

# Trained eye spots 'bingabing,' stems species' invasion

**Public urged to be aware so similar good deeds can be done**

MISC crew leader **Darrell Aquino** holds a leaf of the *Macaranga mappa*, commonly known as "bingabing."

## Kia'i Moku

By Joylynn Paman



While visiting a friend in Ha'ikū last April, Darrell Aquino

ally seeded by plane after a large fire swept through the area.

Today, it is naturalized at low elevations on the Big Island and O'ahu and thrives along roadsides, gulches and in disturbed forest areas.

Unfortunately for the Big Island and O'ahu, bingabing has become widely established in the moist windward areas.

Maui is fortunate in that only two plants have been found to date. Both were being cultivated ornamentally – one in Olinda and one in Ha'ikū. Both plants were brought in from the Big Island.

Thanks to the keen eye of MISC crew members and partners, action to control both plants was taken immediately.

The landowners were cooperative and allowed MISC to remove the invasive plants. Since then, no other plants have been found.

A related species, *Macaranga tanarius*, or parasol tree, has smaller leaves but can be just as aggressive. MISC is working to stop the spread of *M. tanarius* on East Maui.

With early detection, we can prevent the introduction and establishment of bingabing within Maui County and avoid having our forests and roadsides overtaken by this pest as has happened on neighboring islands.

If you discover a bingabing location, report it to the Maui Invasive Species Committee at 573-MISC (6472).

Do not plant this pest in your garden. Instead, plant alternative species that are non-invasive and better yet, go native. Do not purchase bingabing plants or seeds.

Look for bingabing along the roadside near Hilo the next time you're on the Big

had no idea that recent training about the early detection of new invasive species would come into play so quickly - but it did.

Just days after the training, the crew leader from the Maui Invasive Species Committee stumbled upon a new pest that he immediately recognized. It had huge wavy leaves and it towered over his friend's driveway.

The plant was *Macaranga mappa*, commonly known as "bingabing."

Bingabing grows 15 to 30 feet tall, like a large column, and sports pink flower clusters when in bloom. This species produces a dense growth of very large oval leaves that average two to three feet long. The stem is attached to the underside of the leaf, like an offset umbrella built by nature.

Native to the Philippines, the large leaves were used as plates and napkins during public feasts, explaining the origin of the Latin word, *mappa*, meaning table napkin.

Bingabing is considered invasive because its leaves crowd and shade out other vegetation. Research has shown that areas dominated by bingabing also have less soil water available.

This pest found its way to Hawai'i as an ornamental plant as early as the mid-1920s. It has been used in reforestation projects on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Hawai'i. In Hilo, bingabing was aeri-



**Bingabing** grows 15 to 30 feet tall, like a large column, and sports pink flower clusters when in bloom. It produces a dense growth of oval leaves that average 2 to 3 feet in length. The picture above was taken in Hilo, where it is a widely established pest.

Island to learn what it looks like. Help stop the spread of invasive species and do your part to keep Maui nō ka 'oi.

For more information on bingabing and other pests affecting Maui County, visit [www.mauiisc.org](http://www.mauiisc.org).

• "Kia'i Moku" (or "Guarding the Island") is prepared by the Maui Invasive Species Committee to provide information on protecting the island from invasive plants and animals that can threaten the island's environment, economy and quality of life. Joylynn Paman, is public relations and education specialist with the MISC.