Sida rhombifolia

Arrowleaf sida, Cuba jute

Sida rhombifolia L.

Family: Malvaceae

Description: Small, perennial, erect shrub, to 5 ft, few hairs, stems tough. Leaves alternate, of variable shapes, rhomboid (diamond-shaped) to oblong, 2.4 inches long, margins serrate except entire toward the base. Flowers solitary at leaf axils, in clusters at end of branches, yellow to yellowish orange, often red at the base of the petals, 0.33 inches diameter, flower stalk slender, to 1.5 inches long. Fruit a cheesewheel (schizocarp) of 8–12 segments with brown dormant seeds. A pantropical weed, widespread throughout Hawai‘i in disturbed areas. Possibly indigenous. Used as fiber source and as a medicinal in some parts of the world. [A couple of other weedy species of *Sida* are common in Hawai‘i. As each species tends to be variable in appearance (polymorphic), while at the same time similar in gross appearance, they are difficult to tell apart. *S. acuta* N.L. Burm., syn. *S. carpinifolia*, southern sida, has narrower leaves with the bases unequal (asymmetrical), margins serrated to near the leaf base; flowers white to yellow, 2–8 in the leaf axils, flower stalks to 0.15 inches long; fruit a cheesewheel with 5 segments. *S. spinosa* L., prickly sida, has very narrow leaves, margins serrate or scalloped (crenate); a nub below each leaf, though not a spine, accounts for the species name; flowers, pale yellow to yellowish orange, solitary at leaf axils except in clusters at the end of branches, flower stalk to 1 inch long; fruit a cheesewheel with 5 segments]. *Sida* was adopted by Linnaeus from the works of Theophrastus, who used it for an entirely different plant. *Sida*, plant; *rhombifolia*, rhombic- or diamond-shaped leaves; *acuta*, sharp angled, perhaps for the leaf apex; *carpinifolia*, fruited leaves, perhaps referring to fruits in leaf axils[25, 69 70].

Distribution: A pantropical weed, first collected on Kaua‘i in 1895. Native to tropical America, naturalized before 1871[70].

Environmental impact: Infests mesic to wet pastures and many crops worldwide in temperate and tropical zones[25].

Management: Somewhat tolerant of 2,4-D, dicamba and triclopyr. Higher end of labeled rates required. Probably a good idea to mow and treat regrowth. Australian sources indicate good control with wick applications of glyphosate using double passes at right angles[61].