



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 – subshrub form



c) Close-up of Senna compound leaf and leaflets



e) Senna seeds



b) Senna leaves and flower stalks



d) Close-up of Senna flower spike

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