

False 'Awa



False 'awa is often mistaken as true 'awa. It is currently being cultivated in gardens, agricultural fields and yards by individuals who thought they were planting true 'awa.

False 'awa is a garden pest. It grows and spreads vegetatively, out competing other desirable plants like taro.

Our hope is to educate cultivators how to identify and control false 'awa, replace it with true 'awa, and teach others of the differences between these two plants.



A great way to tell the two plants apart is by the leaf veins. The veins of true 'awa lead out from the center or piko.



For more information or to report sightings, call **643-PEST (7378)**.



O'AHU INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE

2551 Waimano Home Road
Pearl City, HI 96782

Phone: 808-286-4616
Fax: 808-453-6113
E-mail: oisc@hawaii.edu



O'AHU INVASIVE
SPECIES
COMMITTEE

False 'Awa



**Have you accidentally planted
false 'awa in your garden?**

**If so, please call OISC
at (808) 286-4616.**

False 'Awa

(*Piper auritum*)



True 'awa is on the left, while false 'awa is the brighter green leaf with a red piko.

False 'awa is a term applied to plants that resemble true 'awa, (*Piper methysticum*) in appearance but

lack certain complex biological chemicals, the kava lactones, which gives kava its special qualities. The plants described as false 'awa in the Pacific are relatives of 'awa, being other species of the same *Piper* genus.



False 'awa (*Piper auritum*)

Why is false 'awa a pest?

There are two problems posed by false 'awa. First, it can be harvested and mixed with genuine 'awa and in this way it reduces the quality of the product. When buyers both in the Pacific and in larger external markets learn of this, shipments may be rejected and local and export markets lost. Secondly, it is larger than true 'awa, grows more vigorously, and it can be a weed that interferes with the growth of other crops.

How to control false 'awa.

Young plants can be uprooted. Care must be taken to assure that all pieces of rhizome are removed from the soil. All cut stems, shoots, and spikes of seeds should be removed to prevent sprouting and should be burned. For tall plants, a foliar herbicide with glyphosate can be applied. Treated plants and the surrounding ground should be monitored for re-growth a few weeks later and treated again if necessary.



A patch of true 'awa. Note the piko color and parallel veins on the leaves.

Replace your false 'awa!

After controlling false 'awa, replace your plant with true 'awa, kalo, or another native or canoe plant species. Visit Hui Kū Maoli Ola in Ha'ikū Valley, Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i for a replacement plant.

(Below clockwise left to right: 'ōhelo, palapalai, 'uala, kalo)



**O'AHU INVASIVE
SPECIES COMMITTEE**

2551 Waimano Home Road
Pearl City, HI 96782

Phone: 808-286-4616

Fax: 808-453-6113

E-mail: oisc@hawaii.edu