

# *olopua, pua* (*Nestegis sandwicensis*)

OLEACEAE, olive family



(A. Gray) Degener, I. Degener, and L. Johnson

This species is endemic to Kaua`i, O`ahu, Moloka`i, Lāna`i, Maui, and Hawai`i island (Wagner *et al.* 1990). Hillebrand (1888) gave the Hawaiian names for this species as *pua* and *ulupua*. The Hawaiian word for flowers of this species is *nonohina* (Pukui and Elbert 1986).

Summary statement of uses: The hard, dark brown wood of *olopua* was used in house construction and in making weapons (spears and daggers), agricultural tools (adze handles and digging sticks), firewood, and fishing lures.

Wagner *et al.* (1990) state, "The durable hard wood was formerly used for handles of adzes and other tools and as a rasp in the manufacture of fish hooks. It was a preferred firewood, as it burned with a hot flame even when green."

Kamakau (1976) stated that straight trunks of *olopua* 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*.

Kamakau (1976) and Buck (1957g) described the use of *pua* wood in making bait sticks, *la`au melomelo*, a type of lure used in net fishing. A more detailed description of *melomelo* fishing is given under the *kauila* listing.

Buck (1957j) describes the use of *olopua* wood for *pahoa* (daggers) and *pikoi*, (tripping weapons).

Status at Auwahi: *Olopua* is one of the most common and characteristic dryland tree species throughout Auwahi district. Despite this, natural reproduction by seed is very rare.