



MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

2856 O'ahu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822

Return Service Requested



'A'ohe ipu 'ōpio e 'ole ka mimino i ka lā

No immature gourd can withstand
withering in the sun [without care].

ʻŌlelo No'eau #155



Inspired by a Name

***By Lara Villareal Hutner, Founder of The Clementina Foundation,
who attended a tour at MHC in January 2025 and reflects on the experience:***

I arrived early at Mānoa Heritage Center to visit Kūka'ō'ō, one of the few restored heiau on O'ahu. On the tour, I learned about Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku Naihe. In the late 1800's, the Cooke family had a premature baby. After trying Western medicine, they invited Ka'aha'aina, who lived in Keauhou-Kona on the Big Island, to help. She saved the boy, Charles Montague "Monte" Cooke, Jr., and raised him to value Hawaiian culture and tradition. His descendant, Sam Cooke, and his wife Mary, founded MHC to preserve Kūka'ō'ō Heiau.

One morning I woke up and the name "Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku" – which the day before I still could barely pronounce – was ringing in my head. I booked a roundtrip flight to Kona - and then changed it. "Fly into Hilo, out of Kona," the little voice inside me nudged. Then I reached out to MHC to find out all they knew about Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku Naihe and within a few hours found two old articles about her. In one she was noted as being the oldest "traveler" alive. Born in 1823 during the brief reign of Kamehameha II, she was one of the first Hawaiians to be baptized at the first church in Hawai'i - Mokuaikaia. And in 1942, she was still swimming in Keauhou Bay and talking about the Cooke baby she had saved who died an old man. With the new information I found where she had been buried after living to be about 118! A week later I landed in Hilo to bring flowers to this phenomenal woman's burial site.



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MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER



Aloha mai kākou,

It is an honor to accept the kuleana of serving as Mānoa Heritage Center's Executive Director (again). As some of you might know, I served in this role a few years back and had the privilege of working with Mary Cooke and the incredible MHC team to build what is now a thriving Visitor Education Hale serving more than 7,000 people per year. Mary was particularly proud of our programs engaging teachers and students and, as the academic year begins, I am inspired by what our educators have in store for local schools. From exploring Kūka'ō'ō Heiau to learning about native plants and ahupua'a, these programs foster a deeper connection to the land and Hawai'i's cultural history.

I am also looking forward to building upon the wonderful strategic planning conducted with community stakeholders to transform the Cooke family home, Kūali'i, into a vibrant space for learning and connection. We will continue to gather community input especially as we move forward with applying for a Conditional Use Permit. One of the things I learned from working with Mary was to move forward thoughtfully at a pace that builds a strong foundation to support MHC's mission. Thanks to the wisdom and generous spirits of MHC's board of directors, staff members, volunteers, donors, partners and neighbors, we are well on our way to creating something that will make a difference.

Mahalo nui for your support and I look forward to the journey ahead!

Me ke aloha,

Jessica

Executive Director, Mānoa Heritage Center

Plant Power: Healed by Hāloa

Revered lā'au lapa'au practitioner Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku Naihe utilized a variety of plants in her healing practice, including one we're very familiar with here at MHC – kalo!

According to Cooke family lore, in 1874 the Cooke family sought out the expertise of Ka'aha'aina hoping to save the life of their baby, Charles Montague "Monte" Cooke, Jr., who was born prematurely. Under Ka'aha'aina's care, Monte was able to gain strength and miraculously survived.

Last fall, MHC was privileged to host our very first artist-in-residence and lineal descendant of Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku, Al Lagunero. Al was able to provide details to this incredible story passed down through his 'ohana, sharing that one of the ways Ka'aha'aina was able to sustain Monte was by rubbing poi on his fontanelle.

This incredible story is just one example of the many life-giving properties of this staple crop.

Here in our gardens at MHC, we have a few different kalo varieties (cultivars) including: Palehua, Hāpu'u, Pilialoha, 'O'opukai, Manini uliuli, Mana 'ulu, Manini toretore, 'Ele'ele makoko, Moi, and Moi 'ula.

Mahalo to our friends from Ka Papa Lo'i O Kānewai, Paepae O He'eia, Hālau Kū Māna and Voyager PCS for sharing some of these kalo varieties with us!



Pilialoha

Visit us at www.manoaheritagecenter.org



2856 Oahu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822 (808) 988-1287 contact@manoaheritagecenter.org

‘Āina Kumu Wai: Watershed Workshop Engages Educators

Summer break provided a wonderful opportunity for MHC to connect with local educators from all over the island at our first ‘Āina Kumu Wai: Watershed Workshop. While we host thousands of students every school year, sharing our place-based educational activities with those from our broader community, we recognize that our site is only one of many special places with important stories to tell.

