



Buy Local to Protect 'Ōhi'a

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture needs your help to keep destructive 'ōhi'a rust out of Hawai'i. 'Ōhi'a rust (*Puccinia psidii*), also known as guava rust, is a disease that can kill 'ōhi'a trees and other plants in the myrtle family.

'Ōhi'a rust can enter Hawai'i by hitchhiking on imported plants and plant parts in the myrtle family. Agriculture inspectors have repeatedly intercepted 'ōhi'a rust on common myrtle in imported flower bouquets, although any plant material in the myrtle family, including eucalyptus foliage and wax flowers, could also bring in the rust.

Like the flu virus, there are different strains of 'ōhi'a rust. One strain of the rust has already arrived in Hawai'i and it quickly killed rose apple trees across the state. Any additional arrivals of this rust pose a very real threat to the survival of 'ōhi'a trees, which comprise 80% of Hawaii's native forest (nearly 1,000,000 acres).

Restricting the importation of myrtle family plants, produce, and cut flowers is vital to protecting 'ōhi'a forests, and your help is needed!

What can you do?

- Whenever possible, **buy local** cut flowers and foliage. Growers are working to provide local-grown alternatives to high-risk imports.
- **Voice your support** for protecting 'ōhi'a during the rulemaking process. Public hearings will be held in each county.

Your understanding and kokua are greatly appreciated! For more information, visit www.hear.org/species/puccinia_psidii/



'Ōhi'a rust appears as tiny bright yellow powdery spots on leaves or stems, deforming leaves and killing growing stems, which may eventually kill the infected plant.



A strain of 'ōhi'a rust was first reported in Hawai'i in 2005. Rose apple was particularly susceptible and nearly all trees have died statewide. Arrows in this photo point to large swaths of dead rose apple trees in Waihe'e, Maui.

'Ōhi'a photo by CGAPS; all others by Forest and Kim Starr