

On Friday, March 2, 2007, the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) will host a free public lecture about miconia in East Maui. The lecture will take place at the Hāna Public Library at 6:00 p.m. Join MISC staff and partners as they explain the threat of miconia, its current status and MISC's operations to control the pest.

Miconia was first introduced to Maui in the 1960's as an ornamental plant in Hāna, then quickly spread to the surrounding forests. By 1993, one plant had multiplied into thousands, distributed over a 2,000-acre area. Alarmed by miconia's potential to overwhelm available resources, conservation agencies pulled together and formed the Maui Invasive Species Committee, a voluntary partnership to protect Maui County from invasive plants and animals. Over the years, MISC's focus broadened to include many other invasive species, but miconia continues to be the top priority plant target. MISC now has a full-time crew searching for and destroying miconia over thousands of acres in East Maui.

Miconia is a serious threat to Maui. If left uncontrolled, miconia shades out other plants in native forests, pastures, and farmlands, causing increased erosion and degradation of Maui's healthy watersheds. The rapid spread of miconia in East Maui has been aided by unintentional movement of these tiny seeds, as small as a grain of sand. Birds, hunters, hikers, vehicles, and even the movement of other plants, can bring miconia to new areas. It is illegal to transport the plant and it is on Hawai'i's State Noxious Weeds list.

You can learn more about miconia and how to prevent its spread at this free public lecture. If you know of a miconia location or have questions about the lecture, please contact MISC Public Relations & Education Specialist, Joylynn Paman at 573-MISC (6472) or e-mail her at miscpr@hawaii.edu.

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