

*Tradescantia spathacea*  [简体中文](#) [正體中文](#)

**System:** Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Liliopsida	Commelinales	Commelinaceae

**Common name** riri raei (English, Cook Islands), moses in a boat (English), riri mangio (English, Cook Islands), oyster plant (English), boat lily (English), Moses-in-a-basket (English, Hawaii), talotalo, laupapaki (English, Niue), faina kula (English, Tonga), boat plant (English)

**Synonym** *Rhoeo discolor* , Hance ex Walp  
*Rhoeo spathacea* , (Sw.) Stear  
*Tradescantia discolor* , L'Hér.  
*Rhoeo spathacea* , (Sw.) Stearn  
*Rhoeo spathacea* , (Sw.) Stearn forma *concolor* (Baker) Stehle  
*Rhoeo spathacea* , (Sw.) Stearn forma *variegata*(Hook) Stehle  
*Tradescantia discolor* , L'Hér. var. *concolor* Baker  
*Tradescantia discolor* , L'Hér. var. *variegata* Hook.  
*Tradescantia discolor* , L'Hér.  
*Rhoeo discolor* , (L'Hér.) Hance

## Similar species

**Summary** *Tradescantia spathacea* is a beautiful succulent that has been introduced to south Asia and many Pacific Islands from its native range in the tropical Americas. Although it has not yet been declared a pest, in many areas it has become a very invasive weed, especially in Florida where it invades and disrupts native plant communities. *Tradescantia spathacea* creates a dense groundcover on the forest floor which prevents native plants from germinating. *Tradescantia spathacea* has diverse reproductive methods and grows in areas other plants cannot. These two characteristics make this plant a potential danger to many areas. Monitoring is recommended wherever this species is present.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)

## Species Description

"Rosette-forming succulent herb, stems short, leaves crowded, elongate, broadly linear-lanceolate, up to 30-40cm long and 4-6cm wide, the upper surface green, the lower surface rich reddish-purple; inflorescence axillary, short; bracts subsessile, boat-shaped; flowers white; petals 3; stamens 6, ovary 3-celled, cells 1-ovulate; fruit capsular 3-valved; seeds rugose" (Stone, 1970. in PIER, 2002).

## Notes

Widely planted as an ornamental, often in cemeteries (PIER, 2002). The sap may cause brief stinging and itching of the skin to some people, and when eaten, oysterplant will cause severe burning pain in the mouth and throat. Relatively tolerant of the allelopathic chemicals (compounds that prevent other plants from growing) put out by Australian pine (Floridata.com).

## Uses

Primarily grown for bedding, rock gardens, and tropical effects. The reddening effect of the irritating juice has been used for cheek colouring also, (Floridata.com). The flower is used medicinally for the treatment of dysentery, enterorrhagia and hemoptysis (Brach).

## Habitat Description

Prefers well-drained sites and will grow well on rocks (PIER, 2002). Although it likes soil with substantial organic matter, oysterplant will grow in sand or even coral rock (Floridata.com). It is drought resistant, Likes shade and will invade the forest understory (PIER, 2002).

## Reproduction

*T. spathacea* can reproduce by seeds, cuttings, and discarded plants (PIER, 2002). Broken pieces will resprout easily (Floridata.com). *Tradescantia spathacea* flowers all year round, and is pollinated by insects, or self-pollinated (Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, 2000).

## General Impacts

Can create a dense groundcover that prevents native plants from germinating on the forest floor. (Floridata.com)

## Management Info

Preventative measures: Plant cuttings should not be dumped anywhere as this is a frequent source of new weed infestations. The origin of new top soil or fill should be checked as physical transportation of plant segments in soil is a major method of spread.

**Principal source:** [Pacific Island Ecosystem at Risk \(PIER\)](#),  
[Floridata.com L.C. Copyright 1996 - 2002](#)

**Compiler:** IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)

**Review:** Anon

**Pubblcation date:** 2006-03-23

## ALIEN RANGE

<b>[1]</b> AMERICAN SAMOA	<b>[1]</b> AUSTRALIA
<b>[1]</b> BERMUDA	<b>[1]</b> BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY
<b>[3]</b> CAYMAN ISLANDS	<b>[1]</b> CHINA
<b>[8]</b> COOK ISLANDS	<b>[1]</b> FIJI
<b>[1]</b> FRENCH POLYNESIA	<b>[1]</b> GUAM
<b>[1]</b> HONG KONG	<b>[1]</b> JAPAN
<b>[1]</b> KENYA	<b>[2]</b> KIRIBATI
<b>[8]</b> MARSHALL ISLANDS	<b>[7]</b> MICRONESIA, FEDERATED STATES OF
<b>[1]</b> NAURU	<b>[1]</b> NEW CALEDONIA
<b>[1]</b> NIUE	<b>[1]</b> NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
<b>[3]</b> PALAU	<b>[1]</b> REUNION
<b>[1]</b> SAINT LUCIA	<b>[2]</b> SAMOA
<b>[1]</b> TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF	<b>[6]</b> TONGA
<b>[1]</b> TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS	<b>[3]</b> UNITED STATES
<b>[1]</b> UNITED STATES MINOR OUTLYING ISLANDS	

