



Wednesday, October 17, 2018

Small Business Regulatory Review Board  
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT)  
No. 1 Capitol District Bldg., 5th Fl.  
250 South Hotel St.  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: Proposed New HAR Title 4 Chapter 70, Plant and Non-Domestic Animal Quarantine, Plant Import Rules, Subchapter 15, "Introduction to Myrtaceae" (Myrtle Family Plants and Plant Parts

Aloha Chair Borge, Vice Chairs Cundiff and Yamanka, and Members of the Committee,  
We thank the Small Business Regulatory Review Board for considering HDOA's proposal to **add a new subchapter to HAR Chapter 4-70, Plant and Non-Domestic Animal Quarantine, Plant Import Rules**. The purpose of the new subchapter is to protect native Myrtle family species such as 'ōhi'a lehua, and important non-native species like eucalyptus by restricting the domestic importation of plants in the Myrtle family into Hawai'i. While this particular rule names *Austropuccinia psidii* (formerly known as *Puccinia psidii*, and sometimes called guava rust), and the multiple strains of this disease as the reason for this restriction, the reality is that Hawaii's native Myrtle species cannot withstand any additional pests and diseases. This restriction would prevent pests and diseases of Myrtle family plants from being imported in cut flowers/foilage and plants in that family.



The impacts of such an imported disease, *Austropuccinia psidii*, believed to have been carried into the state on imported cut myrtle foliage in flower bouquets, can be seen in rose apple (see photo of dead rose apple in Waihee, Maui, left), a Myrtle family plant. In its home range in South America this disease is known to have different species and strains, each closely associated with Myrtle family plants. To learn how these different pathogens could possibly impact 'ōhi'a, Hawai'i resource managers worked with researchers in Brazil. They found that

several of these strains are particularly virulent on 'ōhi'a—that is, 'ōhi'a were exposed to these diseases and were killed.

CGAPS, a partnership of agencies and NGOs working together to address invasive species, has worked on this issue since the discovery of the rust in 2005. It is disheartening to see how long it has taken for this issue to finally arrive at a point where meaningful protection is being considered for Hawaii's Myrtle species. However, in those years, a lot of studies have been produced to document and communicate the risks, and how they could be mitigated. For some of those studies, visit <http://www.cgaps.org/myrtle-studies/>. In addition, CGAPS staff participated in outreach and projects to address potential small business impacts resulting from an import restriction.

2011: HDOA hosted a meeting with organizations for Hawaii's agriculture and floriculture industries on August 10, 2011 to discuss proposed restrictions on Myrtaceae family imports. Discussion highlights from this meeting include outreach to florists and nurseries in Hawaii, questions about existing quantity and variety of ornamental eucalyptus sold by nurseries and Myrtaceae imported by florists, and potential for expanding local production of Myrtaceae family plants. Attendees included CGAPS, the Hawaii Agriculture Foundation (HAF), the Hawaii Agriculture and Research Center (HARC), and the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA).

- CGAPS secured private funding from Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation to support this import replacement and outreach work (see grant <http://www.cgaps.org/wp-content/uploads/CGAPS-2011-Prevention-Projects.pdf>). Through HFNA, local growers and retailers were surveyed to determine the demand and varieties of ornamental eucalyptus imported. HARC staff grew ornamental eucalyptus varieties and provided them to interested nurseries.
- CGAPS placed the article "Serious Action for a Serious Ohia Threat" by Janice Uchida and Robert Hauff published in Hawaii Landscape magazine, which was direct mailed to 6,000 landscape, nursery, and related business statewide. <https://www.slideshare.net/lichorganization/201110-landscape-hawaii-magazine-oct-nov-2011-issue>
- DLNR and CGAPS consulted with HARC regarding local biofuel industry use of eucalyptus. DLNR and CGAPS commissioned a study, funded by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW), that focused on designing suitable phytosanitary policies to ensure that new eucalyptus varieties could continue to be imported safely, while minimizing the risk of importing pathogens. The report, "Safe Importation of Eucalyptus Germplasm into Hawai'i," can be found here <http://www.cgaps.org/wp-content/uploads/Kim-et-al.-2011-App-H.pdf>.

2012: HDOA sponsored several events open to the public as a part of its "Buy Local, It Matters" campaign designed to encourage consumers to support local farmers and growers through conscious decisions. The purpose of the outreach events listed was to encourage the public to use locally grown flowers to make event arrangements to reduce the risk of invasive species from imported flowers coming into Hawaii. Below are a few of the events:

- On May 2, 2012, HDOA sponsored "Buy Local Bridal Floral Challenge," a public event to engage local floral designers involved in wedding design. <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/blog/news-releases/hawaii-grown-flowers-take-stage-on-wedding-designs/>

- On October 22, 2012, HDOA engaged local florists in an outreach event called “Free Make-and-Take Floral Arrangements Features Spectacular Flowers Plus a Message to Help Protect Hawaii.” The designers that participated in the event included: Alluvion Inc., Pearl City Florist, Fujikami Florist, Flo Min Florist, Ambiance Today, and others (see photo at right). <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/bl og/news-releases/tis-the-season-to-buy-local-for-the-holidays/>
- On November 11, 2012, HDOA sponsored another public “Buy Local” event to encourage local florists to use locally-grown flowers in their floral arrangements of the holidays. <http://floralambiance.blogspot.com/2012/11/>
- In 2017, through the “Buy Local, It Matters” campaign, HDOA provided a grant to the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) to conduct workshops and public outreach on local alternatives to imported flowers in an effort to reduce the risk of importing invasive species. <http://bigislandnow.com/2017/04/12/hfna-buy-local-for-easter-and-admin-professionals-day/>



We have done all that we can to assess and mitigate any impacts to local businesses, and to assess the risks of inaction. Any one of the twenty-five other strains of *A. psidii* that exist on Myrtle family plants could be more virulent on ‘ōhi‘a than the existing strain. A number of other pathogens harmful to Myrtle family plants have been documented as a risk for importation with their Myrtle hosts. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to approve this proposed rule change for public hearing. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Martin  
CGAPS Program Manager & PIO

Chelsea Arnott  
CGAPS Planner