

Leucaena (500)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In Australia and 22 Pacific island countries.
- Note, a subspecies, *leucocephala*, used for fodder, fuel, green manure, is the problem. Aggressive, invasive weed especially in dry disturbed areas on calcareous soils. Weed of pastures, open woodlands, parks, gardens, wastelands, along roadsides, riverbanks, coasts. Flowers/fruits early and abundant, hard seed, forming large seed banks germinating over time, spreads easily, fire tolerant. Problem in Tonga and Vanuatu forming dense thickets, preventing access by animals, and negatively impacting biodiversity.
- Shrub or tree up to 10m. Leaves alternative, divided into leaflets (4-9 pairs), divided again (up to 12 pairs). Flowers, round white/cream clusters on stalks up to 6cm, forming long seed pods each with about 20 seeds. Long tap root.
- Spread: seed, dispersed by rodents, birds, cattle, machinery, vehicles.
- Biosecurity: Among IUCN 100 World's Worst Invasive Species. Seeds available on Internet.
- Biocontrol: bruchid beetle, *Acanthoscelides macrophthalmus*, released South Africa, and accidentally in Australia.
- Cultural control: hand-pulling or slashing (remove taproot, preventing regrowth). Use cattle or goats to graze trees. Clean machinery/vehicles.
- Chemical control: in Australia, triclopyr + picloram; and triclopyr + picloram + aminopyralid. Spray or cut-stump applications. 2,4-D in diesel for basal-bark treatment.

Common Name

Leucaena. It is also known as coffee bush, hedge acacia, horse tamarind, wild tamarind, white leadtree.

Scientific Name

Leucaena leucocephala; previously, it was known as *Acacia glauca*, *Leucaena glauca*, *Mimosa leucocephala*. It is a member of the Fabaceae. There are three subspecies: i.e., *leucocephala* (Common or Hawai'ian type), *glabrata* (Giant or Salvador type), and *ixtahuacana*, a relatively new find.



Photo 1. Dense thicket of leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 2. Shrubby stand of leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*, leaves and flowers.



Photo 3. Leaves, flowerheads, flowers, leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 4. Flowers, leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 5. Leaves, flowers and fruits, leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 6. Single creamish flowerhead showing long stamens of individual flowers, leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 7. Fruits, leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*.



Photo 8. Single, shrubby leucaena, *Leucaena leucocephala*, with mass of seed pods.

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Information from PIER (2017) *Leucaena leucocephala* (Lam.) de Wit, Fabaceae. Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER), Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry. (http://www.hear.org/pier/species/leucaena_leucocephala.htm); and CABI (2019) *Leucaena leucocephala* (leucaena). Invasive Species Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/31634>); and DAF (2020) *Leucaena Leucaena leucocephala*. Queensland Government. (https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/73450/leucaena.pdf). Photo 1 Dan Clark USDI National Park Service, Bugwood.org. Photo 2. Forrest & Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org. Photos 4&5 Gerald McCormack Cook Islands Biodiversity & Natural Heritage. Photo 7 Krish Dulal Pods of *Leucaena leucocephala* in the month of May. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leucaena_leucocephala_NP.JPG).

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