

Mexican rubber tree

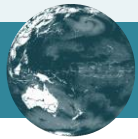
Castilla elastica

KEY FEATURES



- Mexican rubber tree is invasive in Samoa, American Samoa, French Polynesia and Vanuatu in the Pacific where it poses significant threats to native forest ecosystems

- The tree can grow up to 30 m tall with a diameter at breast height of up to 60 cm. The plant produces abundant milky sap when cut. It has spreading or drooping branches, the young ones woolly-hairy.
- The leaves are coarse, densely hairy on both sides, short-stemmed, arranged in two rows. The leaf is oblong, broadest in the upper half, 20-45 cm by 7-15 cm. The base of the leaf is heart-shaped and the tip pointed
- Small, female flowers in clusters of 2-4 develop into fruit about 4 cm in diameter, consisting of a cluster of many red individuals about 2 cm long, with sweet, edible pulp
- Seeds are eaten and dispersed by birds and other animals, contributing to spread



PATHWAYS

✓ garden and forest escapes

✓ forestry

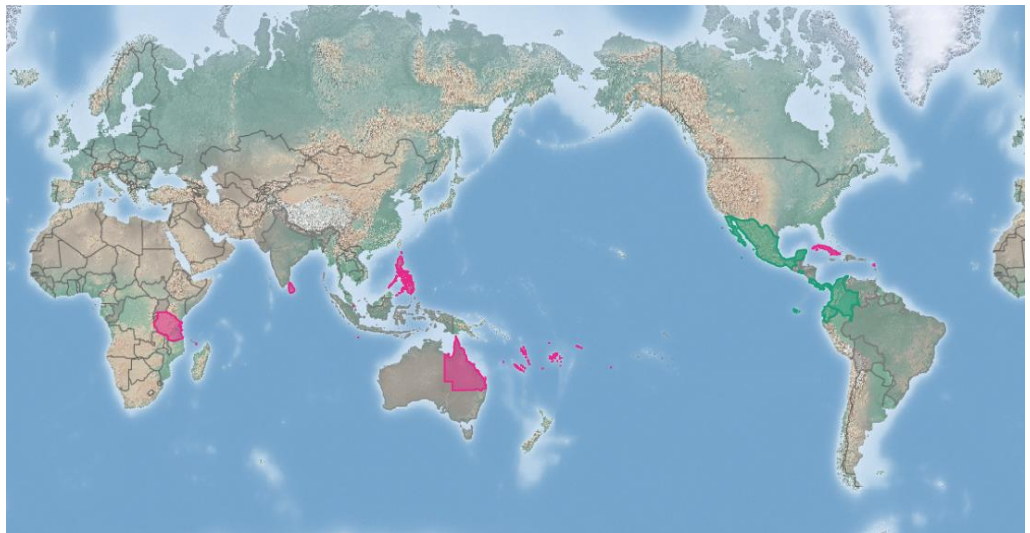
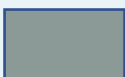
Introduced



Native



Origin not recorded



Mexican rubber tree

Castilla elastica

IMPACTS



Potential to displace slow growing native species which are sensitive to competition. Likely to decrease ecological stability on slopes



None reported



Reduced aesthetic value of forest, exclusion of trees of value for traditional uses



None reported

DISTRIBUTION

Native range southern Mexico, Central America and parts of South America

Introduced range Tropical Asia, Oceania and Africa, including India, Sri Lanka, Java, West Indies, Singapore, Mauritius, West Africa, Tanzania, Fiji, Samoa, American Samoa, Vanuatu, French Polynesia and Queensland

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The sap was once used to produce latex which was made into rubber

INFORMATION SOURCES (click links for more)

Images (top to bottom, left to right) ©2009 Moorea Biocode/CalPhotos, University of California, Berkeley (2 images) – CC BY-NC-SA 3.0, ©Steve Hurst/USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database all via CABI

Text and map *Castilla elastica* (Mexican rubber tree) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/11498>

