

*E nihi ka helena i uka, mai  
pūlale i ka 'ike a ka maka.*

Watch your step and don't let  
the things you see lead you into  
trouble.

Certain practices can be applied  
to the gathering of most types of  
plants that are used for lei or  
hula. Many of these are com-  
monsensical and easily adopted  
or learned.

- Gather in the early morn-  
ing as the sun comes up.
- Take the time when walk-  
ing in to look at plants you  
might want to gather from.
- Always gather while walk-  
ing out of the forest or  
down the mountain.
- Don't take any plants or  
soil into the forest so as not  
to introduce foreign plant  
diseases or bugs.

**To reduce gathering pres-  
sure on our native forests,  
you are encouraged to culti-  
vate these plants in your gar-  
den and gather them there.**



'Ōhi'a lehua branches that were torn or pulled  
off the tree. This is not good gathering.

- Gather a little from here and  
there; don't take all that you need  
from one tree or plant.
- Be aware that others might gather  
in the same areas you do so al-  
ways leave some for the next per-  
son.
- Return lei to the forest floor so  
nutrients can be re-absorbed.
- Weed alien plants at the same  
time you gather.
- Try to gather in your own ahu-  
pua'a

Today, Hawaii's forests are much different than they were  
in the past. They have been altered through habitat loss and  
invasion of alien species. In today's forests the effects of  
harvest are changing as gatherers whose practices are pri-  
marily based on knowledge of the past have to adapt to  
changing environmental conditions, including the invasion  
of alien plants. To conserve our plants we need to draw on  
the knowledge of kupuna and apply it to today's environ-  
ment in combination with ecological studies. The knowl-  
edge presented here has been shared with us from the fol-  
lowing individuals.

*Mahalo nui i ke kōkua nui mai:*

Kupuna Kahalekomo

Uncle Bill Char

Aunty Vicky Holt-Takamine

Aunty Mapuana De Silva

Mehanaokalā Hind

Uncle Kepa Maly

Kumu John Lake

Kapua Kawelo

Dr. Tamara Ticktin

Kāwika Winter

**A mahalo nō ho'i e nā po'e 'ē a'e a pau loa e  
kōkua mai.**

This pamphlet is a result of a study conducted by Amber  
Nāmaka Whitehead, Hō'ala Fraiola, and Tamara  
Ticktin.

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*E Mālama, O Lilo 'Auane'i*

**Proper Gathering is Good,  
Not Gathering Properly is  
Harmful.**

All native plants are becoming  
scarce, in part because they are  
losing habitat and in part because  
they are being taken over by inva-  
sive species. Among the native  
plants that are declining are the  
hula, lei and other culturally sig-  
nificant plants.

The maintenance of many Hawaiian  
cultural traditions is dependent on  
the use of, access to and conserva-  
tion of native species, local land-  
scapes and their biological resources.  
There is concern both to Hawaiian  
cultural practitioners, as well as to  
environmentalists, as how we can  
best protect and preserve these  
plants that are becoming increasingly  
rare. This pamphlet is the result of  
bringing together the knowledge of  
kupuna and ecological studies.

**Some mana‘o specifically intended for Palapalai and Pala‘ā ferns include**

- Never walk inside a patch so as not to hurt any keiki that are hard to see or trample any leaves.
- Only gather around the edges, as far as your hand can reach.
- Fronds are ready to harvest when tips are pointy, completely unfurled.
- If fronds are gathered too young they will wilt and turn black.

A pala‘ā patch invaded by strawberry guava (*Psidium cattleianum*) tree. Pala‘ā and other lei plants are declining due to alien plant invasions.



**Results of our ecological study showed:**

- Fronds grow when there is rain and die-back when conditions become dry. Or gather a few weeks after a rainy period.
- If it is dry do not gather.
- Most palapalai and pala‘a patches can not withstand being gathered more than once or twice
- Gathering in alien invaded patches can be harmful unless you weed.
- Make sure you weed alien plants when you gather and throughout the years when not gathering.
- Palapalai and pala‘a patches that are properly gathered and weeded are as healthy or more than those left to grow among aliens plants.
- Proper gathering can help maintain lei plants. Improper gathering or gathering too much can damage them.
- Over harvesting and other stress lead to small leaf (frond) sizes. If you notice fronds getting smaller don't pick.

***I ulu nō ka pua i ke kumu.***

**The flower grows because of the tree.**

**If the tree is not cared for, the flower will be lost.**



The *liko* or young leaf bud of the ‘ohi‘a lehua.

**When gathering ‘Ōhi‘a Lehua**

- Trees have shallow root systems, walk around the tree only once while picking to avoid disturbing them.
- Just gather the *liko* (tip, new leaf growth) or flowers, not entire branches.
- Gather only what you can reach.



The ripe fruit of the ‘a‘ali‘i tree.

**When gathering the ‘A‘ali‘i plant** it is important to remember the following practices

- Only gather clusters of fruit, don't take whole branches.
- Don't take high fruit clusters, gather only what you can reach.

**When gathering Maile**

- Don't leave inner wood on plant after stripping maile.
- Don't gather when seeding or during long dry periods as long shoots will usually grow after seeding or heavy rains.
- Scatter maile seeds to help them disperse like the kupuna used to, “ua lu ka hua o ka maile...”

**When gathering Mokihana**

- Gather only what you can reach, don't pull down high branches.
- Only gather the ripe fruit, don't strip branches of all the fruit.

A branch with flower buds of the mokihana tree.



- Don't step on keiki mokihana/seedlings.

Our results show that mokihana keiki are not coming back as they used to. We need to plant them and encourage them. In the past Hawaiian gatherers used to encourage mokihana by planting cuttings in the forest.