



Distribution of albizia on the island of Hawaii (above). The trees are most readily identified as those forming the "tree tunnel" near Lava Tree State Park (below).



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ALBIZIA

THE TREE THAT ATE PUNA

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(*Falcataria moluccana*; synonyms *Albizia falcataria*, *Paraserianthes falcataria*)
 Twig with fruits (above), flowers (upper right)

Albizia is a fast growing tree that is invasive (weedy) in native `ohi`a forests as well as on land disturbed by human activities. Albizia causes `ohi`a to die off, and makes the environment more favorable for other invasive species (clidemia, guava, and possibly miconia and the coqui frog).

Because of their brittle wood and weak structure, large albizia trees pose a hazard to nearby infrastructure. Strong winds can cause large limbs to drop onto whatever may be underneath, potentially causing costly damage to homes and power lines.

Albizia grows at a rapid rate. Trees can reach heights of more than 20 feet in their first year, 45 feet in their third year, and 60 feet by the end of their tenth year. The crown of an albizia tree is broad, capable of shading over half an acre.

What you can do:

- ❖ Leave the natural vegetation untouched—don't bulldoze—until you are ready to utilize the land. Albizia grows rapidly in bulldozed areas
- ❖ Eliminate albizia seedlings and small trees before they become a problem.
- ❖ Deal responsibly with "hazard trees." Trees that are posing a hazard to infrastructure should be removed professionally.

Methods of control:

- ❖ For medium-sized to large trees, and any trees near infrastructure, contact an arborist for free consultation to determine the safest and most effective course of action to remove the tree. An arborist will help you determine when professional removal is necessary.
- ❖ Fell saplings and young trees and apply herbicide to cut stumps immediately. Triclopyr amine is effective at concentrations of 7-10%. Before applying any pesticide, applicators must determine that the product under consideration is correct for the intended use site according to the label on the container or package.

For more information, read "Woody Plant Control for the Home, Pasture and Forest," by Philip Motooka and others; this and other University of Hawaii publications are available at <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/ctahr2001/PIO/FreePubs> [click "Weed Control"] or from the Komohana Agricultural Complex at 875 Komohana Street, Hilo, HI 96720, Phone (808) 981-5199.



Above: The crown of a mature albizia forms a wide canopy with a distinctive shape.



NOTE: Registrations of pesticides are under constant review by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. Use only pesticides that bear the EPA registration number and carry directions for home and garden use. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the labels. When applying a pesticide it is advisable that you be fully clothed. If the pesticide is spilled on your skin or clothing, remove clothing immediately and wash skin thoroughly. Dispose of empty pesticide containers by wrapping them in several layers of newspaper and placing them in your trash can.