



‘Āhinahina

(Ka‘ū silversword, *Argyroxiphium kauense*)

Description¹

- Endangered; Asteraceae (sunflower) family.
- Primarily monocarpic, meaning it flowers and fruits once then dies.
- Giant rosette; stems 2-8 ft. long.
- Narrow sword-shaped leaves, covered with dense, silky, silvery gray hairs.



Karl Magnacca

Distribution¹

- Endemic to the island of Hawai‘i.
- Historically occurred from the southwest rift to the northeast slope of Mauna Loa.
- Currently, three populations with more than 60 wild individuals at Kapāpala, Kahuku, and Upper Waiākea.
- Reintroduction efforts established 690+ plants with natural recruitment occurring.



Karl Magnacca

Kinolau (Body Form)

- ‘Āhinahina are one of the kinolau or physical manifestations of Poli‘ahu.
- Poli‘ahu is the beautiful snow goddess of Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Haleakalā; the three places ‘āhinahina species occur.
- ‘Āhinahina were once so common, that they appeared to look like blankets of snow covering the mauna (mountains).



Laurie Sumiye

‘Ano Like (Similarities)

- ‘Āhinahina and hinahina mean “gray”.²
- Gray is the official color³ of Kaho‘olawe; its flower⁴ is the hinahina kū kahakai (*Heliotropium anomalum* var. *argenteum*).
- Other native plants that are “hinahina”:
 - ‘Ewa hinahina (*Achyranthes splendens* var. *rotundata*);
 - Pōhinahina (*Vitex rotundifolia*);
 - ‘Āhinahina—the Mauna Kea and Haleakalā silversword species.



Hinahina kū kahakai; Gregory Koob

¹ USFWS 2020. ² wehewehe.org. ³ <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/color>. ⁴ <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/flower>.