

# Flora of Samoa: Flowering Plants

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**Flora of Samoa: Flowering Plants.** By W.A. Whistler (edited by D.H. Lorence and W.L. Wagner). National Tropical Botanical Garden, Kauai, Hawaii. ISBN: 978-0-915809-04-2, 2022. Pp. 1–940. \$100 (hardcover).

This monumental flora is the result of Art Whistler's lifelong dedication to documenting and studying the plants of Samoa, a project that began in the early 1980s. The result is a wonderful reference for anyone interested in Pacific Island flora and vegetation. The scope of the book covers the entire archipelago, comprising both Samoa and American Samoa, the latter reflecting its territorial status as part of the United States. In this work, the term "Samoa" is used to reflect both political entities. In total, the flora covers 833 native and naturalized species of flowering plants, of which 177 are considered endemic. The author estimated that there are ca. 225 ferns and lycophytes found in the Samoan archipelago. He had plans to prepare a treatment on those plants, but these were thwarted by his untimely passing in 2020. The book begins with an introduction to the geography of Samoa, which is part of the region of Oceania known as Polynesia. Six vegetation types are described in great detail, providing insight into the geographic diversity of the archipelago. The botanical history of Samoa is presented next, and similar to other areas of Oceania, it was influenced by various waves of botanists from different regions beginning in the

late 18<sup>th</sup> century, who had been attracted to the richness of its biodiversity. Twenty-five herbaria are said to contain the majority of the extant collections of Samoan plants. A brief elaboration of the Samoan language offers some basic information on this Austronesian language subgroup, which is useful in interpreting vernacular names. Formal treatments of angiosperm families, genera, and species comprise the bulk of this large tome, which also includes keys to the genera and species, and additional information, such as notes on distribution, ecology, local names, and other material that adds interest and utility to the work. The book is lavishly illustrated with color photographs, taken primarily by the author. There is also a botanical glossary that helps make this book more broadly usable by local students and others involved with the study and conservation of Samoan plants and forests. Following the passing of the author, many in the community were concerned that this work would never see the light of day. We are thankful to David H. Lorence and Warren L. Wagner for taking this project to completion. Their vision, energy, and dedication have resulted in a remarkable addition to the literature on Pacific Island plants.

## Declarations

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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