



Medicine at Your Feet:
**Healing Plants of the
Hawaiian Kingdom**

Single Plants: A PDF file

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Medicine at your Feet:
Healing Plants of the Hawaiian Kingdom
***Syzygium jambos* ('Ōhi'a Loke)**

By David Bruce Leonard, L.Ac.

"A weed is a plant whose virtues have not been discovered"
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Just what you need... another
Roast Duck Production



*"A peasant must stand a long time on a hillside with his
mouth open before a roast duck flies in."*

- - Chinese proverb

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Dear Reader,

E kala mai, please do not pirate (copy or give away) this PDF file. It has taken eight years to research and write the book from which this material is taken. Your purchase allows us to continue research on the healing properties of medicinal plants and the restoration of our native Hawaiian ecosystems. Ten percent of the profits from this work are given to Hawaiian cultural and environmental restoration groups.

Thank you for your kind support of this work and our 'Āina. Aloha no kākou.

Mahalo,

David Bruce Leonard

WARNING

Caution: Many plants used as medicine are poisonous! They can kill you. Never attempt to use herbal medicine without the guidance of a traditional elder or a licensed healthcare provider. If you wish to act on some of the information in this book, you must consult with a professional. Do not try to be your own doctor.



Syzygium jambos ('Ōhi'a Loke)

PLANT NAME: *Syzygium jambos* (L.) Alston.

OTHER NAMES: *Eugenia jambos*, *E. vulgaris*, *Jambosa jambos*, *J. vulgaris*.

COMMON NAMES: 'Ōhi'a lōke ("rose 'ōhi'a") [Hawai'i]; rose apple, malabar plum, malay apple [English]; Pu tao [China]; ahi'a popa'a [French Polynesia]; fekika papalangi [Tonga]; iouen wai, youenwai, apel en wai [Pohnpei]; jambosier, pommier rose [French]; kavika, kavika ni vavalangi, kavika ni india [Fiji]; pomme rose [Caribbean]; thulo jamun [Nepal]; pomarroza [Spanish]; manzanito de rosa [Colombia].

NOMENCLATURE: Loke is the Hawaiian word for "rose."

FAMILY: Myrtaceae.

CATEGORY: Stabilize and bind (fruit, root bark) ~.

PROPERTIES: Undetermined. The fruit peel is said to be sweet, sour and hot.

PLANT PART USED: Bark, root bark, fruit, seeds.

TOXICITY: The bark has very high tannin content, 77% in water extractions.

CAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS: Caution in constipation.

ENERGETIC CAUTIONS: Caution with damp stagnation, heat stagnation or in exterior conditions ~.

PREPARATION OF MEDICINE: Bark infused or decocted.

DOSAGE: 5 - 10 grams of bark as single herb. 2 -4 fresh fruit.

STATUS IN HAWAII: A lovely tasty alien. High pest factor. Devour them all.

MERIDIAN AFFINITIES: Fruit peel: Spleen, lung.

WESTERN FUNCTIONS REPORTED: Antimicrobial; astringent; antiseptic~; hemostatic; hypoglycemic.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE ENERGETIC FUNCTIONS (~ = extrapolated):

Fruit, root bark:

- 1) Astringes.
- 2) Cools the blood.

Fruit peel:

- 1) Warms the stomach.
- 2) Strengthens the spleen.
- 3) Breaks Blood stasis in deep ulcers and tumors.
- 4) Warms the lungs in lung deficient cold cough.

OTHER ENERGETIC FUNCTIONS: Benefits kapha and pitta.

'Ōhi'a Loke Common Medicinal Uses

- **Diarrhea**

'Ōhi'a Loke Cross-Cultural Medicinal Uses

CARDIOVASCULAR

- **High blood pressure** [Suriname (seeds)].
- **Bleeding** [India].

DIGESTIVE

- **Diarrhea, dysentery** [China (fruit, root bark), India (bark), Suriname]; **diarrhea with fever** [Suriname (leaves)]; **diarrhea with abdominal pain** [Suriname (fruit)].
- **Vomiting** [China (peel)].

ENDOCRINE

- **Diabetes** [Brazil, China (seeds), India, New Zealand, Suriname (seeds, leaves, bark)].

HEAD AND THROAT

- **Painful eyes** (leaves boiled)
- **Sore throat** [India].

HEPATIC

- **Liver problems** [Nepal (bark)].

INFECTION

- **Infectious diseases** [sub-Saharan Africa].

MUSCULOSKELETAL / TRAUMA

- **"Bleeding from knife wounds"** [China (fruit, root bark)].

RESPIRATORY

- **Wheezing and coughing, asthma** [India].

OTHER MEDICINAL USES

- **Hiccups** [China (fruit peel)].

USE AS FOOD: Rose apple tastes the way a rose smells. It is sweet and quite delicious. Can be eaten raw or made into preserves and jellies. *Small amounts only* as large amounts of tannins may be harmful, though the fruit contains much less than the bark.

OTHER USES: Bark is made into a brown dye. Used for erosion control, firewood, and as a windbreak. The distilled fruit has been made into "rosewater."

RANGE: Throughout Micronesia and Polynesia, Hawai'i, East Indies, & Malaya. Prehistoric introduction occurred through Southeast Asia, and more recently to Jamaica. First brought to Hawai'i from Rio de Janeiro in 1825 on the frigate "Blond."

HABITAT: Likes it shady and moist. Apparently gravity carries the seeds downhill and rats (& humans) carry them uphill. Supposedly it grows to 3500 feet on tropical islands and up to 6000 feet in Ecuador, but I've never seen it above 1200 feet or so.

GATHERING: By hand or with a fruit picker. Take care as the fruit bruises easily.

PROPAGATION & CULTIVATION: Don't. Creates monostands in Hawai'i, but it can also be a sub-canopy of other trees. Estimated rate of invasion is 3 feet per year. That's in *all* directions. In some places (South America, Pitcairn Island) rose apple as an invasive provides a safety zone for certain shade-tolerant native species, but not in Hawai'i. If cut it will re-sprout, so the roots must be removed. This is a gorgeous and psychopathic plant.

RESEARCH:

Water and acetone extractions are antimicrobial due to tannins. They are effective in vitro against numerous *Staphylococci*, and also against *Yersinia enterocolitica* [Djipa 2000].

NOTES 'N QUOTES

- Rose apple may be the legendary "gambu" or "jambu" tree of India that produced fruit of immortality. The seeds were said to produce gold and the fruit juice created the river Gambu. The Buddha is sometimes shown under a rose apple tree.
- The myrtaceae plant family often embodies extremes, and 'ōhi'a loke is no exception. The strong astringency of the bark is counterbalanced with the powerful and delicious sweetness of the fruit. It is usually an afterthought as a medicinal plant, but can be quite useful in an acute digestive disturbance. Given the alien impact of the plant, it is always a mixed blessing to come across a fruiting 'ōhi'a loke in the forest while gathering. The Chinese uses of the fruit peel are intriguing, and warrant further investigation.

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