

Schefflera actinophylla

Octopus tree

Schefflera actinophylla (Endl.) Harms
Syn. *Brassaia actinophylla*

Family: Araliaceae

Description: Tree, sometimes epiphytic and capable of strangling host trees, to 45 ft tall. Branches at base, sparingly above. Leaves radially compound. Leaflets, 5–18, up to 1 ft long, radiate from the tip of the 2 ft long petioles. Inflorescences radially arranged floral branches at terminals with closely held flowers, red. Blooms March–October, peaks in September. Fruits spheroid, 0.25 inches diameter, bright red, present most of the year beginning in spring, giving the appearance somewhat of the tentacles of the octopus, turning dark purple or black. Fruits used in making *lei* in recent years. *Schefflera* honors J.C. Sheffler, 19th century Polish botanist; *actinophylla*, radiating leaves, refers to the radial symmetry of the leaves^(5, 70).

Distribution: Native to Australia and New Guinea. A weed in South Florida⁽⁶³⁾. A common ornamental tree introduced before 1900. Now naturalized in moist to wet lowlands on Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, and Hawai‘i⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Environmental impact: Spreads deep into forests and is epiphytic, capable of strangling host trees.



Management: Only marginally susceptible to triclopyr and dicamba; somewhat tolerant of glyphosate applied to drilled holes in base. Kline and Duquesnel⁽³⁰⁾ reported that triclopyr applied basal bark or to cut surface was only moderately effective and that repeat treatments would be necessary. However, basal bark applications or cut-stump applications of triclopyr have been recommended⁽⁶³⁾.