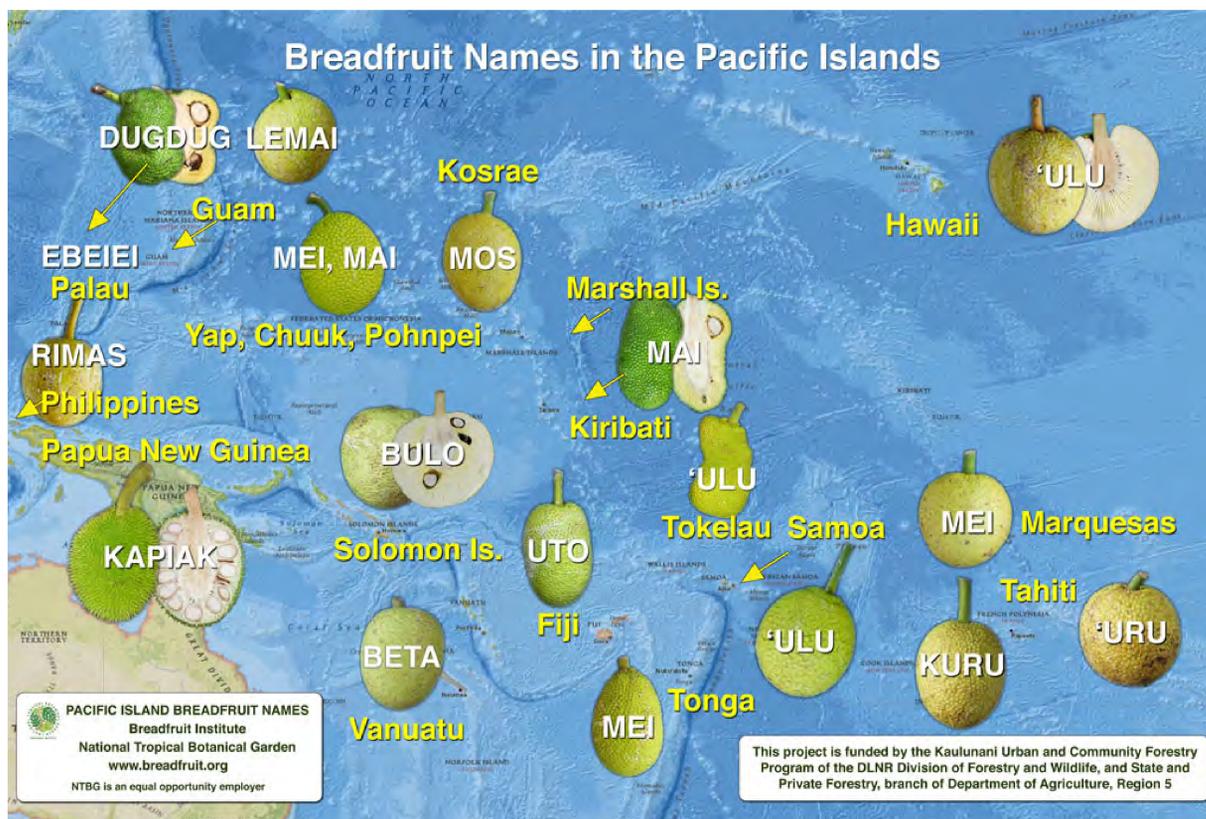


'ULU IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



Breadfruit has been an important staple crop and component of traditional agroforestry systems in the Pacific for more than 3,000 years. It originated in the South Pacific and was spread throughout Oceania by intrepid islanders settling the numerous islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Due to the efforts of European voyagers, a few seedless varieties from Polynesia were introduced to the Caribbean in the late 1700s. These gradually spread to other tropical regions. Breadfruit is now grown in 90 countries. (Visit www.breadfruit.org for more information.)

Considering the importance of breadfruit, it is not surprising that it holds a special place in the proverbs, chants and legends of cultures throughout Polynesia. Below are a few examples.

LALAU AKU 'OE I KA 'ULU I KA WEKIU, I KE ALO NO KA 'ULU, A HALA

You reach for the breadfruit away at the top and miss the one in front of you.

