



COORDINATING GROUP ON
ALIEN PEST SPECIES

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Contact: Christy Martin, CGAPS Public Information Officer

Ph: (808) 722-0995

Email: christym@rocketmail.com

A New Online Resource for Hawai'i and Pacific Islands: Plant Pono

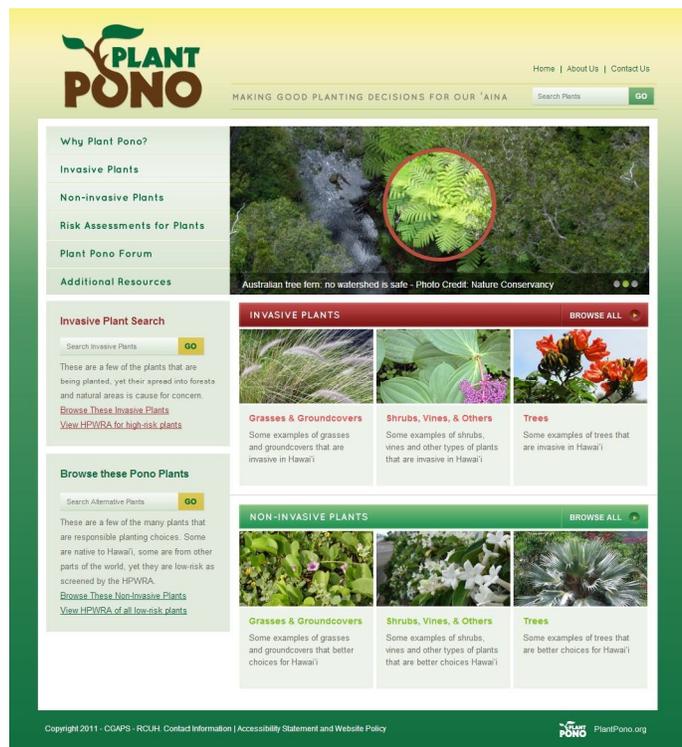
The Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment (HPWRA) has a new website launched in September called Plant Pono (www.plantpono.org). "Pono" is a Hawaiian word that means righteous, upright, and just, and the site is intended to help people make good planting decisions.

The website allows visitors to search the more than 1400 plants that have been screened with the HPWRA to assess their potential to invade Hawai'i and similar Pacific islands. The HPWRA is like a free background check for plants, which uses professional plant screeners to research published information to answer 49 questions about the plant, resulting in a prediction that is more than 90% accurate at flagging invasive plants. The HPWRA transitioned from being a research project by Dr. Curt Daehler of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and Dr. Julie Denslow, now retired from the U.S. Forest Service, to a free service supported by the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council.

To find out whether a plant is invasive or not, just type in the common or Latin name, or part of the name to automatically search the database. If the plant hasn't been screened, submit the plant name to Dr. Chuck Chimera and Patti Clifford for an assessment. Over the next few months, photos of each of the plants will be added, thanks to additional funds provided by the U.S. Forest Service.

The website also features the Plant Pono Forum, a moderated page for questions and answers on invasive plants, which will be archived and searchable.

For Hawai'i gardeners, Plant Pono provides planting guidelines on some native Hawaiian and non-invasive ornamental plants as good, safe choices, and information on invasive plants



and their impacts. For landscape and nursery businesses and garden clubs, this site provides a user-friendly interface for making decisions.

In Hawai'i, plants are not checked for their potential to become invasive when they are imported (the federal Plant Protection Act preempts the state from being more restrictive), and noxious seed and weed rules regulate less than 100 species of plants, most of which are already present in Hawai'i. Nursery and landscape industry

Once in Hawai'i, invasive plants tend to hopscotch their way across the Pacific. Today, with the HPWRA and www.plantpono.org, we have the tools to significantly reduce the importation, use, and spread of invasive plants, and that's pono.

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