**Family:** Malvaceae  
**Taxon:** Hibiscus syriacus  
**Synonym:** rose of Sharon, shrub-althaea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Assessor: Chuck Chimera</th>
<th>Data Entry Person: Chuck Chimera</th>
<th>Designation: EVALUATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Is the species highly domesticated?</td>
<td>y=3, n=0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Has the species become naturalized where grown?</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Does the species have weedy races?</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

201 **Species suited to tropical or subtropical climate(s) - If island is primarily wet habitat, then substitute "wet tropical" for "tropical or subtropical"**  
202 **Quality of climate match data**  
203 **Broad climate suitability (environmental versatility)**  
204 **Native or naturalized in regions with tropical or subtropical climates**  
205 **Does the species have a history of repeated introductions outside its natural range?**  
206 **Naturalized beyond native range**  
207 **Garden/amenity/disturbance weed**  
208 **Agricultural/forestry/horticultural weed**  
209 **Environmental weed**  
2010 **Congeneric weed**  
2011 **Produces spines, thorns or burrs**  
2012 **Allelopathic**  
2013 **Parasitic**  
2014 **Unpalatable to grazing animals**  
2015 **Toxic to animals**  
2016 **Host for recognized pests and pathogens**  
2017 **Causes allergies or is otherwise toxic to humans**  
2018 **Creates a fire hazard in natural ecosystems**  
2019 **Is a shade tolerant plant at some stage of its life cycle**  
2020 **Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions (or limestone conditions if not a volcanic island)**  
2021 **Climbing or smothering growth habit**

**WRA Score:** 5

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Print Date: 6/8/2010  
*Hibiscus syriacus (Malvaceae)*  
Page 1 of 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>y, n, m</th>
<th>Designation:</th>
<th>WRA Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>412</td>
<td>Forms dense thickets</td>
<td>y=1, n=0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501</td>
<td>Aquatic</td>
<td>y=5, n=0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>y=1, n=0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>503</td>
<td>Nitrogen fixing woody plant</td>
<td>y=1, n=0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>Geophyte (herbaceous with underground storage organs -- bulbs, corms, or tubers)</td>
<td>y=1, n=0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>601</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial reproductive failure in native habitat</td>
<td>y=1, n=0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>602</td>
<td>Produces viable seed</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>603</td>
<td>Hybridizes naturally</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>604</td>
<td>Self-compatible or apomictic</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>605</td>
<td>Requires specialist pollinators</td>
<td>y=-1, n=0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>606</td>
<td>Reproduction by vegetative fragmentation</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>607</td>
<td>Minimum generative time (years)</td>
<td>1 year = 1, 2 or 3 years = 0, 4+ years = -1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>Propagules likely to be dispersed unintentionally (plants growing in heavily trafficked areas)</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>702</td>
<td>Propagules dispersed intentionally by people</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>703</td>
<td>Propagules likely to disperse as a produce contaminant</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>704</td>
<td>Propagules adapted to wind dispersal</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>705</td>
<td>Propagules water dispersed</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>706</td>
<td>Propagules bird dispersed</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>707</td>
<td>Propagules dispersed by other animals (externally)</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>708</td>
<td>Propagules survive passage through the gut</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801</td>
<td>Prolific seed production (&gt;1000/m2)</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>802</td>
<td>Evidence that a persistent propagule bank is formed (&gt;1 yr)</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>803</td>
<td>Well controlled by herbicides</td>
<td>y=-1, n=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>804</td>
<td>Tolerates, or benefits from, mutilation, cultivation, or fire</td>
<td>y=1, n=-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>805</td>
<td>Effective natural enemies present locally (e.g. introduced biocontrol agents)</td>
<td>y=-1, n=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Designation:** EVALUATE  
**WRA Score:** 5
Supporting Data:


It has been cultivated in China, Japan, and Korea since antiquity, and is the national flower of Korea.


