

POHINAHINA

Vitex rotundifolia L. fil.

Plant Symbol = VIRO80

Contributed by: Hoolehua Plant Materials Center



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Alternate Names

Beach Vitex, kolokolo kahakai, hinahina kolo, manawanawa, mawanawana, polinalina.

Uses

Conservation: Primary recommendation for this plant would be a ground-cover for soil stabilization. Pohinahina also has the potential for native ecosystem restoration, re-vegetation of degraded habitats, and to increase diversity in riparian and other native communities.

Cultural: In Hawaii the flowers and seeds of the plant are used in the making of lei. The fruits of *V. rotundifolia* have been used as a folk medicine for the treatment of headache, cold, migraine, eye pain, asthma, chronic bronchitis, and gastrointestinal infections such as bacterial dysentery and diarrhea.

Landscape: *Vitex rotundifolia* takes well to pruning and can be shaped to a nice hedge. It has a beautiful flower and silvery leaves that are very appealing.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Vitex rotundifolia is a sprawling shrub 6 to 8 feet in diameter and 6 inches to 2 feet tall, but reaching 4 feet in height and 12 feet in width when protected from wind and salt spray. The round leaves are gray-green to silvery and 1 to 2 inches long and have a sage-like aroma when crushed. The 1 inch flowers are bluish purple and are produced in small clusters at the ends of the branches throughout the year. The round fruits are about 1/4 inch in diameter and bluish purple to black when ripe.

Adaptation and Distribution

Vitex rotundifolia is a widespread strand plant. Its natural range spans from China, Taiwan and Japan south to Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Australia, Pacific Islands, and Hawaii. In Hawaii, Pohinahina grows along the coast on sandy beaches, dunes, and rocky shorelines. It occurs naturally up to elevations of 50 feet on all the main islands except Kahoolawe, but it can grow at higher elevations.

For a current U.S. distribution map, please consult the plant profiles page for this species on the PLANTS web site.

Establishment

Vitex rotundifolia can be propagated either by seed or by cuttings.

The seeds are difficult to remove from the fruit, but the entire fruit can be planted. Use a sterile planting medium and plant seeds at least 1/4 inch deep. Be sure to keep the medium moist. Germination should occur within 3 to 6 months, although, there have been some instances where seeds have germinated earlier.

For vegetative propagation, it is recommended that the cuttings be taken from a plant that is not in its flowering stage. The cuttings should be 8-12 inches long and a bit on the woody side. Cuttings taken from new-growth stems have a tendency to rot easier. Use a sterile planting medium and be sure to keep it moist. Cuttings should take about two weeks to sprout new growth, but the application of any rooting hormone will quicken rooting time significantly.

Management

Vitex rotundifolia is drought and salt spray tolerant and spreads by runners. It thrives in full sun, sandy soils, and moderate temperatures.

Pests and Potential Problems

There are no known pests that are detrimental to the life cycle of *Vitex rotundifolia*.

Environmental Concerns

It is recommended that *Vitex rotundifolia* be utilized only in areas of its natural range. If introduced to areas outside its natural range, it has the potential to be an aggressive invader and deserves monitoring. Along the South Carolina shore, where *Vitex rotundifolia* was once introduced to help stabilize sand dunes, its prolific nature and resilience are now causing it to take over the natural vegetation. In the Charleston District, SC, there is concern about its growth because it has taken over and created monocultures (communities of only one species) by shading out native vegetation. Volunteers of South Carolina that monitor sea turtles have observed the plant spreading in or near turtle nesting areas, where its fibrous roots can trap turtles and destroy eggs.

Weediness:

This plant may become weedy or invasive in some regions or habitats and may displace desirable vegetation if not properly managed. Please consult with your local NRCS Field Office, Cooperative Extension Service office, state natural resource, or state agriculture department regarding its status and use. Weed information is also available from the PLANTS Web site at plants.usda.gov. Please consult the Related Web Sites on the Plant Profile for this species for further information.

Control:

Please contact your local agricultural extension specialist or county weed specialist to learn what works best in your area and how to use it safely. Always read label and safety instructions for each control method. Trade names and control measures appear in this document only to provide specific information. USDA NRCS does not guarantee or warranty the products and control methods named, and other products may be equally effective.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials:

None.



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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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