

5 Reasons to Grow Native

Here are the top 5 reasons you should grow native plants. One easy way to help native species thrive and survive is by giving them a home in your gardens and landscaping. Nurturing native plants provides each of us the chance to participate in healing the land while offering habitat to native fauna that depends on these plants for life.

Less is more

Because they evolved over thousands of years in Hawaii's environment, native plants generally need fewer inputs when compared with exotic gardens. Native plants, when grown in the right place, are adapted to local conditions. They survive and thrive in harmony with the land, sun, rain, and soil. Growing native saves money, resources, and time. Native gardens need less fertilizer, water, and they recover faster after installation. After establishment, native plants rarely need much human intervention. They are generally healthier than exotic plants.

● Easy to grow

Native plants are perfect for the lazy gardener. Planting a garden is fun, maintaining one not so much. Natives tend to thrive once established. There is no need to change the environment to suit a plant when a native plant already suited to the area can be grown. Grow native – Work with nature, not against it.

● Exciting New Cultivated varieties

Many native plants are available in the nursery industry as garden varieties, sometimes referred to as "bulletproof species". These are tried and true varieties that can tolerate a wide range of environments, are widely available, and offer plenty of information available about cultivation, reproduction, and uses. Private and academic entities are constantly testing, selecting, and breeding new native cultivars for the landscape. Maui Native Nursery, UH Manoa botanists including Dr. Orville Baldos, and Hui Ku Maoli Oia are some that innovate novel cultivars (AKA nativars) to enhance our native planting choices.

● Creates a sense of place:

Hawaii is a botanical marvel: each plant has a story, a connection with the land. Community begins with place. Hawaiians used, admired, and depended on native plants for survival. When we grow native, it deepens our connection to the past, a way to respect those who came before us. Native landscaping evokes a sense of place.

Habitat for native critters

Preserving biodiversity is more important than ever. Hawaiian birds, butterflies, moths, bees, and other animals depend on the native plants they evolved with. Planting native repairs the fragmented landscape. A native landscape is like a kipuka or a safe haven in a sea of buildings, pastures, and agricultural crops. It becomes a resting ground for native fauna as they move around the land.