

`ahakea (*Bobea sandwicensis*)

RUBACEAE, coffee family

Bobea sandwicensis (A. Gray) Hillebr.

This species is endemic to O`ahu, Moloka`i, Lāna`i, and Maui (Wagner et al. 1990).

Bobea timonioides (J.D. Hook.) Hillebr.

This species is endemic to East Maui and Hawai`i island and perhaps also O`ahu and Kaua`i (Wagner et al. 1990).

`Ahakea is apparently the only Hawaiian name recorded for these two species (Hillebrand 1888; Pukui and Elbert 1986)

Summary statement of uses: The yellowish wood of *`ahakea* was formerly used for *poi* boards, canoe rims (Pukui and Elbert 1986) and framing of doors in houses (Kamakau 1976).

Degener (1970) stated, "To this a gunwale or rim, termed *moo*, six to eight inches high, was accurately fitted and sewed or fastened with wooden pegs. This was made of the more durable *`ōhi`a lehua* or of the yellow *ahakea* (*Bobea* spp), so that the paddles might rub here without much damage to the canoe." The wood of *`ahakea* was also used in making canoe paddles (Andrews 1922).

Kamakau (1976) stated, "*Ahakea* wood was a suitable wood to use for the side posts, *kunakuna*, of the door; the reddish yellow color of the *`ahakea* matched the chiefly red (*ka `ula`ula o ke ali`i*)". The wood of this species was also used for door sills where the *`aumakua* of the house sat (I. A. Abbott, University of Hawai`i at Mānoa Botany Dept., October 1996, pers. comm.).

Ahakea, as well as other dryland forest trees *alahe`e*, *ʻiliahī* (as *ʻaoa*), *kauila*, *naio*, *neneleau*, *ʻūlei*, and *wiliwili* are mentioned in the Hawaiian creation chant, *Kumulipo* (Beckwith 1972). The *`ahakea* tree is matched with the *ʻOkea* living in the sea", an unidentified marine species (Beckwith 1972).

Status at Auwahi: *Ahakea* is very rare in western Auwahi and slightly more common on rough lava flows both east and west of the Auwahi district. Total population of dryland *`ahakea* on leeward Maui is less than one hundred trees.