Big Island Invasive Species Committee

Priority Invasive Species

Brown Treesnake **Call 911 to report *ALL* snake sightings.**
(*Boiga irregularis*)

- Not known to be present in Hawai'i at this time, but if established here, remaining at-risk native birds might be wiped out.
- At risk is Hawai'i's $15 million poultry industry.
- An economic study by the University of Hawai'i estimates the cost of brown treesnake introduction to Hawai'i at $28,500,000 to $405,000,000 annually. A new study by the USDA National Wildlife Research Center puts the actual cost at $1.7 billion per year.

Little fire ants
(*Wasmannia auropunctata*)

- Delivers a painful sting when disturbed. Welts can last for weeks.
- Infests agricultural fields and farms, where they damage crops and sting workers.
- Promotes plant pests, such as aphids, white flies and scale insects, which secrete plant sap that the ants eat. Ants then protect these insects from natural predators and parasites.
- Can also infest houses, beds, furniture and food.

Red-vented bulbul
(*Pycnonotus cafer*)

- Feeds on fruits, vegetables, flower buds and insects.
- Spreads the seeds of invasive plants.
- Aggressively chases other birds; competes for food and space.

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle
(*Oryctes rhinoceros*)

- Attacks palms and hala.
- Adult beetles bore into palm crown, cutting through developing leaves.
- Causes a V-shaped cut in fronds.

Miconia with underside of leaf (inset)
(*Miconia calvescens*)

- Forms thick stands, shades out native plants.
- Forms an "umbrella" over the watershed, potentially reducing the amount of rainwater that seeps into the soil; shallow root systems promote erosion.
- Seeds spread by birds and animals and by people when contaminated dirt or mud sticks to shoes, clothing, equipment, or vehicles.

Fireweed and flower detail (inset)
(*Senecio madagascariensis*)

- Toxic to livestock when eaten, it causes slow growth, illness, liver malfunction and even death in severe cases.
- Spread by wind, hiking boots, vehicles or by animals when moved from infested to non-infested areas.
- Invades pastures, disturbed areas and roadsides.

Fiddlewood and flower (inset)
(*Citharexylum caudatum*)

- Considered one of Hawaii's most invasive horticulture plants.
- Prolific seeder, spread by birds.
- Displaces existing vegetation in moist forests, valleys and open areas, usuallly inland.

Gorse and flower detail (inset)
(*Ulex europaeus*)

- Spiny shrub that can from dense impenetrable thickets.
- Alters soil conditions by fixing atmospheric nitrogen and acidifies the soil.
- Aggressive plant that displaces other cultivated and native plants.
- Fire hazard.

Wax myrtle with fruit (inset)
(*Morella cerifera*)

- Forms dense weedy thickets known as "hell nests."
- Colonizes native-dominated vegetation and alters nutrient availability.
- Has potential to alter the few remaining lowland forest ecosystems in windward Hawai'i.
- Negatively impacts the native tree 'ōhi'a lehua (*Metrosideros polymorpha*).

Rubbervine
(*Cryptostegia madagascariensis*)

- Grows to 45 ft. high, smothering and killing other vegetation.
- Twines tightly around other plants and restricts their growth.
- Poisonous when eaten by humans and animals. When the vine is dry, a powdery dust emerges and can cause violent coughing, swelling of the nose, and blistering of the eyelids.
- Contact with the plant's milky sap can cause burning rashes and blisters.

Poison Devil's Pepper
(*Rauvolfia vomitoria*)

- Invades gulches, pastures and waterways.
- Has spread into mixed 'ōhi'a forests.
- Potential to become a serious pest in agricultural and natural areas.
- Outcompetes some of the most invasive plant species of tropical forests.

Pampas Grass
(*Cortaderia selloana*); plume inset: (*Cortaderia jubata*)

- Wind spreads pampas grass long distances. In native forests pampas grass out-competes native plants and creates a fire hazard.
- Both species, *C. selloana* and *Cortaderia jubata,* were planted as ornamentals on Maui.

False Kava and close up (inset)
(*Piper auritum*)

- Thick growth and spreading root suckers displace other plants.
- Extremely difficult to control, as root pieces and stems re-grow when cut.
- Grows more than twice as fast and out-completes true kava plants.

Tumbleweed and close up (inset)
(*Salsola tragus*)

- Spiny plants form round bushy clumps.
- With age clumps break off and tumble across the landscape, becoming a road hazard.

Statewide Noxious Invasive Pest Program, State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Highways Division

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