**Citharexylum spinosum**

**System:** Terrestrial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kingdom</th>
<th>Phylum</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plantae</td>
<td>Magnoliophyta</td>
<td>Magnoliopsida</td>
<td>Lamiales</td>
<td>Verbenaceae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common name**

spiny fiddlewood (English), Florida fiddlewood (English), fiddlewood (English), masese (Fijian, Fiji)

**Synonym**

*Citharexylum albicaule*, Turcz.
*Citharexylum bahamense*, Millsp. Ex Britton
*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
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L.
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L. var. *smallii* Moldenke
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L. forma *sub serratum* (Sw.) Moldenke
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L. forma *bahamense* (Millsp. Ex. Britton)
Moldenke
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L. var. *brittonii* Moldenke
*Citharexylum fruticosum*, L. var. *sub serratum* (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 *sub serratum* (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.
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. (Starr *et 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 Caribbean 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 *et 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). *C. 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

Preventative measures: A Risk Assessment of *Citharexylum spinosum* 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 et al, 2003).

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

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

Biological: A treehopper *Aconophora compressa* was released in 1995 in Australia for control of *Lantana camara*, 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).


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

Review:

Publication 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*

Management information


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.


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


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


General information
Duquesnel, Jim. 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]


McFadyen, Rachel. 2003. Why fiddlewood trees don’t fruit in Australia. Aliens-L. Summary: This e-mail provides some species information and distribution information. [Accessed 6 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]