green to brown, ornamentallv unattractive five-valved dehiscent capsules are persistent throughout much of the Winter on older cultivars; most modern cultivars are virtually fruitless [certain cultivars can be sterile]


widely naturalized


Invasive Shrub: Hibiscus syriacus - Rose of Sharon; Current Invaded Range: New York to Missouri, south to Georgia and Texas, Utah. Native Alternatives: Scarlet Mallow (Hibiscus coccineus) [considered invasive in Virginia]


Although Linnaeus thought this species was native to the Palestine area, H. syriacus is actually native to temperate China. [temperate species, cultivated in Hawaii]


Habitat: zones 5 to 8; native to China and India


Hardiness: USDA Zones 5-8


Hardiness: USDA Zone 5a: to -28.8 °C (-20 °F) USDA Zone 5b: to -26.1 °C (-15 °F) USDA Zone 6a: to -23.3 °C (-10 °F) USDA Zone 6b: to -20.5 °C (-5 °F) USDA Zone 7a: to -17.7 °C (0 °F) USDA Zone 7b: to -14.9 °C (5 °F) USDA Zone 8a: to -12.2 °C (10 °F) USDA Zone 8b: to -9.4 °C (15 °F) USDA Zone 9a: to -6.6 °C (20 °F)


No records of naturalization in the Hawaiian Islands

204 2010. WRA Specialist. Personal Communication.


widely cultivated


naturalized from Asia.


Locally naturalized in S. Europe. [Tennessee]


Hibiscus syriacus is a large shrub or small tree, attaining a height of 4 meters or more, that is native to Asia. This species is naturalized in scattered locations across Arkansas and over much of the eastern US.


Category 3 – A minor exotic plant problem in Georgia natural areas, or not yet known to be a problem in Georgia, but known to be a problem in adjacent states. [list includes H. syriacus]
Many of the most successful alien plants in the New York metropolitan area, such as Ampelopsis brevipedunculata (Maxim.) Trautv., Elaeagnus umbellata Thunb., and C. orbiculata Thunb., have been introduced and cultivated for horticultural purposes. However, not all well known ornamental plants have increased in range, such as Hibiscus syriacus L. and Ligustrum vulgare L. These species continue to be cultivated and, despite widespread horticultural introductions, have decreased in range. [H. syriacus decreasing in range]

This exotic species seeds itself aggressively; therefore, it is unacceptable to meet long term landscaping needs.

It grows in full sun to light shade and invades waste areas, disturbed ground, forest, and forest edges. It prefers a well-drained humus rich fertile soil within USDA zones 5-10.

A weed of disturbed sites [no evidence as a weed of agriculture or forestry]

Ecological Impacts: It has escaped intended plantings to invade, crowd out and displace more desirable native plants. [but primarily a nuisance weed of disturbance. See 3.02]

Disturbed areas, riparian habitats and Eucalyptus savanna. A native of Africa it is now widespread in most tropical countries. Naturalised from Darwin to the Katherine region and across the north of Western Australia. It is not particularly invasive in Queensland as yet. Seed is dispersed when eaten by birds and animals and expelled. Spread intentional as a cultivated ornamental and food plant. Competes with native species.

No spines, thorns or burrs

No evidence of allelopathy [although H. syriacus seeds were tested to evaluate allelopathic effects on them]

Not parasitic

0% of foliage browsed by white-tailed deer

Table 1. Ornamentals found to be browsed little or not at all by white-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus) in a landscape nursery study conducted in Connecticut. [includes H. syriacus]

This plant is not bothered by rabbits, squirrels or deer.
405 2010. USDA Forest Service. Weed of the Week - Rose of Sharon. USDA Forest Service, Newton Square

Hibiscus syriacus - Rose-of-Sharon. Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
http://hort.ufl.edu/trees/HIBSYRA.pdf

406 Although usually strong and easy to grow, hibiscus can be bothered by aphids which accumulate at the tips of stems, causing new growth to be misshapen. Aphids may cover the leaves with sticky honeydew. The insects can be dislodged with high pressure water sprays from the garden hose or controlled by pinching off the part of the twig with the insects. Over-fertilizing increases aphid infestations. In northern gardens, Japanese beetles are particularly fond of the flowers. Diseases if leaf spots are seen, pick off and destroy the infected leaves. If bacterial leaf spot causes problems, pick off and destroy infected leaves. Canker can kill branches or entire plants. Bright, reddish-orange fruiting bodies may appear on the bark. Prune out infected branches. Flowers may be infected with a blight caused by a fungus. Bud drop can be caused by too much or too little water or over fertilization.


