

`māmane (*Sophora chrsophylla*)

FABACEAE, pea family



This species is endemic to Kaua`i, O`ahu, Moloka`i, Lāna`i, Maui, and Hawai`i island (Wagner et al. 1990). The Hawaiian name for this species is sometimes spelled as *māmani* (Hillebrand 1888; Degener 1945)

Summary statement of uses: The very hard and durable wood of this species was used in house construction as well as adze handles, agricultural tools, *hōlua* sled runners, *olonā* scraping boards, and superior quality firewood. The wood had religious significance.

Māmane wood was used for tools, spades, and *hōlua* sled runners (Pukui and Elbert 1986, Handy and Handy 1972). Kamakau (1976) stated that straight trunks of *māmane* and several other dryland trees were preferred for posts of houses. The complete quote from Kamakau (1976) is given under the species account of *`a`ali`i*.

Degener (1945) stated, "The wood of the *mamani* is very hard and durable. It was used by the Hawaiians as a substitute for the more valuable and rarer *kauila* wood in the making of agricultural implements and adz handles. It was sometimes used for the posts and beams of their houses. Often the sap wood of such timbers was carefully cut away, as that is not as strong and durable as the older, heartwood. During certain religious ceremonies to ward off evil, the high priest or *kahuna nui*, would hold in his hand a piece of *mamani* or *kauila* wood wrapped in dark *kapa* as a symbol of his authority. *Mamani* wood was preferred for the making of the runners of the Hawaiian sled, or *papa holua*....In more recent times, the ranchers cut the trunks of the *mamani* trees into fence posts because of their great durability in the soil." The *māmane* is referred to in M. Beckwith *Kepelino* (Pukui and Elbert 1986:65).

Summers (1990:41) wrote that *kauila*, *koai'e*, *kōlea*, *kāwa'u*, *hōlei*, *māmane*, and *nā'u* were among the woods used in making *lā'au kahi olonā* or *papa olonā*, the long slender thin hardwood boards used for scraping *olonā*.
Status at Auwahi: *Māmane* is uncommon at lower elevation but above 3500 feet elevation at Auwahi, large individuals become increasingly common growing with large *naio* trees. Presumably in pre-contact forests this forest type merged in with sub-alpine forest shrublands at ca. 6000 feet on southwest Haleakalā.