

# *`aiea* (Nothocestrum latifolium)

SOLANACEAE, tomato family



## Nothocestrum latifolium A. Gray

This species is endemic to Kaua`i, O`ahu, Moloka`i, Lāna`i, and Maui (Wagner et al. 1990). The *`aiea* are four species of small trees in the endemic Hawaiian genus Nothocestrum (Hillebrand 1888; Wagner et al. 1990). Another Hawaiian name for this genus is *hlena* (Pukui and Elbert 1986).

Summary statement of uses: The wood was used in firemaking and in making thatching sticks and canoe trimming. The leaves and bark are used medicinally.

Rock (1913) wrote, "The wood of this, as well as of the other species, is soft and of a green color; it was used by the natives in the olden days for finishing off canoes. The reddish yellow berries were sometimes eaten."

Regarding *`aiea*, Pukui and Elbert (1986) noted, "One slender species was used for thatching sticks (*`aho*) and fire-making." Lennox (1967) writes of this species, "Soft green wood used for canoe trim".

Chun (1994:197) in his translation of *kahuna lā`au lapa`au* provides a description of using the bark and leaves of *`aiea* as medicine "taken from the side where the sunrises and sets, one *ha`ilima* in length and half a *ha`ilima* in width".

Status at Auwahi: *`Aiea* is one of the most common trees of middle elevation Auwahi (2500-4000 feet elevation) and rarer at higher and lower elevations.