

# Have you seen **Poison Devil's Pepper Tree?** Waimea Community Pest Alert



**Identification:** Poison devil's pepper (*Rauvolfia vomitoria*), aka swizzle stick, is a recent introduction to the state of Hawaii from Africa. This fast growing tree quickly grows more than 30 feet tall with a trunk that is 1 foot in diameter. It has leaves that are long and skinny with an undulating margin and pointed tip. The leaves are up to 9.4 inches long and grow in groups of 3-5 leaflets in whorl arrangements around the stem. Minute flowers (1 mm long) are cream colored and sweet smelling. Clusters of fruits are red-orange and fleshy. Young branches and stems contain latex.

**Impacts:** Poison devil's pepper's only known in Hawaii is one area of North Kohala on Big Island where it is quickly spreading into both pastures and closed-canopy forest areas. It can outgrow other trees, such as eucalyptus, albizia, strawberry guava, and 'ohia. This tree is hard to kill and vigorously resprouts when cut. All parts of this tree are poisonous and have been reported to cause nausea when handled.

## Report any sightings of this tree!

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