

## 'Ae'ae

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Bacopa monnieri*

**Indigenous to Hawai'i**

'Ae'ae is a dense, flat growing ground cover with blueish white flowers. It is found in a variety of habitats from mud flats, bare sandstone, sand, rocks, marshes, and brackish stream shores on all of the main islands except Kaho'olawe; 'ae'ae can even grow directly in water. This ground cover is great for erosion control and can handle light foot traffic. The name 'ae'ae is a reduplication of 'ae, meaning soft, fine; or to rise, like the tide. When you step on a mat of 'ae'ae you too will understand where this native plant gets its name.

**USES:** 'Ae'ae is used in modern restoration projects to clean waterways and retain soil. Its natural ability to soak up unwanted nutrients through phytoremediation and sprawling root patterns make this possible. There are no traditional Hawaiian uses known, but today it is known as an antioxidant and has been used in medicine to help with brain function, as well as in beauty products.



*Photo by Forest & Kim Starr*

**PLANTING INFO:** 'Ae'ae thrives in wet environments and will spread rapidly in the right conditions to create a lush green carpet. It can be planted in sun or shade if there is enough water. On your school campus, find a spot that is always moist, like at the bottom of a rain gutter downspout, spigot, or water fountain. 'Ae'ae will soak up excess water and grows well in muddy areas. It can handle foot traffic once it's established. 'Ae'ae can also be potted.

**SOURCES:**

[hawaiiannativeplants.com/ourplants/aeae](http://hawaiiannativeplants.com/ourplants/aeae)  
[manoaheritagecenter.org/moolelo/native-plants](http://manoaheritagecenter.org/moolelo/native-plants)  
[nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/Bacopa\\_monnieri](http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/Bacopa_monnieri)

### Native Hawaiian Plant Fact

*'Ae'ae is one of the predominant plants found in the wetlands and bioswales of Kōkua Learning Farm. Come visit!*

## 'Aki'aki

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Sporobolus virginicus*

**OTHER HAWAIIAN NAMES:** Aki, Mahiki, Mahikihiki, Manienie

### INDIGENOUS

'Aki'aki is a native coastal grass, it thrives when it receives an occasional spritz of saltwater but does not require it for successful growth. The hairy leaf blades can range from 1 to 5 inches in length and a single planting can grow anywhere from 2 to 10 feet in width. It flowers year-round with a yellow-ish brown spikelet. 'Aki'aki is one of the few native plants found on Midway Atoll, an island in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. 'Aki'aki's name is also associated with the exorcism of spirits.

**USES:** Today, 'aki'aki is used for coastal erosion control; it can be seen at beaches across the island. Look out for it the next time you are on the coast in Waimānlo or Hale'iwa. According to the Hawai'i Wetland Field Guide, 'aki'aki root and leaves were crushed and mixed with other plants to help treat 'ea, coated tongue or thrush, traditionally.



Photos by KHF Staff

**PLANTING INFO:** 'Aki'aki grows best along wetlands or near the beach, it requires plenty of water but once established it can handle seasons of drought. If 'aki'aki is planted 4 to 10 inches apart it will eventually grow and interweave together to create a dense patch of grass, be sure to plant in areas with full sun. Unlike most grasses, 'aki'aki will not survive if mowed, it can, however, regrow after being weed wacked.

### SOURCES:

[http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/Sporobolus\\_virginicus/#flowercharacteristics](http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/Sporobolus_virginicus/#flowercharacteristics)

<https://friendsofmidway.org/explore/wildlife-plants/plants/native-plants/>

<https://shorturl.at/IsyQ1>



## Fun Fact!

All of the 'Aki'aki distributed to 'ĀINA Schools was propagated from the Constructed Native Wetland at the Kōkua Learning Farm.

Come visit during a Community Workday, every first Saturday of the month! For more information, email [volunteer@kokuahawaii.org](mailto:volunteer@kokuahawaii.org).



# Ma'o Hau Hele

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Hibiscus brackenridgei*

**OTHER HAWAIIAN NAMES:** Aloalo

**Endemic** to Hawai'i.

Different subspecies of ma'o hau hele can be found throughout all islands of Hawai'i except Ni'ihau and Kaho'olawe. While it is most often found growing as medium sized shrubs, between 3 and 6 feet tall, some plants in the right conditions can stretch to over 30 feet! As a variety of hibiscus, it is no surprise that this plant grows beautiful yellow flowers! On some plants these darken to a beautiful maroon towards the center.

