



Albizia (*Falcataria moluccana*)



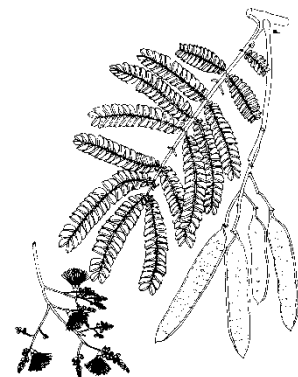
Left, large stands of Albizia across the lookout at Boiling Pots, Hilo

- Albizia is a fast-growing tree that has invaded native Ohi'a forest.
- Albizia grows well even in nutrient poor soil, and changes the soil composition that gives other invasive understory plants a competitive advantage.
- With brittle wood and a weak structure, the limbs of large trees can cause havoc falling onto infrastructure.

Fallen trees pose a large safety threat on roadways- this is particularly dangerous on roads on the Hamakua coast. Fallen trees have caused fires by falling into power lines, and large infestations around Kaumana and Hilo have the potential to block access to the Hilo Medical Center should an adverse weather event occur.

Albizia is best controlled early. Large trees are hazardous and costly to remove.

Seedling description: Young branches are a green to reddish brown color. Leaves are described botanically as bipinnate compound leaves. That is, every small branch has many paired, smaller branches with small oblong shaped leaves. The illustration to the right shows Albizia leaves in this arrangement.



84. *Mimosa alba* *Albizia moluccana* (L.) Forster*
*Fig. with pods (above), leaves (below) pl. 237.

Flowers and seed pods: Creamy white, light yellow to greenish yellow silky, feather-like flowers. After flowering, green seed pods about 9-12 cm long develop that ripen to brown. The seeds within are a disc-shape about 1.5-2.5 cm long.

Adult trees: Albizia can grow up to 15 ft a year, reaching heights of 130 feet (40 m) tall. The branches of large Albizia can be as big as an average-sized tree, and the crown of the tree forms a wide canopy. The distinctive silhouette of Albizia is easily recognized lining the road to form a 'tree tunnel' near Lava Tree State Park in Puna. The bark is smooth to slightly warty and is grayish cream in color.

Dispersal: Seeds tend to fall nearby mature trees and with lightweight pods can disperse further distances by wind.

Distribution: This perennial tree is native to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. Widely distributed for ornament and reforestation, Albizia was introduced to Hawai'i in 1917. Here in Hawai'i, Albizia grows mainly in wet to mesic (moderately wet) lowland areas, where it can be quite weedy and invasive. Albizia grows very well in disturbed habitats.

Control: Albizia should be removed as quickly as possible and seedlings can be easily hand-pulled. Young seedlings look similar to other species including native Koa.

For removal of large trees you should seek the advice and assistance of an arborist.



Lookalike species (seedlings). Young Acacia Koa looks very similar to Albizia seedling. However, young Koa is found on the Hawaiian Islands at higher elevations (300-7500ft). Left: Acacia Koa seedling. Right: Albizia seedlings.
Acacia Koa is endemic to Hawaii.

