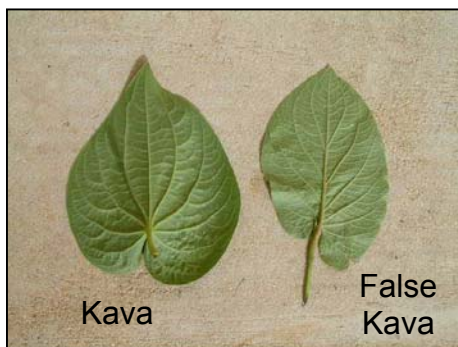


PEST ALERT

False Kava (*Piper auritum*)



What is it?

False Kava is a term applied to plants that resemble true Kava, (*Piper methysticum*) in appearance but lack certain complex biological chemicals, the Kava lactones, which give Kava its special qualities. The plants described as False Kava in the Pacific are relatives of Kava, being other species of the same *Piper* genus.

Why is it a pest?

There are two problems posed by False Kava. Firstly it can be harvested and mixed with genuine Kava 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 Kava, grows more vigorously, and it can be a weed interfering with the growth of other crops.

How do we control False Kava?

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 the stem can be cut or broken off and Garlon 4 applied to the surface of the stump. Treated plants and the surrounding ground should be monitored for re-growth a few weeks later and treated again if necessary.

For more information or to report sightings, call 246-0684