**USES:** Flowers can be boiled to make a beautiful blue-gray dye used for coloring kapa or other items.



*Photos by Forest & Kim Starr*

**PLANTING INFO:** Ma'o hau hele likes to grow in dry lowland areas with lots of sun. If overwatered it can suffer from increased pest issues and root rot. Occasional pruning may be required to keep the ma'o hau hele at a manageable size, however these cuttings are very vigorous and can be used to create new plants to share with your friends!

**SOURCES:**

<https://ntbg.org/database/plants/detail/hibiscus-brackenridgei-ssp-brackenridgei>

<https://hawaiiannativeplants.com/ourplants/maohauhele/>

[http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/hibiscus\\_brackenridgei\\_brackenridgei](http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/hibiscus_brackenridgei_brackenridgei)

<http://www.nativehawaiiangarden.org/flowering-plants/ma-o-hau-hele>

## Native Hawaiian Plant Fact

This endemic yellow hibiscus is the official flower of the State of Hawai'i.

## Pā'ū o Hi'iaka

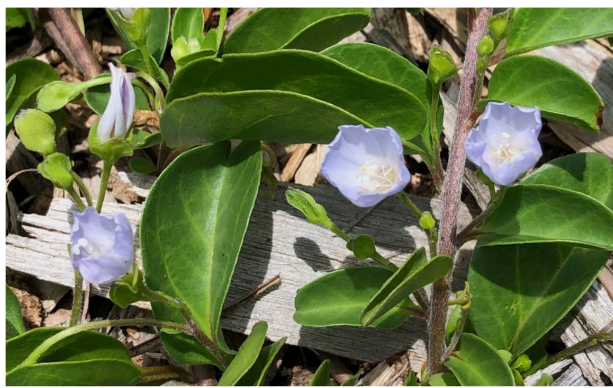
**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Jaquemontia ovalifolia* subsp. *Sandwicensis*

**ENDEMIC** to Hawai'i.

Pā'ū o Hi'iaka is a sprawling vine that can quickly become a thick mat useful for weed suppression in landscaping and on farms. Its light green leaves alternate on each side of the viney stem, they become 'hairy' as an adaptation to harsh, sunny ecosystems. Bell-shaped white or purple flowers up to 1 inch in diameter can be seen on the plant from December to July. When the flower of this plant is turned upside down, it looks like a little skirt. Its name can be translated to "The skirt of Hi'iaka".

**USES:** Pā'ū o Hi'iaka is most commonly used today as ground cover and weed suppressant in hot and dry climates. At the Kōkua Learning Farm it is planted as a ground cover in the agroforestry orchard, bioswale, and lei garden! As it grows, roots form at the leaf nodes every few inches, making it great for erosion control as well.

Traditionally, its leaves have been used in conjunction with other plants to treat 'ea (thrush) or as a laxative. Dried leaves and stems can be eaten or made into a tea, be mindful of how much you consume!



Photos by Mānoa Heritage Center

**PLANTING INFO:** Pā'ū o Hi'iaka will form a dense groundcover, plant 12 to 18 inches apart, the vines will find one another and fill in. This plant likes consistent watering to start and will tolerate drought conditions once established. Pā'ū o Hi'iaka will grow in full or partial sun. It is a wonderful understory for other plants. The more sun it gets the 'hairier' will appear, as the hairs protect the leaves from the sun.

### SOURCES:

<http://hawaiiannativeplants.com/ourplants/pau-o-hiiaka/>

[http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view Jacquemontia\\_sandwicensis/](http://nativeplants.hawaii.edu/plant/view/Jacquemontia_sandwicensis/)

<https://www.manoaheritagecenter.org/moolelo/native-plants/pau-o-hiiaka/>

## Mo'olelo

Hi'iaka is the younger sister of Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire and volcanoes, and pā'ū means skirt. It is believed that Pā'ū o Hi'iaka gets its name from this mo'olelo of Pele and Hi'iaka. When Hi'iaka was a young child, Pele left her on the beach while she went surfing. Hi'iaka fell asleep, and as she slept the hot sun began to creep over the beach. When Pele returned from the water, Hi'iaka had the Pā'ū o Hi'iaka plant draped over her body like a skirt, which was shading and protecting her from the harsh sun. Another mo'olelo told was of Hi'iaka's journey to find Pele's lover, in which Pele gave Hi'iaka a magical skirt to protect her along her quest.