

Hala Scale

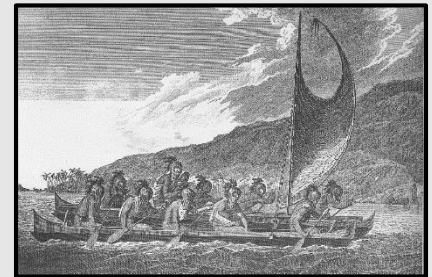
A THREAT TO HAWAII'S HALA

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 can cause significant damage plants.

The hala scale can cause leaf deformities, discoloration, stunting, twisting, yellowing, and leaf blade length can be greatly reduced, rendering them useless to weavers. It also attacks the tree's fruit, can cause entire crowns of the plant to fall off, and even premature death of the entire tree.



Woman weaving a lauhala mat with rolls of prepared hala leaves



Canoe with sails made from lauhala



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.



Hala scales compared in size to a dime



Hala scales magnified under a microscope



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



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

The hala scale was originally discovered in Hana, Maui in 1995, and spread over the entire island within a decade. A small Oahu infestation was also detected in 2013 and HDOA is currently working to eradicate it.

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 infestation of the hala scale puts these ancient ecosystems at risk of disappearing.

What people can do right now:

- Do **NOT** move hala plants (all *Pandanus*), seeds, or green leaves interisland
- When collecting brown leaves from infested areas, double bag and freeze for two days.
- Do not move brown leaves interisland or near uninfested areas without freezing first!
- Do **NOT** visit uninfested hala after being around infested hala trees! Hala scales crawlers can hitch a ride!
- Report new infestations on Oahu and other islands not known to occur:
 - Call **643-PEST** or **973-9538**
 - Email- **[hdoa.ppc@Hawaii.gov](mailto:hdoa.ppc@hawaii.gov)**



Leaf yellowing/discoloration of severely infested hala crown