# Chromolaena odorata

## Recognize the problem

Family: Asteraceae (daisy family).

Common names: paraffin bush, turpentine weed, Siam weed, triffid weed, chromolaena, devil weed.

Evergreen shrub, which may take the form of a scrambler when growing among trees, 3–7 m high, often forming dense thickets. Stems yellowish-green and slightly hairy, woody towards the base with wide-spreading branches; deep taproot.

Leaves: Light green, hairy, simple, triangular (5–12 cm long and 3–7 cm wide), pointed, margins toothed, three conspicuous veins from the base; leaves positioned opposite each other on stem; strongly smelling of turpentine when crushed.

Flowers: Pale purple, in cylindrical heads (about 10 mm long and 3 mm wide) clustered at the ends of stems.

Seeds: Straw-coloured (4–5 mm long), with bristles.

Flowers are clustered at the ends of stems. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)

Leaves are hairy and pointed with three clear veins from the base. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)

## Background

Origin: South-east USA and Latin America.

Introduction: As ornament and accidentally as seed contaminant.

Habitat: Humid tropical regions.

Spread: By seed and fragments via wind, water, animals and humans, and on machinery.

Invades: Plantation crops, pasture, savannah, fallow land, disturbed land, wastelands, urban open space, drainage ditches, forest edges/gaps, riparian vegetation and roadsides.

Impacts: *Chromolaena odorata* can be a serious weed in all perennial crops. It can completely smother low-growing plantations such as coffee and cocoa. Taller plantations such as rubber and teak are less affected, as soon as the canopy closes. In Southeast Asia it is a seriously affects oil palm, rubber, coffee, cashew, fruit and forestry. Some agricultural areas in Southeast Asia have been abandoned because chromolaena has taken over pasture and crops. The weed also causes serious health problems in livestock and people (skin complaints and asthma) and significantly reduces livestock carrying capacities. Its ability to form dense impenetrable thickets leads to the displacement of native plant species and the dry stems and leaves, which are rich in oils, also increase fire intensities contributing to additional biodiversity loss.

Scientific name(s) > ***Chromolaena odorata***

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries

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