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) 2025. Species profile *Tradescantia spathacea*. Available from: <https://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/species.php?sc=493> [Accessed 25 August 2025]

## 15 references found for *Tradescantia spathacea*

### Management information

[PIER \(Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk\), 2002. \*Tradescantia spathacea\*.](#)

**Summary:** Ecology, synonyms, common names, distributions (Pacific as well as global), management and impact information.  
Available from: [http://www.hear.org/pier/species/tradescantia\\_spathacea.htm](http://www.hear.org/pier/species/tradescantia_spathacea.htm) [Accessed 25 February 2003].

[Varnham, K. 2006. Non-native species in UK Overseas Territories: a review. JNCC Report 372. Peterborough: United Kingdom.](#)

**Summary:** This database compiles information on alien species from British Overseas Territories.  
Available from: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3660> [Accessed 10 November 2009]

### General information

[Brach, Anthony R. \*Tradescantia spathacea\*. Flora of China.](#)

**Summary:** Description, Distribution and uses of the plant.

Available from: [http://flora.huh.harvard.edu:8080/flora/browse.do?flora\\_id=1&taxon\\_id=222000433](http://flora.huh.harvard.edu:8080/flora/browse.do?flora_id=1&taxon_id=222000433) [Accessed on 25 February 2003].

[Conservatoire Botanique National De Mascarin \(BOULLET V. coord.\) 2007. - \*Tradescantia spathacea\* Index de la flore vasculaire de la Réunion \(Trachophytes\) : statuts, menaces et protections. - Version 2007.1](#)

**Summary:** Base de données sur la flore de la Réunion. De nombreuses informations très utiles.

Available from: <http://flore.cbnm.org/index2.php?page=taxon&num=94cb02feb750f20bad8a85dfe7e18d11> [Accessed 9 April 2008]

Evans TM, Faden RB, Simpson MG and Sytsma KJ, 2000. Phylogenetic relationships in the Commelinaceae: I. A Cladistic analysis of morphological data. Systematic Botany, 25: 668-691.

[Factsheet, 2000. \*Rhoeo spathacea\* Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida.](#)

**Summary:** Description, Ecology, History, and Distribution.

Available from: <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/rhospa.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2003].

Faden RB, 1985. Commelinaceae. In: Dahlgren RMT, Clifford HT, Yeo PF, eds. The Families of the Monocotyledons. Berlin, Germany: Springer Verlag.

Faden RB, 1988. Commelinaceae. In: Kubitzki K, ed. The Families and Genera of Vascular Plants, Vol. 4. Berlin, Germany: Springer Verlag, 109-128.

Faden RB, Hunt DR, 1991. The classification of the Commelinaceae. Taxon, 40: 19-31.

[Floridata.com L.C. Copyright 1996 - 2002.](#)

**Summary:** Good amount of information on the Spathodea including Description, Locations, Culture, and uses of the plant.

Available from: [http://www.floridata.com/ref/s/spat\\_cam.cfm](http://www.floridata.com/ref/s/spat_cam.cfm) [Accessed 25 February 2003]

Hofer, Daniel, 18 April 2007. Pers.comm., Invasive in Africa: *Tradescantia spathacea*

[ITIS \(Integrated Taxonomic Information System\), 2005. Online Database \*Tradescantia spathacea\*](#)

**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.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxastep?king=every&p\\_action=containing&taxa=Tradescantia+spathacea&p\\_format=&p\\_ifx=plgt&p\\_lang=">](http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxastep?king=every&p_action=containing&taxa=Tradescantia+spathacea&p_format=&p_ifx=plgt&p_lang=) = [Accessed March 2005]

[Langeland, K.A. and Burks, K. C \(Eds\) 1998. Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas, University of Florida. \*Tradescantia spathacea\*](#)

**Summary:** Information on plants that pose threats to natural resource areas in Florida.

Available from: [http://www.fleppc.org/ID\\_book/Rhoeo%20spathacea.pdf](http://www.fleppc.org/ID_book/Rhoeo%20spathacea.pdf) [Accessed 30 December 2004]

[Meyer, J.-Y. 2000. Invasive plants in the Pacific Islands. In: The Invasive Species in the Pacific: A Technical Review and Draft Regional Strategy. Sherley, G. \(tech. ed\). Published in June 2000 by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme \(SPREP\).](#)

**Summary:** Resource that includes the distribution of invasive species throughout the Pacific Islands.

Research Institute for Bioresources, Okayama University. Plant List: Naturalized plants from foreign country into Japan.

**Summary:** Includes list of naturalised plants in Japan.

Available from: [http://www.rib.okayama-u.ac.jp/wild/kika/kika\\_table.htm](http://www.rib.okayama-u.ac.jp/wild/kika/kika_table.htm)