406 Numerous chewing and sucking insects attack the foliage, including scale, mealybugs, thrips, aphids, caterpillars and Chinese rose beetles; these can be controlled with the appropriate insecticides.


407 Known Hazards: None Known...Edible Parts: Flowers; Leaves; Root. Edible Uses: Tea. [no evidence of toxicity or allergenic properties]


408 Recommended for fire prone areas [apparently does not create a fire hazard]


409 Light: best in full sun


409 easy to cultivate, requiring full sun

409 Plants prefer exposure to several hours of direct sun per day, however, will survive and grow under conditions of increased levels of shade.

http://www.hsu.edu/default.aspx?id=6352

410 Grows in any soil, except those that are extremely dry or wet. Quite pH adaptable.


410 prefers moist, well-drained soils supplemented with organic matter in full sun, but is very adaptable to various soils, soil pHs, soil compaction, drought, heavy pruning, and pollution (and is therefore urban tolerant)


411 Erect shrub or treelike usually 6-12 feet tall [not climbing or smothering]

412 2010. USDA Forest Service. Weed of the Week - Rose of Sharon. USDA Forest Service, Newton Square

412 No evidence that H. syriacus forms dense thickets


501 Terrestrial


502 Malvaceae


602 2009. Harrison, M.. Flowering Shrubs and Small Trees for the South. Pineapple Press Inc, Sarasota, FL Some altheas were introduced by the National Arboretum during the '60s and '70s that are sterile triploids. They have larger flowers that bloom earlier than the species, and they set no seeds [this assessment is for species, and not sterile cultivars]

602 2010. The Ohio State University. Hibiscus syriacus. http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TCM/Plantlist/hi_syracus.html propagated primarily by rooted stem cuttings, but also by seeds

603 2004. Eeckhaut, T.G.R./Van Huylenbroeck, J.M./De Riek, J./Van Bockstaele, E.. Interspecific Hybridization Between Hibiscus syriacus L. and Hibiscus paramutabilis Bailey. Acta Horticulturae. 630: 85-90. Different Hibiscus syriacus L. cultivars (diploid ‘Melwhite’ and ‘Oiseau Bleu’ and tetraploid ‘Red Heart cv’ and ‘Purple cv’) were used in a breeding program with Hibiscus paramutabilis Bailey. Compared to Hibiscus syriacus, a well-known winter hardy ornamental shrub, Hibiscus paramutabilis grows more vigorously, with larger leaves and flowers. When used as a seed parent, H. paramutabilis failed to set fruits. However, when pollinated by H. paramutabilis, H.s. ‘Oiseau Bleu’ and H.s. ‘Red Heart cv’ reacted by fruit setting. Fruits containing swollen (=fertilized) ovules were not observed on H.s. ‘Melwhite’ or H.s. ‘Purple cv’. After putting the isolated embryos in vitro 5 H.s. ‘Red Heart cv’ x H. paramutabilis embryos and 7 H.s. ‘Oiseau Bleu’ x H. paramutabilis embryos could be converted. Respectively 1 and 6 plants were acclimatized and put in soil; they grew vigorously and leaves of all showed strong morphological similarities with H. paramutabilis. Ploidy analysis of these potential hybrids revealed that the H.s. ‘Red Heart cv’ offspring was triploid, as was expected. AFLP analysis confirmed the hybrid character of all tested seedlings. [unknown if natural hybrids can form]


605 2008. Plants for a Future Database. Hibiscus syriacus. Plants for a Future Database, http://www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Hibiscus+syriacus The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects.

