provides general support and allows the Garden to create an audio tour native app for smartphones. Our current self-guided audio tour recording features 106 species

and more than 200 messages. The Gardens' 5-acre plant display has plant identification signs with numbers that, when entered into hand-held audio wands, provide English language messages with growing information and traditional cultural uses for each plant. However, we only have 5 working wands. They are the size of a landline phone handset and must be held to the face to be heard. Although we regularly sanitize the wands, we needed to modernize this resource so that more people can use the tours. By using our existing tour recordings to create a native app for smartphones, many more people will access the recorded information. The audio wands will be maintained and repaired for visitors without phones. Mahalo nui to the Atherton Family Foundation for their support of our programs in 2021.



Weekly Plant Sales & Giveaways

Since COVID restricts annual events where the Garden traditionally held plant sales, we now make new plants available weekly online. To see what plants are available for free or for sale each week, follow us on Instagram @mauinuibg, on Facebook at Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, or check our website home page. Plants featured for sale are posted by 9 am Thursday and giveaways are posted every Friday. You can reserve plants for sale by direct message or calling (808) 249-2798 and have one week to pick up and pay. Giveaway plants are limited quantities per 'ohana and are first come, first served.



Winter Workshops

Pre-registration is required for all workshops.

Email info@mnb.org or call 808-249-2798 to register. Space is limited, but is still available as of newsletter publication date. For in-person workshops, participants will be required to follow all current State of Hawai'i COVID-19 mandates.

Living Wreath Making with Native Plants (In-Person)

Saturday, December 4th

Two Sessions: 9am–12pm & 1pm–4pm

Native plants provide more than just food and habitat for wildlife: they also provide great beauty all year long! Learn to make a living wreath from Native Hawaiian plants just in time for the Holidays. This workshop will be led by MNBG Executive Director Tamara Sherrill

Cost: \$30 for current MNBG members; \$55 for new members (includes one-year membership). Space is limited and participants are required to wear a mask the entire time they are on site.

Piko Kalo Workshop with Namea Hoshino (In-Person)

Saturday, December 11th | 9am–12pm

Learn about the Piko family of kalo (taro) with MNBG Hawaiian Cultivars Manager, Namea Hoshino. Participants will learn about the cultural uses of the Piko group of taro and identification techniques. Samples for taking home and tasting will be included.

Cost: \$25 for current MNBG members; \$50 for new members (includes one-year membership). This is an in-person class limited to nine (9) attendees; masks will be required during the entire class.

Conservation Partnerships



Top: MNBG Garden & Nursery Manager Chris d'Avella collecting 'ōhi'a seeds with NEPM-DLNR. **Bottom:** Kupu Member Mālia Reghi collecting 'ōhi'a seeds at Waihe'e Ridge.

Maui County 'Ōhi'a Genetic Diversity & Disease Resistance Project Funded

A partnership project entitled Engaging Community with Wild Seed Collection to Protect Genetic Diversity and Develop Disease Resistance for 'Ōhi'a, a Keystone Native Hawaiian Tree has been funded for the next three years by the USDA Forest Service Region 5 Urban and Community Forestry Program. The project is a joint effort between the MNBG Seed Storage Program, Hawai'i Agricultural Resource Center and County of Maui Department of Water Supply, and Kalelehua Seed Conservation Consulting to initiate a disease resistance program for the keystone native tree, 'ōhi'a, on the Maui County islands of Maui, Moloka'i and Lāna'i. By cost sharing during wild seed collection from established seed zones, the project aims to increase the genetic diversity represented in seeds that supply Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) disease resistance trials to be held on Hawai'i island. This will ensure that seed orchards to be established after the project period on Maui will have a higher likelihood of containing high resistance to ROD, a fungal disease that has already destroyed more than 70,000 hectares of forest on Hawai'i island but has not yet harmed Maui County forests and watersheds. Seed collec-

tion trainings and protocol will be shared to recruit community volunteers and partners to access the gap areas that need representation. This model could be applied to other tree species across the nation threatened by invasive pathogens, with the goal of increasing the robustness and resilience of native forest trees and using community driven conservation to incorporate native trees with high genetic variability into city and town urban landscapes.

