

Spiked pepper (493)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu.
- Invasive, aggressive shrub, of logged native forests (preventing regeneration), waterways, roadsides and cultivated lands, e.g., plantations, pastures, fallows, subsistence gardens. High seed production, ability to regenerate vegetatively and grow rapidly under varying rainfall (rainforest to savanna).
- Shrub up to 8m. Stems swollen at nodes, with stilt roots. Leaves alternate, oval, up to 22cm, short leaf stalks, soft hairs underneath, aromatic when crushed. Flowers on curved spike opposite each leaf, on long stalks. Seeds small, up to 1.25mm, black.
- Spread: birds, bats, wind, on clothing, machinery, vehicles, packing materials, as ornamental.; in kava consignments.
- Biosecurity: check seed and kava imports.
- Biocontrol: none.
- Cultural control: hand-weed, removing all roots; or slash and collect cuttings and burn.
- Chemical control: 2,4-D or imazapyr applied to basal bark or cut stems.

Common Name

Spiked pepper. It is also known as bamboo piper, *yaqona ni* (Fiji), and false kava (note, this is also the name given to *Piper auritum* (see **Fact Sheet no. 492**)).

Scientific Name

Piper aduncum. It is a member of the Piperaceae.



Photo 1. Thicket of spiked pepper, *Piper aduncum*. Note, *Merremia* in the foreground (right); everything behind that is spiked pepper.



Photo 2. Spiked pepper, *Piper aduncum*, forming small trees, several metres tall.



Photo 3. Leaves, spiked pepper, *Piper aduncum*.



Photo 4. Flowers and leaves, spiked pepper, *Piper aduncum*.

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Information from CABI (2019) *Piper aduncum*. Invasive Species Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/41354>); and *Piper aduncum* L. (2020) Weeds Australia - Profiles. Centre for Invasive Solutions, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Australian Government. (<https://profiles.ala.org.au/opus/weeds-australia/profile/Piper%20aduncum>); and from *Piper aduncum* L, Piperaceae (2011) Pacific Islands Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). (http://www.hear.org/pier/species/piper_aduncum.htm). Photos 1-4 Forest & Kim Starr. *Piper aduncum* (Spiked pepper).

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