

Trema orientalis

Gunpowder tree, charcoal tree

Trema orientalis (L.) Blume

Family: Ulmaceae

Description: Tall tree to 110 ft with somewhat buttressed base. Leaves narrowly ovate, 7 inches long by 4 inches wide, alternate, hairy, margins serrate. Flowers of single sex on different branches, in clusters at nodes, not showy. Fruits small, black. Greek *trema*, hole, in reference to reticulated surface of the seed⁽⁷⁰⁾; *orientalis*, eastern⁽⁵⁾.

Distribution: Native to the Old World between Africa, Japan, Australia, and Polynesia. Occurs in moist to wet forests and pastures on all the inhabited islands except Ni‘ihau. Very common in Hilo, Hawai‘i. In Hawai‘i since around 1870⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Environmental impact: Invasive in disturbed forests and pastures.



Management: Sensitive to cut-surface applications (to drilled holes) of hormone-type herbicides and glyphosate. HAVO staff reported control with triclopyr amine at 10% product in water applied to cut stumps (Chris Zimmer, HAVO). Also sensitive to basal bark, frill, and cut-stump applications of triclopyr. Cattle relish the leaves of gunpowder trees (Sam Taka, rancher).