

GLOBAL INVASIVE SPECIES DATABASE

FULL ACCOUNT FOR: Citharexylum spinosum

Citharexylum spinosum 简体中文 正體中文

System: Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Magnoliopsida	Lamiales	Verbenaceae

spiny fiddlewood (English), Florida fiddlewood (English), fiddlewood (English), Common name

masese (Fijian, Fiji)

Citharexylum albicaule, Turcz. **Synonym**

> Citharexylum bahamense, Millsp. Ex Britton Citharexylum broadwayi, O.E. Shultz ex. Urb.

Citharexylum cinereum , J.F. Gmel

Citharexylum cinereum , L. Citharexylum coriaceum, Desf.

Citharexylum fruticosum, L. var. subvillosum (Moldenke)

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. forma subvillosum (Moldenke) Moldenke

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. var. villosum (Jacq.) O.E. Shultz

Citharerxylum fruticosum, L.

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. var. smallii Moldenke

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. forma subserratum (Sw.) Moldenke

Citharexylum fruticosum, L. forma bahamense (Millsp. Ex. Britton) Moldenke

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. var. brittonii Moldenke

Citharexylum fruticosum , L. var. subserratum (Sw.) Moldenke

Citharexylum hybridum, Moldenke

Citharexylum molle, Salisb Citharexylum pentandrum, Vent. Citharexylum polystachyum, Turcz. Citharexylum quadrangulare, Jacq.

Citharexylum spinosum, L. forma villosum (Jacq.) Citharexylum spinosum , L. forma subserratum (Sw.) Citharexylum spinosum , L. forma smallii (Moldenke)

Citharexylum subserratum, Sw. Citharexylum surrectum, Griseb.

Citharexylum teres , Jacq.

Citharexylum tomentosum, Poir. Citharexylum villosum, Jacq.

Similar species

Summary

Citharexylum spinosum (fiddlewood) is a tree that is commonly planted for its multi-seasonal aesthetic appeal. After escape, it can cause problems by forming dense thickets that choke out other vegetation. In addition, its roots are very aggressive and cause damage to pipes and underground services. Efforts to monitor this plant are underway in many areas, namely Hawaii, where it has spread to several islands.



view this species on IUCN Red List



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Species Description

Citharexylum spinosum is an evergreen tree that can be up to 50 feet tall. It has no spines and has smooth, quadrangular twigs. Its leaves are up to 8 inches long, smooth and oval or oblong. The leaves also narrow at the base to a short stem, are coarse-toothed or entire, pointed at the tip, and are opposite or in groups of three. \"Fragrant, white, tubular five-parted flowers, each about 0.3 inch long, are borne in narrow clusters, which are 4 to 12 inches long, branched below or not.\" (PIER, 1999). Flowers on C. spinosum are functionally unisexual and the trees are dioecious. The fruits of Citharexylum spinosum are globose, 0.25 in (0.60cm) in diameter, immaturely red or orange and purplish to black when ripe. The leaves turn a browish gold colour between February and May. (Starret al, 2003). The bark of C. spinosum is light brown, and becomes fissured as it ages. (IRREC, 2003). Fiddlewood forms crowded stands even in undisturbed habitats. (Smith, 1998).

Notes

During the dry season, Citharexylum spinosum is deciduous. (Smith, 1998)

Uses

Citharexylum spinosum is cultivated as a street tree and is a popular ornamental in many tropical and subtropical regions. The leaves of *C. spinosum* turn orange prior to dropping, which is part of the reason for its appeal. The tree is also attractive because of its fragrant white flowers. People in the Carribean use the wood of *C. spinosum* to make stringed instruments and cabinets. (Starr *et al*, 2003).

Habitat Description

Citharexylum spinosum generally grows in wet habitats below 500 metres. It has been found in dry habitats at different elevations, where it adapts by dropping its leaves during the dry season. (Smith, 1985).

Reproduction

Citharexylum spinosum can be propagated by seeds or cuttings. (Starret al., 2003).

General Impacts

Citharexylum spinosum is able to form a dense canopy, choking out other vegetation. (Starr et al, 2003). Because of its aggressive roots, which can damage pipes and other underground services, C. spinosum is no longer desirable in Australia and other parts of the world. (The State of Queensland, 2006) \r\nC. spinosum is able to form a dense canopy, choking out other vegetation. (Starr et al, 2003). Because of its aggressive roots, which can damage pipes and other underground services, C. spinosum is no longer desirable in Australia and other parts of the world. (The State of Queensland, 2006)

Management Info

<u>Preventative measures</u>: A Risk Assessment of <u>Citharexylum spinosum</u> for Hawai'i and other Pacific islands was prepared by Dr. Curtis Daehler (UH Botany) with funding from the Kaulunani Urban Forestry Program and US Forest Service. The alien plant screening system is derived from Pheloung *et al.* (1999) with minor modifications for use in Pacific islands (Daehler *et al.* 2004). The result is a score of 7 and a recommendation of: \"reject the plant for import (Australia) or species likely to be of high risk (Pacific)\".

Cultural: The public should be informed not to plant C. spinosum. (Starret al, 2003).

Physical: If cut and not treated, C. spinosum will certainly grow back.

<u>Chemical</u>: Chemicals will likely play a role in controlling *C. spinosum* because it grows back when cut to the ground. (Starret al, 2003).