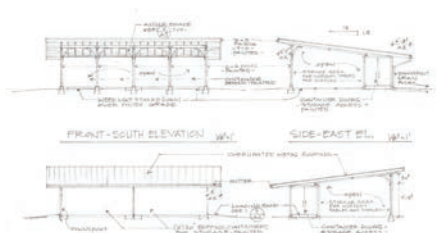
MNBG Seed Technician Cathy Davenport has been working with these Hawai'i state partners throughout 2021 to collect 'ōhi'a from important areas on Maui not yet represented in seed storage, and this funding will allow the Garden to expand the collections to Moloka'i and Lāna'i, engage local volunteers in collection efforts, and provide community outreach.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



MNBG Master Plan Developments

2021 saw a major move towards improving our leased site for future nursery and volunteer work area. The current nursery was built in 2001 with the help of the County of Maui and has served us well. That location, next to Kanaloa Avenue, is an ideal site for parking, so the MNBG Master Plan called for an undeveloped acre to become the new nursery, equipment storage, and volunteer work area. Starting in 2020, years of accumulated green waste, kiawe trees, and weedy brush were moved and shredded by Jason Dengenhart and his dog, Elvis, of Hillbilly Tilling. All shredded organic matter was kept on site to improve soil; kiawe wood was given away and saved for our annual imu workshops. Large and healthy kiawe were retained for windbreak, shade, and swale drainage absorption. Torsten Eriksen of MauiScapes did a stellar job of improving swales, building driveway access, installing water lines including a fire hose connection, and planting grass. Kim Harter of Kim Harter Designs has created a storage area design using existing shipping containers for equipment and tool storage, and adding two 20' x 40' sheltered areas. Matson Shipping agreed to donate half of the containers needed for



Top: Plans for one of the storage buildings by Kim Harter. **Bottom:** Our newly improved acre.

these new buildings, which are ready to be constructed in 2022. These improvements were made possible by a grant from the Strong Foundation, and we are now seeking new funding so that we can construct the storage buildings and move the existing nursery. To donate to this project, please go to mnbg.org or call us at 249-2798.

New Lease Agreement with County extends to 2050

Mahalo to everyone who sent letters of support for our lease renewal with the County of Maui Department of Parks and Recreation. The County Council met and approved a renewed lease to 2050! We are excited to know that the County and our community supports the continuation of the MNBG mission and improvements that will allow future generations to continue this work. *Image below by Emmely Felipe.*



Arbor Day Garden Expo & Tree Giveaway

Tuesday, November 2–Saturday, November 6
9AM to 3PM Daily

The Maui Arbor Day Garden Expo and 1,000 Tree Giveaway will once more be a bit different. Unlike last year's drive-through event, free trees available for "adoption" will be at Maui Nui Botanical Gardens from Tuesday, November 2nd through Saturday, November 6th, with pick up any time between 9AM and 3PM.

Tree Care Webinars

A fabulous lineup of free tree care and horticulture presentations is being hosted by the Maui Association of Landscape Professionals online throughout the week. Visit arbordayexpo.com for more details.

1,000 Hawaiian Tree Giveaway (In-Person)

The outdoor, distanced, and masked five-day event is made possible by the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program of the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife and Hawaiian Electric Company, in partnership with the Maui Association of Landscape Professionals. Masks and social distancing will be required while on site.

How to Get a Free Arbor Day Tree

The reservation system is open. Your tree species and pick-up day must be reserved by creating your ticket online beforehand at Click here to reserve your free tree! on arbordayexpo.com where you can also find information about each species to help you decide which tree is best for your area. Residents can choose from 24 species and 1,400 native and Polynesian introduced trees, one per person, with no age limit. Trees that are not picked up by 3PM on your reserved day will be forfeited and become available to others, so if for any reason you can't reserve your first choice, check the link again starting November 3rd.

