



Aloha,

I am writing on behalf of the statewide Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), a public-private partnership united to address invasive species issues in Hawaii. You may have heard from articles in the Hawaii Landscape newsletter and Honolulu Advertiser that we are working with landscape and nursery industry groups, garden shops and others in the plant industry on implementing “Codes of Conduct” designed to reduce the chances of importing new invasive plants to the islands and slow or stop the spread of some ornamentals that are invading the native forests.

The plant industry groups that have signed voluntary Codes are the Oahu Nursery Growers Association (ONGA) and the Kauai Landscape Industry Council (KLIC). In agreeing to the Codes of Conduct, they have agreed to three main objectives.

First, they will help prevent new invasive plants from being introduced to Hawaii. They agree to use the Hawaii Pacific Weed Risk Assessment system, which will screen new ornamental plants (plants not yet known to occur in Hawaii). This screening process looks at the biology and track record of the plant in question to determine the likelihood of it being invasive if introduced to Hawaii. This Weed Risk Assessment has proved to be 90% accurate at predicting invasiveness and it is the best tool we have for prevention (current laws allow the introduction and sale of ANY plant unless it is on the Noxious Weed or Seed Lists, about 80 plants, most of which are already present in Hawaii—therefore, even the species of trees that outcompete miconia in its native range in Central America can be legally imported and sold, no questions asked!).

The second major objective of the Codes project is to identify some ornamental plants that are currently available, yet are invading natural areas and are the subjects of control or eradicate attempts by conservation groups on Oahu. ONGA has agreed to phase-out and discontinued sale of the following plants due to their invasive nature by the end of April 2006 (see the attached sheets for photos and a list of plants that KLIC has discontinued):

Australian tree fern (*Cyathea cooperi*)
rubbervine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora* and *C. madagascariensis*)
smokebush (*Buddleja madagascariensis*)
butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*)
pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana* and *C. jubata**)
mule's foot fern (*Angiopteris evecta*)
glorybush (*Tibouchina urvilleana**)
(*these plants are State Noxious Weeds but are occasionally sold)

The third major objective of the Codes is to promote non-invasive or native plants. There are so many plants that are not spreading, and these plant industry groups have agreed to promote non-invasive plants where possible, and to help educate people about the use of non-invasive plants.

Although the above list of invasive plants is not comprehensive by any means, it is a starting point. This is the type of communication that is necessary between conservation/resource management groups and plant industry groups so that we can begin working together to decrease the amount of invasive plants that damage the environment. I think we can all agree that it makes no sense for resource managers to be in the forest, trying to control the very same plants that are being sold on garden supply shelves. ONGA, KLIC and LICH are taking an important and forward-thinking step in addressing the problem of invasive plants, and their participation in this program is appreciated.

This Codes of Conduct project is in conjunction with a national study being conducted by Valerie Vartanian (The Nature Conservancy/Missouri Botanical Garden), to work with plant industry folks nationwide on implementing and testing the Voluntary Codes of Conduct. The study will follow up with participants to determine the impact that this has on business. For more information on the project and the national codes we are adapting, visit <http://www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives/codesN.html> .

We realize that nurseries, garden shops and botanical gardens are only part of the equation. Landscape architects may still spec these species, landscape contractors may grow and supply them, and there may be people that continue to ask for them. Therefore, we ask for your help in supporting ONGA's and KLIC's decision by participating and implementing these Codes in your business. My colleagues and I will continue to work with plant industry to gain widespread participation in the Codes program. Thank you so much for your time. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns, and I will be following up in the next couple of weeks.

Sincerely,

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