Subject: Maui Melastomes
Date: Mon, 26 Aug 2002 13:22:08 -1000
From: Forest Starr <fstarr@hawaii.edu>
To: "Philip Thomas (HEAR)" <pt@hear.org>

Aloha Philip,

Here's the latest on some of the Maui melastomes.

Forest & Kim

[ed. NOTE: only one ID confirmed now; all specimens will be sent to Bishop Museum.]

MAUI MELASTOMES
There are more species of Melastomes here than we previously realized. The Tibouchina / Melastoma complex is an interesting case in point. We originally thought all Tibouchina like melastomes on Maui that weren't T. urvilleana or T. herbacea were Melastoma candidum. We now think we probably also have T. granulosa, T. multiflora, T. longifolia, and M. sanguineum on Maui. These are all state noxious weeds (Tibouchina spp. and Melastoma spp.). Some of these are known to be weeds elsewhere (T. longifolia and M. sanguineum). Others (T. granulosa and T. multiflora) don't appear to have a history of being invasive elsewhere. The question that has arisen from MISC is this, do we control all of these listed melastomes, even if some lack a clear history of invasion? The same question apparently arose with Medinilla on the big island.

MORE ON MELASTOMES -- BIOCONTROL
We were recently on the Hana Hwy. with Mach looking at the biocontrols of some of the Melastomes. It appears the Clidemia beetle (Lius poseidon) has jumped to Tibouchina herbacea, and perhaps T. urvilleana. Pat Conant apparently recently documented the same thing occurring on the big island (it seems host testing before release was not done well enough to predict this). There is also a lep Mach is now rearing that is doing serious tip damage to T. urvilleana (just on the Hana Hwy., not in Kula). The current thinking is that it is either a Melastoma agent that somehow made it to Maui, or it is something new.