
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TARO.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Kalo (*Colocasia Esculenta* (L.) Schott), the
2 Hawaiian word for taro, is a culturally significant plant to the
3 kanaka maoli, Hawaii's indigenous peoples. According to the
4 kumulipo, the Hawaiian creation chant, kalo grew from the first
5 born son of Wakea, the sky father, and Papa, the earth mother,
6 through Wakea's relationship with his and Papa's daughter,
7 Hoohokulani. This son, named Haloa, was stillborn and buried.
8 From Haloa's grave grew the first kalo plant. Wakea and
9 Hoohokulani named their second son Haloa, after his older
10 brother. From the second Haloa came the genesis of man. Kalo
11 provides the kanaka maoli's life-giving sustenance, poi, and is
12 seen as the older brother of mankind.

13 Over three hundred kalo varieties may have existed at the
14 time of the arrival of European explorers. Today there are
15 approximately seventy varieties of taro and of these, the
16 majority are unique to the Hawaiian islands due to the
17 horticultural skills of native Hawaiian farmers.

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1 The important cultural relationship between kalo and the
2 kanaka maoli continues today in the cultivation of kalo and
3 ohana, the Hawaiian word for family. The cut stalk of the kalo,
4 called the huli, is planted to become the next generation. Huli
5 means to turn or turn-over. When "ohana" is broken into root
6 words, "oha" is the smaller taro corms growing from the older
7 part of the taro plant that is used to feed one's family and
8 "ana" is a conjunctive word connoting regeneration or
9 procreation.

10 Therefore, kalo intrinsically ties the interdependency of
11 our past, the present, and the future, the essence of
12 procreation and regeneration, as the foundation of any
13 sustainable practice. Kalo expresses the spiritual and physical
14 well-being of not only the kanaka maoli and their heritage but
15 also symbolizes the environmental, social, and cultural values
16 important to the state. This relationship is symbolized in the
17 use of the kalo plant upon the crown of King Kalakaua and today
18 in the logo of the office of Hawaiian affairs and many
19 commercial enterprises throughout the state.

20 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
21 agriculture and the department of land and natural resources to
22 conduct a study on whether the taro plant should be adopted as



1 the official state plant and, if so, to determine the
2 appropriate variety or varieties of heritage taro indigenous to
3 the traditional native Hawaiian culture and lifestyle that
4 should be considered for adoption.

5 SECTION 2. The department of agriculture and the
6 department of land and natural resources shall conduct a study
7 to determine whether the taro plant, or Kalo (*Colocasia*
8 *Esculenta* (L.) Schott), should be adopted as the official state
9 plant and, if so, to determine the appropriate variety or
10 varieties of heritage taro indigenous to the traditional native
11 Hawaiian culture and lifestyle that should be considered for
12 adoption. In this report, the departments shall address any
13 issues relating to the various varieties of taro and any other
14 issues the departments deem relevant and appropriate.

15 SECTION 3. The department of agriculture shall serve as
16 the lead agency for the purpose of reporting any findings and
17 recommendations to the legislature no later than twenty days
18 prior to the regular session of 2008.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2025.



Report Title:

Taro; State Plant; Study

Description:

Requires the department of agriculture and the department of land and natural resources to conduct a study on whether the taro plant should be adopted as the official state plant. (SB950 HD1)

