

ACT 36

H.B. NO. 659

A Bill for an Act Relating to Taro.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Kalo (Colocasia esculenta (L.) Schott), the Hawaiian word for taro, is a culturally significant plant to the kanaka maoli, Hawaii's indigenous peoples. According to the kumulipo, the Hawaiian creation chant, kalo grew from the first-born son of Wakea, the sky father, and Papa, the earth mother, through Wakea's relationship with his and Papa's daughter, Hoohokulani. This son, named Haloa, was stillborn and buried. From Haloa's grave grew the first kalo plant. Wakea and Hoohokulani named their second son Haloa, after his older brother. From the

second Haloa came the genesis of man. Kalo provides the kanaka maoli's life-giving sustenance, poi, and is seen as the older brother of mankind.

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

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

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

The purpose of this Act is to recognize the importance of the kalo in the heritage of the state by adopting, establishing, and designating the kalo plant as the official state plant.

SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§5- State plant. Kalo (*Colocasia esculenta* (L.) Schott), the Hawaiian word for taro, is adopted, established, and designated as the official plant of the State."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2025.²

(Approved April 24, 2007.)

Notes

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.

2. So in original.