



Planting Kalo and the Story of Haloa

Lesson Overview:

This lesson is primarily aimed at teaching 1st through 3rd graders, however, it can be applied to a 4th and 5th grade lesson plan with more advanced use of language, and a deeper examination of the anatomy and growth cycle of the kalo.

We begin with the story of Haloa, a tale of the first kalo and the first Hawaiian person. This sets the stage for the students to reflect on the history and significance of the kalo as it is intertwined with Hawaiian culture.

Then we will focus on different parts of the kalo, and what their contributions are to the growth of the plant.

Students will then draw each of these parts, familiarizing themselves with their Hawaiian names.

We finish off with a tasting!

Essential Question:

What can ancient *mo'olelo* (stories) like the story of Haloa teach us about the reciprocal relationship between people and the land?

Student Objectives:

Be able to identify the significance and applied uses of the kalo plant including where and how it grows and common ways to prepare it.

Materials/Setting/Time Needed:

- One fully mature kalo plant for instructor demonstration, 2-3 stems, and 6 kalo leaflets. One sheet construction paper per student, writing and coloring utensils. One quart of poi, sample cups.
- 4-5 mature kalo in aluminum pans, each divided into parts for student observation
- The lesson can be done outside or indoors.
- ~ 1 hour

Outline:

1. Story:

O Wakea ke kane, o Ho'ohokukalani ka wahine. Wakea, sky father of the Hawaiian islands, and Ho'ohokukalani were expecting their first child. The baby was born too soon, and did not survive. Wakea and Ho'ohokukalani buried the child on the east side of their hale (house) where the sun rises in the morning. Still mourning the loss of her child, Ho'ohokukalani cried over the grave each day. Tears from her eyes soaked the earth below, and before long, a plant started to grow from that spot. Up from the ground grew a plant with a long green stock with a heart-shaped leaf. They called the plant Haloanakalaukapalili after the way its unique-shaped leaf fluttered in the breeze. This was the first kalo plant.

Before long, Ho'ohokukalani was pregnant again. She gave birth to a healthy baby boy, and the parents named the child Haloa, after his older brother, the kalo plant. Haloa was the first Hawaiian person.

2. Guided Inquiry:

What stood out to you about this story? Did you learn anything new? What can the story of Haloa teach us about the relationship between plants and people? Do you think a relationship between plants and people exists? Why or why not?

3. Parts of the Kalo:

Using the fully mature kalo as visual representation, here I will describe to the students the importance of each part of the kalo. Several plants will already be divided and set aside in aluminum pans so the students can handle and examine each part in turn as we talk about the parts of the plant and how they relate to the whole and to the 'ohana- or family.

First, the *lau* or the leaf. A kalo's leaf has a distinct heart shape, but they are also special because they are made up of similar parts to us. These lines spanning across the leaf are the veins, they function much the same as our own veins do for us. Here, at the junction of those veins is the *piko* of the leaf. Humans have *pikos* (belly buttons) too, right? You may not know it, but you've probably eaten this leaf before. It's common to use kalo leaf in dishes like laulau or palusami. How many of you have tried something like this before?

Stemming from the leaf here is called the *ha*, or the stalk of the kalo plant. It is from this stalk that the kalo can be regrown. Once it is fully grown, after 8-12 months, you will have a huli of taro ready to harvest. When you do, you can remove the leaf and the root, but you'll keep the stem so you can plant a new crop. With about one inch of the root attached to the *ha*, you can immediately replant the kalo and start the process all over again!

At the very bottom of the plant is the root, which is actually called *kalo*. Although the plant as a whole is often referred to as kalo, this is the proper name for the root as well. Many of you have probably tasted kalo before, as it is used to make dishes like poi, kulolo and taro chips. When cooked, it tastes similar to a potato, but with a richer and semi-sweet flavor. At the end of our lesson today, you will get to try some.

Kalo can be planted on dry land, or in wet land in a *lo'i*. How many of you have seen kalo growing before?

4. Worksheet

Now, everyone will take one piece of paper each, and fold it into fourths. In each square, I want you to draw and label each part of the kalo plant with its Hawaiian name. I will

write each of them on the board to help you with spelling. You are free to color them in or draw them in pencil, however you'd like. Then, in the fourth box, I want you to write your name and grade and in a complete sentence, one way that Hawaiian people are connected to kalo. I will give you about 10-15 minutes to complete this. (If needed, provide a sentence starter such as: "Hawaiians of old and people of Hawaii today depend on kalo for...")

In the meantime, while they are working, I would divide up the poi into the sample cups for tasting.

5. Tasting

I ka wa kahiko, in the olden days, Hawaiians never used utensils. All eating was done with your hands! Therefore, the traditional way to eat poi is by using your index and middle finger pressed together, and making a circular, scooping motion with your wrist. (Demonstrate) The thickness of the poi as "one finger" or "two finger" is still a matter of family tradition today! Of utmost importance was to swirl the wrist in such a way that no poi would fall from your fingers back into the bowl- to do so is seen as a critical insult to the rest of the group.

Now, you try!

What does this poi taste like to you? Do the flavors remind you of anything else you like to eat?

Kalo provides a good source of carbohydrates, which we need for energy. It also is high in vitamins B-6, and E, which help fight diseases and give us healthy skin and eyes. Kalo also has high amounts of minerals like copper and magnesium, which help us grow, keep strong bones and tissue, and helps us metabolize energy from the food we eat.

6. Clean up

Everyone please put your completed kalo sketches in your folders, and throw all of the sample cups in the 'opala. *Mahalo nui* for all of your hard work and attention today!

NGSS: This lesson plan is alligned with cross-cutting concepts *System and System Models, Stability and Change* as detailed within the Next Generation Science Srandards (<http://www.nextgenscience.org/>). Grade level Disciplinary Core Ideas can be incorporated as the lesson is adjusted for the grade level.