

Tibouchina herbacea

Cane tibouchina

Tibouchina herbacea (DC) Cogn.

Family: Melastomataceae

Description: Semiwoody upright shrub to 9 ft tall. Young stems angled, hairy. Leaves opposite, 3 inches long by 1.4 inches wide, hairy, 5–7 prominent veins. Flowers pink, 4 petals, bright yellow anthers. Fruit cup-like, small, 0.2 inches long by 0.2 inches wide. Seeds very small, numerous. Generic name from native Guiana name; *herbacia*, nonwoody^(5, 70).

Distribution: Heavy infestations on Maui. Occurs in northern Ko‘olau range on O‘ahu and on Moloka‘i and Lana‘i, in Hilo including lower Saddle Road on Hawai‘i. Native to Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Recent introduction, first collected in 1977⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Environmental impact: Prolific seeder, spread by birds. Forms dense stands in pastures and disturbed forest sites. Displaces native species.



Management: Patty Welton (Haleakala National Park) reported application of undiluted triclopyr ester to the stem base provided 100% kill. Pat Bily (TNC) reported triclopyr amine effective in foliar sprays with a surfactant and in cut-stump treatments. Based on work with other melastomes, probably sensitive to 2,4-D, dicamba, triclopyr, and metsulfuron. HAVO staff reported control with foliar application of glyphosate at 2% product in water (Chris Zimmer, HAVO).