

# Connecting food, culture, health, and environment into the Hawaiian cultural framework of “Ho`oulu,” the encouragement of growth in all areas of ecological literacy.



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII  
**HILO**

Aleysia-Rae Kaha, William S. Sakai, University of Hawaii at Hilo College of Agriculture Forestry and Natural Resource Management; Leeann Ragasa, Hilo Union School; Jaynal Ioane, Hale Kanilehua- Living and Learning Community. Through the *Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions Grant*

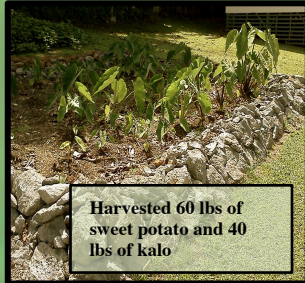
## Seeds



Planted 12 different varieties of Native kalo



**Seed:** **BIG IDEAS**, proposed by Michael Pollan examined four essential values for developing alternative pathways in education K-12. The four values of food, culture, health and environment bring forth fundamentals that support and encourage ecological literacy. *UH-Hilo* founded and supported three projects that help develop these concepts of Ec literacy. We have initiated these projects under the theme *Ho`oulu*, which in Hawaiian means to actively grow. Demonstrated much like a plant, it starts as a seed, sprouts roots, and thrives. To plant the seed we started working with the Hilo Union 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade social science and health classes.



Harvested 60 lbs of sweet potato and 40 lbs of kalo

**Methods:** The Hilo Union elementary had 60 fourth graders plant taro, sweet potato, and sugar-cane. These “canoe plants” were the first plants cultivated by early Hawaiians. Leeann Ragasa, the fourth grade teacher, describes their experience as a key component to their ability to function within her social science class. The garden provides a space to observe and experiment.

## Roots

**Roots:** As these seeds develop, we expanded our project to the Hawaiian speaking dormitories at the University, working to shape a living and learning environment that incorporates food plants and medicinal plants to encourage interaction between language and culture.

**KANILEHUA MĀLA**  
SATURDAY JANUARY 25 FROM 9AM-2PM  
MEET IN KANILEHUA LOUNGE

Kiki kō'ele hula ma'i  
An uncultivated patch awaiting all workers

Kanilehua Living and Learning Community will be collaborating with the development of our tanks or garden, behind our hall. Join us in doing, working, and cultivating unique Hawaiian plants and learn about their uses.

Please wear:  
 • Covered Shoes  
 • Protective clothing  
 • Long sleeve shirts and/or pants  
 • Hat and/or sunscreen  
 • Long pants recommended  
 \*Shoes, gloves and water will be provided

**Methods:** Students built partnerships amongst the Agriculture, Pharmacy, and Hawaiian colleges to support a culturally healthy and sustainable environment for incoming freshman.

1. Weekly “clear days”
2. Monthly work days with practitioners in medicine, traditional gardening, and natural farming methods.

## Plants



**Plant:** In the cultivation of strong roots, supported through culture, develops the plant, the *UH-Hilo Agriculture Club*. This diverse cohort, all with different specialties within the Agriculture Program produced a business plan and is cultivating one acre of land to establish a farm that relies upon the accumulated knowledge, skills, and principles gained from the college. In a collaborative effort *Ho`oulu* encompasses holistic practice, to implement traditional knowledge and sustainable methodologies to grow the land and its farmers. In full circle, each project embodies the **BIG IDEA** of *Ho`oulu*.

**Media broad casting**

1. Doodle poll
2. Facebook
3. Google group

**Techniques**

1. Vermicomposting
2. Indigenous microorganisms
3. Composting

**Methods:** 10 students created a business plan with the “Small Island Business Network,” and established committees in design and fundraising. We make weekly visits to the plot for work days, record personal observations, and take vegetative as well as seasonal analysis.