

BIO-HAZARD

Caesalpinia decapetala

Caesalpinia decapetala (Mauritius thorn), native to eastern Asia, is widespread throughout the Pacific and southern Africa. In South Africa *C. decapetala* is restricted to the moist, eastern parts of the country. It was introduced into the region for ornamental purposes.

Identification

Description:

C. decapetala is a thorny, robust, evergreen shrub or climber reaching heights of between 2 and 10m. The stems are minutely hairy with straight to hooked stem thorns.

Leaves:

The leaves are compound, dark green and up to 300mm long. The leaflets are up to 8mm wide.

Flowers:

The flowers are pale yellow in colour and occur in elongated erect clusters 100-400mm long.

Fruits:

The fruits occur as brown, woody pods.



Figure 2: *C. decapetala* flowerhead



Figure 1: *C. decapetala* plant

Damage

C. decapetala invades riverine habitats, forest margins, savanna and timber plantations. Plants shade out indigenous vegetation causing trees to collapse. Infestations that scramble over riparian vegetation are believed to greatly accelerate water loss by evapo-transpiration.

Control

Chemical and mechanical methods have been used to control *C. decapetala* infestations. However, there are two biological control agents that are currently being monitored to determine the effect on *C. decapetala* infestations.

Contact address

Please report any infestations of *Caesalpinia decapetala* in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park to:

Alien Biota Section
Private Bag X402
Skukuza
1350

Tel: (013) 735 4114 Fax: (013) 735 4051

E-mail: aliens@parks-sa.co.za