Plant Sale (In-Person)

Our in-person plant sale is back and will be held on Saturday, November 6th from 9AM to 2PM. Participating nurseries include Growing Aloha, Azteca Nursery, RM Topiary, MALP, and Maui Master Gardeners.

Visit arbordayexpo.com for complete event details.



Ohi'a lehua (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) is one of the featured trees this year.
Photo Courtesy of Forest & Kim Starr



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Garden Expo & Tree Giveaway

Tree & Plant Care Webinars

Tuesday, November 2–Saturday, November 6

1,000 Hawaiian Tree Giveaway (In Person*)

Tuesday, November 2–Saturday, November 6 • 9AM–3PM

Maui Nui Botanical Gardens • 150 Kanaloa Ave., Kahului

Plant Sale (In Person*)

Saturday, November 6 • 9AM–2PM

Maui Nui Botanical Gardens • 150 Kanaloa Ave., Kahului

**All in-person activities are outdoors, socially-distanced, and masked.*

**Bring your donation for the Maui Food Bank
and receive a free native tree!**

Visit www.arbordayexpo.com for more information
and to reserve your tree online!

Hu'a Lele

A fascinating natural feature in Makaīwa Bay, East Maui by Robert W. Hobdy

Makaīwa Bay is located about three quarters of a mile northeast of the village of Kailua below Hāna Highway along the north coast of East Maui. 'O'opuola Stream that flows into the bay is the boundary between the Moku of Hāmākua-loa and Ko'olau. Makaīwa Bay is a deep, unusually narrow bay, whose depth is accentuated by two sharp prong-like points that jut out into the ocean, 'O'opuola Point on the east side and Ka Puka a Māui Point on the west side. The name Ka Puka a Māui is descriptive in that the point has a large and very prominent, round hole through it whose creation, legend states,

resulted when the demigod Māui cast his spear through it. This famed ana puka is a well-known landmark to mariners and fishermen.

I first hiked down into Makaīwa Bay in the 1980s to see the bay and Ka Puka a Māui. As I walked out along the western shoreline of the bay toward the point, I was stopped short when I encountered an indentation in the shoreline that recessed into a rounded pocket about forty feet across with sheer sixty-foot-high cliffs around it. Trade winds that travel westward along the coast drive currents and waves along with it. Wave energy is deflected off Ka Puka a

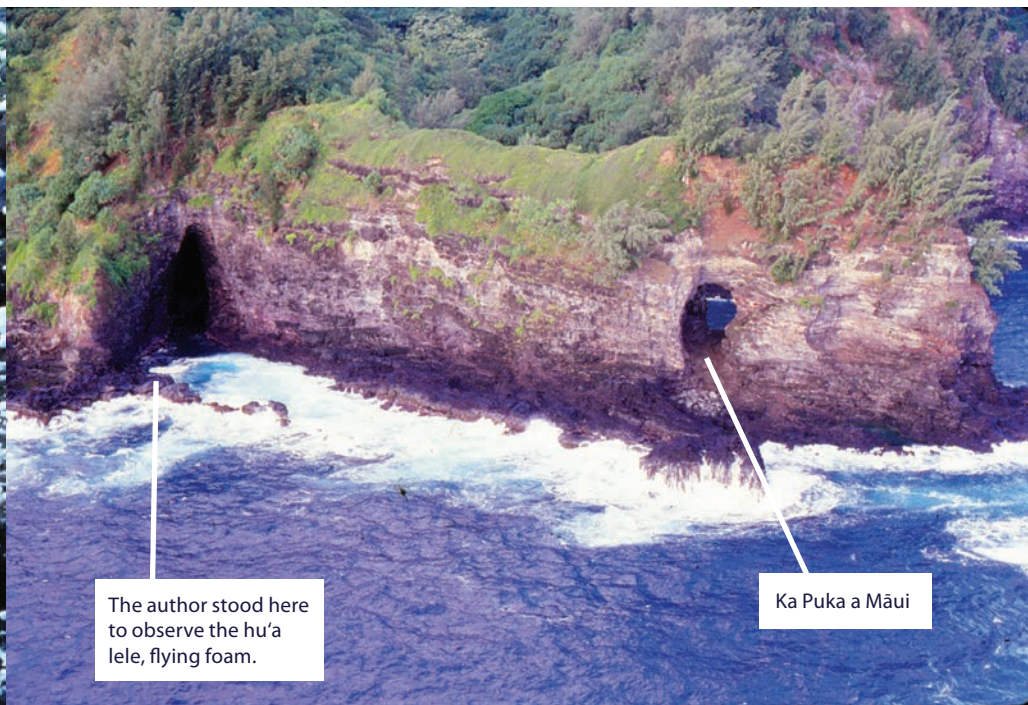
Māui Point into Makaīwa Bay along its west side. A rocky shelf funnels most of the waves into this pocket where they crash and churn about, creating great amounts of foam (hu'a).

