

Hala Scale

A THREAT TO HAWAII'S HALA

Lauhala weaving is an art form and tradition deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture and history, but is under peril. Hala trees continue to be threatened by an invasive scale insect, *Thysanococcus pandani*, which causes significant damage to the leaves. Leaves become discolored and break off of the tree, rendering them useless to weavers. It also attacks the tree's fruit and can cause entire crowns of the plant to fall off and die.



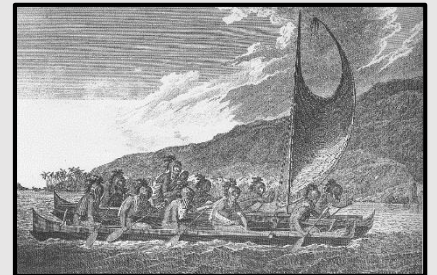
Yellowing seen on top of leaf (left) and hala scales infesting the underside of the leaves (right)

Hala is an important indigenous tree of coastal ecosystems in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific. The hala scale kills young seedlings, preventing new trees from establishing and coastal hala forests from regenerating.

The hala scale was originally discovered in Hana, Maui in 1995, and spread over the entire island within a decade. Chemical treatments have not been successful, and this horrible pest continues to spread across the state. A small Oahu infestation was also detected in 2013 and HDOA is currently working to eradicate it.



Woman weaving a lauhala mat with rolls of prepared hala leaves



Canoe with sails made from lauhala

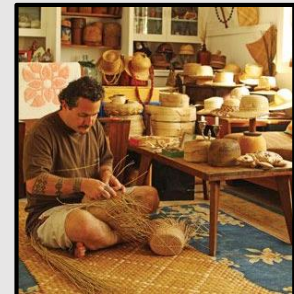


Photo: Nina Kuna
<http://www.mauimagazine.net/Maui-Magazine/March-April-2013/The-Weave-of-History/>



Magnified hala scales



Visible dead leaves and dying crowns on an infested hala tree from the coastal hala forest of Hana, Maui.

In the last year, hala scale was confirmed on Molokai, but the widespread infestation is likely due to its presence for several years. Hana, Maui and Northeastern Molokai are home to Hawaii's last remaining coastal hala forests. The unfortunate infestation of the hala scale puts these ancient ecosystems at risk of disappearing.

HDOA is looking into exploration for biological control agents of the hala scale, as this is now our last option to save our culturally and ecologically important Hawaiian hala.



Visible dead leaves and damaged crowns on an infested hala tree.



Infested hala crown



Hala scales also infest the fruit, making this another distribution pathway

What people can do *right now*.

- Do **NOT** move hala plants, seeds, or leaves from island to island
- Report new infestations on Oahu and other islands not known to occur:
 - Call **643-PEST** or **973-9538**
 - Email- **hdoa.ppc@Hawaii.gov**