LIMU MANE'ONE'O

This limu is peppery, almost hot to the taste, so it is sometimes called chili pepper or mustard limu. It combines well with raw fish and should only be eaten fresh.

Clumped at the base, this limu grows in bushes to a height of about eight inches. The tips of its branches have pits in them from which many colorless hair grow. This limu ranges in color from bright green to dark green and can be found growing in crevices and holes and along rocky coastlines.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i

LIMU WĀWAE'IOLE

This spongy, green limu has stubby, flattened ends at its cylindrical branches that resemble a rat's foot, hence its name wāwae'iole which means rat's foot.

This limu grows in the form of a creeping mat over coral and sand. Frequently, when it is picked up, its bottom will be covered with pieces of shell, sand, or small rocks. It is found in abundance along the shore and is especially prized for eating by the Filipino people. It is called pokpoklo in Filipino and miru in Japanese.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i
LIMU KOHU

This is a small red limu. In the water, it looks like a forest of tiny pink pine trees with tufts of fuzzy branches at the top.

Limu kohu grows well where there is a constant flow of water.

In ancient times, this limu was forbidden to all except the ali'i because it was desired for its peppery flavor and was considered the best of all seaweeds. It is usually used sparingly as a spice or a condiment. It is also combined with meat or fish in a stew.

Limu kohu appears to be found only in Hawai'i.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i

LIMU 'ELE'ELF

Limu 'ele'ele means black seaweed and is descriptive of the dark color of the prepared seaweed. This limu is actually grass green in color. Long strands of limu 'ele'ele may be found growing at the mouth of many island streams. Its presence shows that fresh or brackish water is nearby.

The cleaned seaweed is rinsed and drained and salted. This prepared limu adds a nutty flavor to stews, saimin, and raw fish and its green color makes it a good garnish. It also can be eaten as a spice or dried in Japanese fashion to make a seasoning salt or thin sheets of sushi nori.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i
LIMU HULUHULUMAENA

In ancient Hawai'i, this limu was reserved for the ali'i. It was called the queen limu because of its dark hair-like branches. It was also considered the best edible limu.

This limu grows in different ways. Some have branches that are fine and hair-like, while others may be ½" wide. There are also flat, curled, and twisted varieties.

Traditionally, it is cleaned, rinsed in salt water, chopped and added to 'opihi, raw liver and other limu. It has a delicate but distinctive flavor when fresh and combines well with fish, poultry and dairy products.

Hui 'Imi Na'auno o Hawai'i

LIMU LIPOA

Limu lipoa means gathered from the deep because this limu is a deep-water plant. It grows at three to fifteen foot depths, frequently in meadows, beyond the reef. It is not appreciated by the surfer and beachgoer because it clutters the water and the shore.

This limu has flat blades that are two to eight inches in length. It has a prominent dark brown midrib and is golden-colored with dark spots. It has a strong, perfume-like aroma and is highly favored for its unique spicy flavor.

Hui 'Imi Na'auno o Hawai'i
LIMU KALA

This limu is of ritual and medicinal importance to the Hawaiian people. The word kala means "to free, loosen" and "to forgive, pardon"; and thus it was used symbolically in many ceremonies.

This holly-like brown limu often has small inflated gas bladders which have flattened stalks. It grows in tide pools and reef flats and is commonly found on our beaches. Because of its leathery texture, it is not used much for food.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i

LIMU PĀLAHALAHA

This limu has long, flat, bright green blades. In the water, it resembles a leafy head of lettuce so it is often called sea lettuce. This limu is one of the most common limu in the islands and is found in abundance along the shore. This limu is edible but is rarely collected for eating. When it is prepared properly, it can be a delicacy.

A legend tells that an early ancestor of the shark was wrapped in the leaves of the limu pālahalaha and then put into the sea. To this day this limu is thought to be sacred to the shark god and is kapu to people whose kūmākū is the shark.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i
OGO

This seaweed is not native to Hawai‘i. It probably arrived here around the turn of the century by hitchhiking on the hull of a Japanese ship. The branches are cylindrical with pointed tips that are long and narrow. This is one of our larger red seaweeds.

The limu ogo grows in shallow reefs and is often washed up on the shore. The color varies from red, when it grows on the reef flats, to almost white when it grows in areas of bright sunlight.

This is the most popular limu for eating today. The mild flavor and crunchy texture is recommended for beginning limu eaters.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai‘i

LIMU MANAUEA

Limu manauea is a cousin to the limu ogo and is commonly referred to by that name. The limu manauea has a more reddish color and is shorter and more branched than the limu ogo.

This limu grows in shallow coral and sand reefs and is often washed up on the shore.

Like the Japanese ogo, the limu manauea has a mild flavor and crunchy texture. It is also one of the most popular limu for eating.

Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai‘i