# Bocconia frutescens

**Bocconia, plume poppy, tree poppy**

*Bocconia frutescens* L.

Family: Papaveraceae

Description: Branched shrub to small tree to 20 ft tall. Sap orange, translucent, bitter. Leaves oblong, often wider in upper part, to 1.5 ft long, 0.7 ft wide, concentrated at branch tips. Panicle upright, densely branched, beige yellow, to 2 ft long. Capsules gray, pulp pale yellow. Seed single, black, glossy, base covered by red pulp. Named in honor of 17th century Italian noble and botanist Paolo Boccone; *frutescens*, shrubby or bushy[5, 70].

Distribution: Native to Caribbean area. Occurs in dry to moist forests of Maui and Hawai‘i. Common at Ulupalakua Ranch, Maui, and Wood Valley in Ka‘ū on Hawai‘i. First collected in 1920 on Maui[70].

Environmental impact: Invading dry forests on Maui and moist forests of Hawai‘i[70]. Because bocconia is able to flourish in a broad range of environmental conditions and along a large elevational gradient within its home range, it appears to have the potential to invade native and non-native habitats in dry and mesic environments in Hawai‘i. Bocconia produces large numbers of seeds with a red fleshy aril at the base that attracts birds, which disperse seeds over long distances. Given its potential to reach tree-sized stature and its ability to form thick stands, bocconia is expected to be a serious competitor with native or other desirable species. In the Wood Valley area of Hawai‘i, bocconia quickly spread from one landscape planting to occupy in excess of 3500 acres of abandoned sugarcane land. This recent population explosion coincides with the demise of active sugarcane farming in the area, which allowed bocconia to reach maturity and rapidly increase its range. Bocconia is now considered a major weed in small agricultural lots in the area. On Maui, bocconia has been observed at 5800 ft elevation. Art Medeiros (U.S. Geological Survey) considers bocconia to be one of the most threatening weeds in the Kanaio Natural Area Reserve.

Management: Good control with 2,4-D and fair control with triclopyr applied to basal bark. Very little other work done on bocconia management. Medeiros (USGS) recommended a strategy of removing all flowering trees with periodic follow-up to remove new seedlings emerging from the soil seed bank. Aerial spot spraying with the “spray ball” applicator would be an effective way to kill emerging trees in pastures and abandoned sugarcane land. Trials are needed to determine an effective herbicide and rate for this method.