As I stood on the rocky shelf, near the opening into the pocket, taking in this dramatic scene, I noticed that the cliffs surrounding the pocket were spackled with white spots that intrigued me. Then as I stood there puzzling over the white spots, a gust of wind began to increase in velocity, and as it did, the foam in the pocket began to swirl around. As the gust intensified the swirling foam began to lift off and soon became a powerful whirlwind, lifting the foam to the top of the cliffs and spattering them. When the gust subsided, everything settled down again. I watched this exhilarating sequence play out several times.

When I later recalled this experience, I thought that this place must have been known and appreciated by the kama'āina and would have been given a name. I found an old map from the early 1900s that had the name Hu'a Lele (foam flying through the air) along this coastline. This made perfect sense to me. Hu'a Lele also shows up as a small ahupua'a name along the coast in eastern Kaupō Moku.



Hu'a Lele at Makaīwa Bay, East Maui



The author stood here to observe the hu'a lele, flying foam.

Ka Puka a Māui



Follow @mauinuibg for more information on plant sales and giveaways, volunteer opportunities, and more!

With Gratitude from Our Garden

- Janet Allan for drinks
- Jeff Gray for mulch
- Lorna Hazen and Shannon Paapanen for trees for Arbor Day 2021
- Maggie Sniffen for drinks, fuel transfer pump, and kitchen utensils
- True Heart LLC for banana stumps for Imu Workshop and ma'o seedlings
- Malie Unabia-Verkerke for items for Imu Workshop

MNBG's Contributions to the Community

- Weekly Community Giveaways of ko, 'ae'ae, kalo corm, kalo huli, ki/lā'i (ti), 'uala, nehe (suc.), pōhina-hina, naio papa, 'ala'ala wai nui, 'ihi (*P. lutea*), mau'u 'aki'aki, and naupaka kahakai.
- Emmanuel Lutheran ('uala, 'uki'uki, 'ākulikuli, kalo, koki'o ke'oke'o)
- Michelle O'Byrne & 'Iao School (pili grass seed)
- Ka'ehu Youth Environmental Mentoring Program

(ʻānapanapa, ʻawa)

- Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge (kulu'i, pōhinahina, hau, kukui, 'ilima, nehe (suc.), ma'o, milo)
- Keiki o ka 'Aina (noni, pia)
- Punana Leo Preschool (dwarf naupaka, naupaka kuahiwi, 'ae'ae)
- UHMC ('ahinahina (*Art. mau.*), pia)

Mahalo to Our Interns & Volunteers

- ARCC Gap Participants
- Easter Seals
- MEO Youth Services
- Native Hawaiian Plant Society
- Mimi Ahn
- Marlon Basilio
- Kyani Bateman
- Ralph Canto
- Kysen Canto-Masoe
- Tyra Canto-Masoe
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- Howard Reinhardt
- Dean Rodenrengen
- Chelsea Rodrigues
- Lindsay Rodrigues
- Sean Sakamoto
- Glenzy Salcedo
- Raellyn Santos
- Kadian Shaw
- Chinquay Sisson
- Anuheia Vida
- and Weed & Pot Club Members listed below!