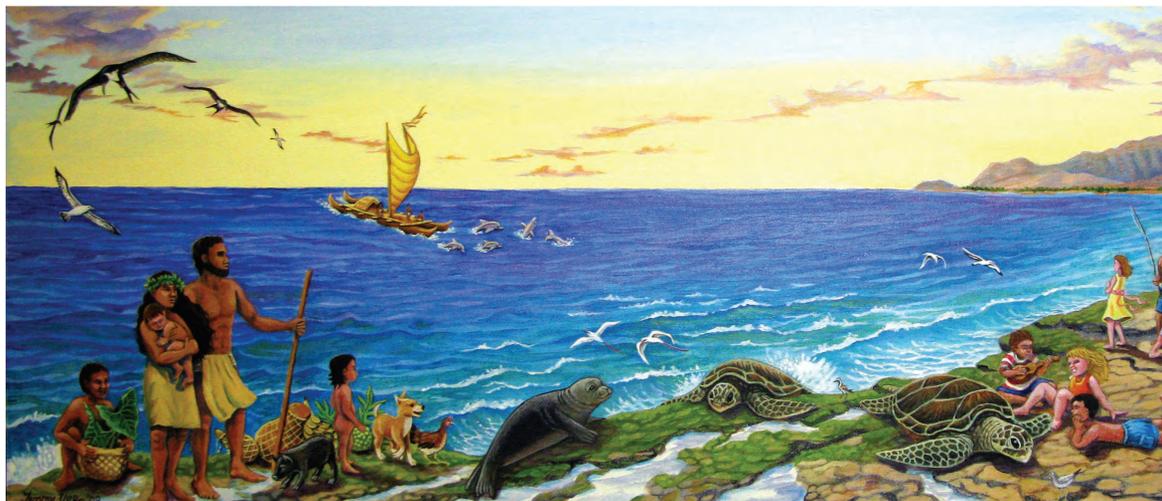
From "Proverbs from Pukui, Mary Kawena, 'Olelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings", Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, 1983.

The following is one of the Hawaiian myths of how Breadfruit came to be as told by Caren Loebel Fried in her book, *Hawaiian Legends of the Guardian Spirits* (published in 2002 by University of Hawaii Press).

According to Hawaiian myth, the breadfruit originated from the sacrifice of the war god Ku. After deciding to live secretly among mortals as a farmer, Ku married and had children. He and his family lived happily until a famine seized their island.

When he could no longer bear to watch his children suffer, Ku told his wife that he could deliver them from starvation, but to do so he would have to leave them. Reluctantly she agreed, and at her word, Ku descended into the ground right where he had stood until only the top of his head was visible.

His family waited around the spot he had last been, day and night, watering it with their tears until suddenly, a small green shoot appeared where Ku had stood. Quickly, the shoot grew into a tall and leafy tree that was laden with heavy breadfruits that Ku's family and neighbors gratefully ate, joyfully saved from starvation.



The following chant and translation was shared by Te Are Toa Ote Pa Toa O Marouna Tama Pikikaa Benioni ("Patoa"), a Cook Islands Elder and Honorary Member of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Native Hawaiian *Kupuna* (Elders) Council. The first line of the chant is in his native language (Cook Islands Maori). The second line is the English translation. The third line is the *kaona* (Hawaiian for "hidden or double meaning") as explained by Patoa.

MOU I TE KO

Hold on to the planting stick.

The planting stick represents your family, language, culture and identity and all the things your elders taught you.

MOU I TE ERE

Hold on tight to the knot of the tether rope.

Just like a tether rope keeps your pigs from being lost, hold on tight to your family, language, culture and identity.

KIA PUKURU O VAEVAE

Be firmly anchored like the trunk of the 'ulu tree.

Hold on to your culture so you will be strong like the trunk of an 'ulu tree that remains in the ground even if the winds blow down its branches.

KIA MOKORA O KAKI

See all around you like the duck.

If you decide to leave your island home, do not go blindly. See everything around you 360° just like a duck, so you can see where you are going. Do not lose your identity, but be observant so you can learn new things that will benefit your life.

Hold onto your culture, stand tall on your feet to face the challenges ahead of you.