# Maui Invasive Species Committee

# Priority Invasive Species

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

- Not known to be present in Hawai'i at this time, but eight brown treesnakes have been found live or dead in Hawai'i between 1981 and 1998.
- 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. In turn, the ants protect these insects from natural predators and parasites.
- Can also infest houses, beds, furniture and food.

**Coqui Frog**
(*Eleutherodactylus coqui*)

- No natural predators to keep populations in check (and no natural competitors).
- Eat huge quantities of insects, disrupting the balance of vulnerable native ecosystems.
- Loss of insect services such as pollination.
- Potential food source for snakes if they were to arrive and become established.
- Loud, incessant and annoying call from dusk until dawn.
- Adverse economic impacts on tourism.
- Decreased export plant sales.
- Disclosure requirement for real estate transactions has decreased some property values.

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

- The wind spreads pampas grass long distances. In native forests pampas grass out-competes native plants and creates a fire hazard.
- *C. selloana* requires cross-pollination between male and female plants to produce viable seeds, spread primarily by wind.
- Both species of pampas grass, *C. selloana* and *Cortaderia jubata,* were planted as ornamentals on Maui.

**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.

**Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA)**
(*Solenopsis invicta*)

- Not known to be present in Hawaii at this time, but could easily arrive hidden in cargo or infested mail parcels.
- "Super colonies" form nests in yards, parks, golf courses and pastures.
- RIFA have attacked and blinded or killed cattle, domesticated animals, and wild animals.
- Fire ant stings on humans may result in injury or death.
- Causes serious damage to crops.
- Infests electrical equipment, causing damage to traffic signal boxes, air conditioners and sprinkler systems.

**Ivy Gourd and leaf detail with flowers (inset)**
(*Coccinia grandis*)

- Vines grow over and smother vegetation, and cover fences and power lines.
- Threatens natural and managed areas.
- Difficult to control because plants regrow from deep roots, even after treating with herbicide.
- Although ivy gourd requires cross-pollination between male and female plants, it is able to spread quickly and can grow up to four inches per day.

**Fountain Grass and seed head (inset)**
(*Pennisetum setaceum*)

- Quickly out-competes plants for resources, such as water and space.
- Poor pasture grass; degrades the quality of pasturelands, particularly in drier areas.
- Dry fountain grass is an excellent fuel for brush fires.

**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.

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

- Forms thick stands, shades out native plants and takes over moist and wet forests.
- Shallow root systems promote erosion.
- Sand-grained sized seeds easily spread by birds and other animals when they eat the fruit.
- Seeds also spread by people when contaminated dirt or mud sticks to shoes, clothing, equipment, or vehicles.

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

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