Invasive Species Fact Sheet

Pacific Islands Area

Candle bush (Senna alata)

Scientific name & Code: ***Senna alata*** L. Roxb., **SEAL4**
Synonyms – *Cassia alata* L.*, Herpetica alata* (L.) Raf.

Family: Fabaceae – Pea Family

Duration/Growth Habit: Perennial Tree/Subshrub

Common names: English – candle bush, candelabra plant, candlestick senna, emperor's candlesticks, golden candelabra tree, ringworm bush, Roman candle tree
Chamorro – Acapulco, akapuku, andadose, candalaria, take-biha

Origin: Northern South America. Introduced to Hawaii prior to 1871.

Description: Coarse, erect shrub 3-5 m tall. Leaves pinnate, 50-80 cm long with 8-14 pairs of large leaflets (largest at the farthest end) up to 17 cm long, ovate-oblong, truncate or slightly notched at end. Inflorescence a long pedunculate erect, dense, oblong spike 10-50 cm, the yellow flowers (about 2.5 cm diameter) crowded and overlapping. Legume (pod) ripening black, straight, papery, winged on the angles 15-20 cm long x 1 cm wide. Seeds numerous (60) and flat.

Propagation: Seeds: pods and seeds distributed by water or animals. Can also sucker from roots.

Distribution: Identified in Hawaii (Kaua'i, Lana'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu), Guam, CNMI (Agrigan, Rota, Saipan, Tinian), Chuuk, Kosrae, American Samoa, Pohnpei, Yap, Palau (main island group)

Habitat/Ecology: Invades forests, forest edges, humid ravines, riverbanks, woodlands and grasslands. Forms extensive root systems in the first year and competes for space and nutrients. Not a Nitrogen fixing plant. The short-lived shrub grows best in sunny locations on most soils from sea level to 850 feet elevation.

Environmental impact: Forms dense thickets; the large leaves shade out most native plants. Particularly aggressive in areas where there is a high water table.

Management: Physical – Usually ineffective because of suckering. Seedlings may be dug out provided all roots are removed.

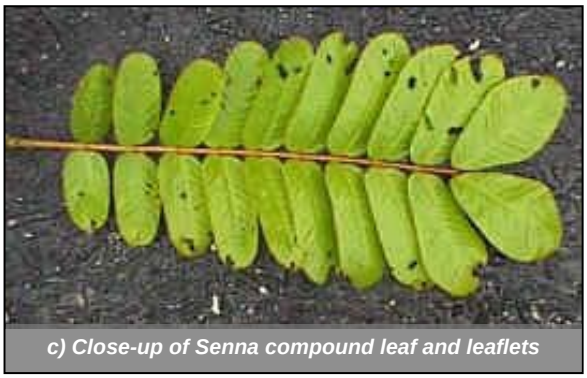
Chemical – Susceptible to triclopyr, picloram, and 2,4-D. Slash aerial growth close to the ground and apply picloram + 2,4-D to the cut surfaces immediately.

Biological – The potential for biological control has not been evaluated.

PIER Risk Assessment: High Risk, score: 10

a) Senna leaves & flowers – subshub form

b) Senna leaves and flower stalks



c) Close-up of Senna compound leaf and leaflets

d) Close-up of Senna flower spike

e) Senna seeds

Header: Public Domain
Photos a,& d: © G.A. Cooper @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
Photo b: © Jim Space, U.S. Forest Service
Photo c: © Dana Lee Ling, College of Micronesia
Photo e: © Tracey Slotta @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

For More Information:

Please contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, listed in phone directories under U.S. Government, or visit our Web site at: http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov. USDA NRCS is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.