This workshop focused on providing educators with context and resources for the scientific and cultural aspects of the watershed that we integrate into our activities here at MHC. Unique relationships between natural resources and the people who use and steward them have always existed, and vary from place to place. Our education team's goal was to support aspiring educators beginning to implement place-based learning to their own ‘āina, and fulfill MHC's mission of inspiring thoughtful stewardship.

Workshop participants spent two days exploring the vital role of water in both our daily lives as well as the lives of the plants, animals, and microbes that inhabit our watershed. Our Watershed Model, Kilo Ao, and Mo'olelo Mapping activities were featured as examples of activities that can be applied anywhere, with adjustments being made to fit your ‘āina. Our Kāhuli Scavenger Hunt stands as an example of an activity inspired by MHC's founder Sam Cooke's grandfather, Charles Montague "Monte" Cooke, Jr., who was Bishop Museum's first Malacologist.

As workshopppers utilized resources to gain information on their ‘āina and begin developing place-specific ideas, we took time to walk through the garden to learn more in depth about the plants that create the foundation for our lessons in the “outdoor classroom”. Each educator was given the opportunity to adopt an assortment of keiki plants to start their native collection either at home, or at school, as well as tips on how to care for and utilize their new ‘āina friends.

Mahalo to The Marisla Foundation for their generous support of ‘Āina Kumu Wai!



Garden Educator Kanoa Nakamura shares a mini propagation lesson with educators. Participants in our workshop took home native plants of their choosing – for their school or to keep.

In the **‘24-‘25** school year, we engaged with a grand total of **5,167** students

Our ***busiest*** month of the school year was **February 2025**, with 20 total school group visits.

That's about **50,000** animal crackers eaten throughout the year!



Mahalo to 2025 Donors

We are deeply grateful to all the donors who support MHC's operations, programs and the Sam Cooke Endowed Fund. We especially thank our 2025 Benefactor Circle level donors, who gave gifts of \$10,000 and above:

Robin Freeman Bernstein, Nat Bernstein & Matthew Bernstein	Hawai'i Tourism Authority's Kūkula Ola program
Monica W. Chun	David A. Keliikuli & Ronald R. Bunn
The Clementina Foundation	State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
Cooke Foundation, Limited	State of Hawaii
Harold K. L. Castle Foundation	



MHC's Wellness Tea

Māmaki + ‘Uhaloa + Lemongrass + ‘Ōlena

After an invigorating walk through the garden, public tour guests are invited to enjoy a refreshing glass of MHC's wellness tea. All tea contents are grown, gathered, and brewed on-site. Through this holistic experience, guests get a chance to feel the mana of this ‘āina inside and out. Brew some wellness of your own with our recipe below.

1 quart wai

3 lau māmaki

2 lau ‘uhaloa

A medium pinch of lemongrass

A tiny pinch of dried* ‘ōlena / 1 small slice of fresh ‘ōlena

**Note that drying of materials is not necessary, but encouraged to best activate plants' medicinal properties.*



Māmaki - An endemic nettle with anti-inflammatory properties, known to aid in lowering blood pressure.



‘Uhaloa - A weed-like woody shrub with a variety of medicinal benefits, including helping to alleviate respiratory ailments.



Lemongrass - A fragrant grass with antibacterial properties, its mild flavors aid in digestion.



‘Ōlena - The colorful rhizomes of this potent plant boasts an impressive list of medicinal properties including being anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal, and an antioxidant.

Upcoming Events

Public tours are offered 2-3 times per week. Check out our website and social media for more information and to register.



Paper Club: Kozo

SAT SEPT 20

9 am – 12 pm

1-session - \$45

Kula pepeiao pololei

with Kumu Wes Sen

Lauhala earrings

SAT OCT 4, 2025

9 am – 12 pm

1-session - \$50.00

(participants will make 2 pairs)

Parol Workshop

(Christmas star lantern)

with Rosie Acopan Ramiro and

Phil Fernandez-Brennan

SAT NOV 1, 2025

10 am – 12 pm

1-session - \$25.00

Pae Lā‘au (Surf Wood)

with Mahi La Pierre

SAT NOV 8, 2025

SAT NOV 15, 2025

8 am – 12 pm

2-day workshop - \$105.00 (per board)