<u>Biological</u>: A treehopper *Aconophora compressa* was released in 1995 in Australia for control of <u>Lantana camara</u>, a weedy species in the same family as *C. spinosum*. Several populations of *A. compressa* were found on *C. spinosum* after their release, and have been damaging the tree and other plants since then. (The State of Queensland, 2006; Dhileepan *et al.* 2006).

Principal source: Starr, F., Starr, K., & L. Loope. 2003. *Citharexylum spinosum*. Plants of Hawaii Reports.

Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) 2025. Species profile *Citharexylum spinosum*. Available from: https://iucngisd.org/gisd/species.php?sc=1059 [Accessed 03 November 2025]



GLOBAL INVASIVE SPECIES DATABASE

FULL ACCOUNT FOR: Citharexylum spinosum

Compiler: National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) & IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group

Review:

Pubblication date: 2006-12-12

ALIEN RANGE

[1] AUSTRALIA [1] FIJI

[1] FRENCH POLYNESIA [1] NEW CALEDONIA

[7] UNITED STATES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

15 references found for Citharexylum spinosum

Managment information

Dhileepan, K. M. Trevi�o, and S. Raghu., 2006. Temporal Patterns in Incidence and Abundance of Aconophora compressa (Hemiptera: Membracidae), a Biological Control Agent for Lantana camara, on Target and Nontarget Plants Environmental Entomology pp. 1001 €1012 Volume 35, Issue 4 (August 2006)

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), 2006. Guidelines for the management of invasive alien plants or potentially invasive alien plants which are intended for import or have been intentionally imported. EPPO Bulletin 36 (3), 417-418. Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). 1999. Citharexylum spinosum. Forest Service. Department of Agriculture.

Summary: This site has brief descriptions and a great distribution section.

Available from: http://www.hear.org/pier/species/citharexylum_spinosum.htm [Accessed 3 December 2006]

Starr, F., Starr, K., & L. Loope. 2003. Citharexylum spinosum. Plants of Hawaii Reports.

Summary: This report is very comprehensive and gives important management information and species details.

Available from: http://www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/reports/html/citharexylum spinosum.htm [Accessed 2 December 2006]

General information

Duguesnel, Iim. 2003. Why fiddlewoods don't fruit in Australia. Aliens-L.

Summary: This e mail provides information about C. spinosum nativity in the Florida keys. [Accessed 6 December 2006]

Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC). 2003. Citharexylum spinosum. University of Florida

Summary: This website provides general characteristics about C. spinosum. Available from:

http://irrecenvhort.ifas.ufl.edu/virtualgarden/infosheets/fiddlewood.htm [Accessed 4 December 2006]

ITIS (Integrated Taxonomic Information System). 2006. Online Database Citharexylum spinosum.

Summary: An online database that provides taxonomic information, common names, synonyms and geographical jurisdiction of a species. In addition links are provided to retrieve biological records and collection information from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Data Portal and bioscience articles from BioOne journals.

Available from: http://www.itis.gov/servlet/SingleRpt/SingleRpt?search_topic=TSN&search_value=32155 [Accessed 20 October 2006] Mcfadyen, Rachel. 2003. Why fiddlewood trees don t fruit in Australia. Aliens-L.

Summary: This email provides some species information and distribution information. [Accessed 6 December 2006]

Smith, C. 1985. Impact of Alien Plants on Hawai Is Native Biota. Botany Department and the National Park Service Cooperative Park Studies Unit of the University of Hawaii at Manoa

Summary: Provides information about habitat and general characteristics.

Available from: http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/faculty/cw_smith/impact.htm [Accessed 6 December 2006]

Smith, C. 1998. Citharexylum spinosum. Hawaiian Alien Plant Studies. University of Hawaii Botany Department.

Summary: Gives general characteristics and habitat information.

Available from: http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/faculty/cw smith/cit spi.htm [Accessed 4 December 2006]

Starr, Forest. 2003. Why fiddlewood trees don't fruit in Australia. Aliens-L.

Summary: This e mail provides some general characteristics and distribution information. [Accessed 6 December 2006]

The State of Queensland. 2006. Ancophora compressa. Department of Natural Resources and Water.

Summary: Provides information about biological control that was released in Australia that inadvertently began to attack fiddlewoods.

Available from: http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/pests/research/aconophora.html [Accessed 3 December 2006]

USDA, ARS, 2005. National Genetic Resources Program. Citharexylum spinosum Germplasm Resources Information Network- (GRIN) [Online Database]. National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland.

Summary: This governmental site has a wealth of distribution information.

Available from: http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/tax_search.pl?Citharexylum%20spinosum [Accessed 5 December 2005] USDA-NRCS. 2006. Citharexylum spinosum The PLANTS Database. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

Summary: This site provides information pertaining to Florida s *C. spinosum* county distribution.

Available from: http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CISP3 [Accessed 2 December 2006]

Wunderlin, R. and B. Hansen. 2006. *Citharexylum spinosum*. Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants. Institute of Systematic Botany. **Summary:** This website gives about 20 synonms for *C. spinosum*.

Available from: http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu/main.asp?plantID=2182 [Accessed 3 December 2006] Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) 2025. Species profile *Citharexylum spinosum*. Available

from: https://iucngisd.org/gisd/species.php?sc=1059 [Accessed 03 November 2025]