

Casuarina equisetifolia

Ironwood, Australian pine

Casuarina equisetifolia L.

Family: Casuarinaceae

Description: Tree to 60 ft tall. Long, slender, drooping branches, hairy. “Leaves” are needles, dull green, segmented into sheaths, sheath margins with 7–9 teeth. Fruit a woody cone less than 1 inch long. “She-oak,” a little-used name in Hawai‘i, derived from the noise the wind makes blowing through these trees⁽⁵⁹⁾. Some of the many legends associated with this plant throughout the South Pacific are re-told by Neal⁽⁵⁹⁾. The hard wood is used as beaters for pounding bark to make tapa and as war clubs. The bark is used in tanning and dyeing and as medicine. [*C. glauca* Siebold ex Spreng., saltmarsh ironwood, longleaf ironwood, or scaly bark beefwood, very similar in appearance but more prone to sucker and spread vegetatively. Some differences: branches of *C. glauca* not hairy; leaf sheath of *C. glauca* has 9–18 teeth, cones smaller, valves on cone more prominent, male flower spikes shorter. Widely planted in Hawai‘i.] *Casuarina* based on scientific name of the cassowary because of resemblance of ironwood branches to feathers of the Australian bird; *equisetifolia*, leaves like a horse’s tail; *glauca*, smooth or hairless^(5, 59, 70).

Distribution: From Australia, now widely distributed in the tropics. Widely planted in Hawai‘i from the seashore to the lower mountain forests, used especially as a coastal windbreak. Introduced on Kaua‘i in 1882, collected on O‘ahu in 1895^(59,70).



Environmental impact: Fixes nitrogen. Suppresses plant growth under its canopy.

Management: Shoots and saplings sensitive to foliar application of triclopyr. Trees sensitive to cut-surface applications of glyphosate, dicamba, and picloram⁽⁴⁵⁾ and, based on response of saplings to foliar applications, probably sensitive to cut-surface application of triclopyr.