

`āla`a (Planchonella sandwicensis)

SAPOTACEAE



This species is endemic to main Hawaiian Islands (Wagner et al. 1990:1233). Other Hawaiian names for this species are *āulu* and *`ēla`a* (Pukui and Elbert 1986). Hillebrand (1889) stated the Hawaiian name for this species was *aulu* or *kaulu*. The word *`āla`a* also is used for an *`ō`ō* (digging) stick made of *`āla`a* wood (Pukui and Elbert 1986).

Summary statement of uses: The wood of *`āla`a* was used in making weapons and agricultural tools. The leaves were used medicinally. The sap was used as glue for trapping birds.

Wagner et al. (1990) wrote, “the hard wood was used for house construction, *`ō`ō* , and spears.”

Hillebrand (1888) stated that natives used the thick milk-sap (of the bruised or cut fruit) as bird-glue. Pukui and Elbert (1986) noted that the sticky, milky sap was used to trap birds and the wood used for making spears and *`ō`ō* handles.

Chun (1994:197) in his translation of *kahuna lā`au lapa`au* from 1867 provides a description of using the leaves of *`āla`a* as part of the cure for the sickness *pehu po`ipū*.

Lennox (1967) wrote of this species, “Milky sap used for bird catching, yellow wood for oo handles, spears.”

Status at Auwahi: *`Āla`a* is still one of the most common and characteristic of tree species of leeward