Wish List

MNBG is currently in search of the following items to help support our conservation goals. Please call us at (808) 249-2798 or email us at info@mnbg.org if you are willing to donate any of the following items.

- Dehydrator
- Garden gloves (all sizes)
- Hand pruners (clippers)
- HawaiianMiles (for interisland travel for staff training)
- Medium sized picks
- Outdoor tables & chairs
- PowerPoint projector
- Rakes (leaf or landscaping)
- Shovels
- Sickles
- Umbrellas

Check out MNBG's Amazon Wish List:

<http://a.co/eWBZKw3>

Note: We are no longer accepting drop offs of used plastic pots. If you have new or used cement or ceramic pots to donate, please give us a call and we will be happy to arrange a pick up.



Mahalo Weed & Pot Club for all you do!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| • Gloria Adlawan | • Elyra Easton | • Marilyn Ratcliffe |
| • Janet Allan | • Gabriel Griffiths | • Breanna Rodgers |
| • Laurie Barker-Perez | • Tom Huber | • Vilma Seiler |
| • Chelsey Borge | • Paul Kastner | • Anna Mae Shishido |
| • Laureen Borge | • Valerie Lasciak | • Maggie Sniffen |
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| • Kimo Conant Eagle | • Irene Newhouse | • Sandy Viloria |
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Zadoc W. Brown & Lawrence N. Brown Foundation

'Iliahi (\$500–\$999)

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'Ilima (\$50–\$499)

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Jenny Wu
In Memoriam
Charlie Lamoureux
Gage Schubert



MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS

Location

150 Kanaloa Ave., Keōpūolani Park, Kahului
Across from the War Memorial Sports Complex

Hours of Operation

Tuesday–Saturday, 8am–4pm*
Closed Sunday, Monday, and Major Holidays
**Weather permitting*

Group Reservations

Reservations are required for group activities.

Contact Information

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

Mission Statement

The mission of the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens is to foster appreciation and understanding of Maui Nui's plants and their role in Hawaiian cultural expression by providing a gathering place for discovery, education, and conservation.

Save a Tree!

If you would like to receive your newsletters via email, please email us at info@mnbg.org. You may also view them on our website: mnbg.org.

We are extremely grateful to all who have made donations the Gardens over the years. We make every effort to assure an accurate membership list; however, if your name was omitted or misspelled, please contact us at info@mnbg.org and we will be happy to update our records.

Follow Us!

Follow MNBG on social media for the latest information on:

- Workshops
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- Giveaways
- MNBG's Plant of the Day



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Maui Nui Botanical Gardens

P.O. Box 6040

Kahului, HI 96733



Hala signifies a time of transition.

During this time of rapid change, please consider helping us make up for revenue losses as a result of the pandemic.

Donate

Donations of monetary or in-kind contributions are greatly appreciated. To contribute, please fill out the enclosed donation envelope, call 249-2798, or donate online at mnbg.org.

Membership

Yearly memberships help to fund important botanical and educational programs, research and conservation efforts. Fill out the enclosed donation envelope or call 249-2798 to become a member.

Leave a Legacy

Play a lasting part in protecting Hawai'i's native plants through planned giving. Consider making a bequest to the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens in your will or trust.

Learn More

Our work conserving Native Hawaiian plants through seed storage and crop cultivar collections is highlighted in a short video created during our closure. Visit mnbg.org to see the people and projects that need your support.

Mahalo to Forest & Kim Starr for their photo.

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