

The Fairchild Challenge/BGCI Global Competition 2011/2012

Entrants:

National Tropical Botanical Garden, Education Department
Kōkua `Āina Youth Initiative Youths (aged 14 -19 yrs old)
3530 Papalina Road
Kalāheo, Hawai`i
www.ntbg.org

Plants Selected and Represented to Kaua`i, Hawai`i, USA's biodiversity:

Latin	Hawaiian	nickname
Acacia koa	Koa	
Styphelia tameiameia	pukiawe	
Dodonaea viscosa	A`ali`i	Florida hopbush
Metrosideros polymorpha	Ohi`a lehua	
Cheirodendron trigynum	`Olapa	Common cheirodendron
Microlepidia strigosa	Palapalai	
Hibiscus tiliaceus	Hau	

Rationale for Selection of Plants: [conservation message for one plant]

The rationale for selecting the plants used in the garland (or also known as *lei* in Hawai`i) was based on the location of where the flowers and plants were gathered. We were taken to Koke`e, the uplands of Kaua`i, to gather our materials. Koke`e is one of the few forests where native Hawaiian plants still flourish. We learned about the significance of the plants chosen to the Hawaiian culture.

Koa (*acacia koa*) represents masculinity and strength. *A`ali`i* (*dodonaea viscosa*) represents resilience. This plant withstands powerful winds and changing weather. *Ohi`a lehua* (*metrosideros polymorpha*) is symbolic of beauty and its fragility. *`Olapa* (*cheirodendron trigynum*) is named after a young hula dancer and a dance move. It represents agility. *Pukiawe* (*styphelia tameiameia*) and *palapalai* (*microlepidia strigosa*) are used as adorning and enhancing

components of the garland or *lei*. We were taught to respect their rareness, and experienced how difficult it is to find and gather these two materials, especially. *Hau* (*hibiscus tiliaceus*) was the material we harvested for two weekend days, and it was the cordage and backing of the garland. This material is one of the most important plants to the Hawaiian culture. Hawaiians used *hau* for their canoes, homes, weapons, and clothing.

We learned about Hawaiian traditions, especially practicing protocol, during the garland competition project. We learned from a cultural practitioner on why it is important to respect and honor nature and ancestors of the forest and plants before, during, and after the gathering. As we made the garlands, we were taught values like patience, team work, and doing our best.

Like the Olympic games, Hawaiians had a culminating sport event called the *Makahiki Games*. We related our garland project to how Hawaiians would celebrate culture and athleticism with the giving of garlands, too, to their victors and champions. During this time, no wars were fought and the sharing of crops and fish were practiced to show fellowship and goodwill. Like the games and cultural tradition, one important message for us after the Fairchild challenge was for us to remember and practice our responsibility to care for Hawai`i's native plants today and in the future.

One-sentence Conservation Message Relating to One of the Plants:

“Remember: Regeneration PLUS Reforestation EQUALS Koa Conservation!”

Photos of Hawaiian wreath from Kaua`i Worn by Students:



