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Meet the Plants

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Currently Viewing: Pandanus tectorius



P. Goltra

Taxonomy:

Pandanus tectorius (Pandanaceae)

Synonyms:

Pandanus chamissonis

Pandanus douglasii

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Description:

Pandanus tectorius is a small tree growing to 10 meters in height with a canopy spreading 5 to 12 m in diameter.

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Geographic Distribution:

Pandanus tectorius native to the tropical Pacific shores of Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Australia.

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Other Resources for Pandanus tectorius



[Steve Perlman speaking about Pandanus tectorius \(audio file\)](#)



[\(herbarium sheet\)](#)



[smooth-edged leaf variety \(photo\)](#)

Food Uses:

The fruit is a major source of food in Micronesia especially on the atolls. The fleshy, juicy keys can be eaten raw or cooked. Either way, it is very healthy. Tips of the roots are also eaten.

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Medicinal Uses:**

In Hawai'i, the juice from the aerial roots tips (ule hala) was used as a tonic and to treat scrofula (a tuberculous infection of the skin of the neck, most often caused by mycobacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) in adults; in children, it is usually caused by Mycobacterium scrofulaceum and Mycobacterium avium.

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Scientific Research:

The volatile oil of the male flowers of Pandanus tectorius has been investigated. Among other compounds it contains methyl B-phenylethyl ether, dipentene, (+)-linalool, phenylethyl acetate, citral, phenylethyl alcohol, and an ester of phthalic acid.

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Native Legends and Names:

Regarded as the Nature Spirit (Kupua) in ancient Hawai'i, the picturesque Hala tree has been revered for centuries by Pacific people.

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Indigenous Practices:

Pandanus tectorius is one of the most useful trees to Pacific Islanders. The leaves, which are the most useful part of the plant, are woven or plaited into mats, thatch, sails, baskets, hats, local fans, etc.

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NTBG Herbarium Data:

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[aerial roots \(photo\)](#)



[tree detail with fruit \(photo\)](#)



[full view \(photo\)](#)



[tree detail \(photo\)](#)



[\(photo\)](#)



[\(photo\)](#)



[Young seedling appears at base of aerial roots \(photo\)](#)



Dry keys (photo)



Seedlings sprouting from dry keys (photo)



Fruit behavior (photo)

Choose a Plant

-----Select a plant name----- ▼

Whole Word Search - Taxonomy (scientific name or common name)

- ▶ Users of this search feature should note that common names are often used for more than one plant species.
- ▶ When searching for common names in the Hawaiian language, the name may include okina, each instance represented by an apostrophe (') or glottal stop (`).

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