606 2010. Dave's Garden. PlantFiles: Rose of Sharon, Althea. Dave's Garden, http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/788/ Where I live in Middle Tennessee this is an extremely invasive plant. It has come under my concrete patio and asphalt driveway and sent up tough, woody stalks as much as 40 feet from the original shrub. My advice would definitely be to pass on this rascal.

606 2010. USDA Forest Service. Weed of the Week - Rose of Sharon. USDA Forest Service, Newton Square http://www.na.fs.fed.us/ftp/invasive_plants/weeds/rose-of-sharon.pdf This prolific seeder has a deep taproot that is difficult to remove once the plant is 2-3 years old. It reproduces primarily by seed.


701 2005. Staples, G. W./Herbst, D. R.. A Tropical Garden Flora - Plants Cultivated in the Hawaiian Islands and Other Tropical Places. Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, HI. Fruit elliptic-ovoid, 0.5-0.8" long, beaked, densely yellowish-hairy. Seeds ca. 0.2" long, silky-hairy along edges [no evidence, and no means of external attachment]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>704</td>
<td>2010. The Ohio State University. Hibiscus syriacus. <a href="http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TMI/Plantlist/hi_iacus.html">http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TMI/Plantlist/hi_iacus.html</a></td>
<td>if fruit capsules are present, they will shatter over the course of the dormant season and spread their easily germinating seeds around the base of the parent plant, forming colonies with time if in naturalized or neglected areas [gravity dispersed]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>706</td>
<td>2005. Staples, G. W./Herbst, D. R. A Tropical Garden Flora - Plants Cultivated in the Hawaiian Islands and Other Tropical Places. Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, HI.</td>
<td>Fruit elliptic-ovoid, 0.5-0.8&quot; long, beaked, densely yellowish-hairy. Seeds ca. 0.2&quot; long, silky-hairy along edges [not fleshy-fruited]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>707</td>
<td>1993. Gilman, E.F./Watson, D.G. Hibiscus syriacus Hibiscus syriacus - Rose-of-Sharon. Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL <a href="http://hort.ufl.edu/trees/HIBSYRA.pdf">http://hort.ufl.edu/trees/HIBSYRA.pdf</a></td>
<td>Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree [no evidence of animal dispersal, and no means of external attachment]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>708</td>
<td>2010. WRA Specialist. Personal Communication.</td>
<td>Unknown if seeds survive passage through gut [but no evidence that seeds are consumed]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801</td>
<td>2010. Dave's Garden. PlantFiles: Rose of Sharon, Althea. Dave's Garden, <a href="http://davesgarden.com/guides/pl/go/788/">http://davesgarden.com/guides/pl/go/788/</a></td>
<td>This is an extremely invasive plant. I had several of them removed from one side of my yard, and the next year, millions of little seedlings came up in an adjacent bed, and I had to painstakingly pull them all out. 2 years later, I am still getting seedlings here and there. [anecdotal evidence of prolific seed production]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>803</td>
<td>2010. USDA Forest Service. Weed of the Week - Rose of Sharon. USDA Forest Service, Newton Square <a href="http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/rose-of-sharon.pdf">http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/rose-of-sharon.pdf</a></td>
<td>Chemical- It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate. Follow label and state requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>804</td>
<td>2008. Plants for a Future Database. Hibiscus syriacus. Plants for a Future Database, <a href="http://www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Hibiscus+syriacus">http://www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Hibiscus+syriacus</a></td>
<td>Plants rarely require pruning [219], though they respond well to pruning and trimming and this is best carried out in the spring or just after flowering[219].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>804</td>
<td>2010. The Ohio State University. Hibiscus syriacus. <a href="http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TMI/Plantlist/hi_iacus.html">http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/TMI/Plantlist/hi_iacus.html</a></td>
<td>very adaptable to various soils, soil pHs, soil compaction, drought, heavy pruning, and pollution (and is therefore urban tolerant)</td>
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