



Cordia curassavica

Family: Boraginaceae

Species: *Cordia curassavica* (Jacq.) Roem. & Schult.

Common Names: black sage, stringbush

Synonyms:

Cordia macrostachya (Jacq.) Roem. & Schult.

Cordia cylindrostachya var. *graveolens* Roem. & Schult.

Cordia cylindristachya var. *interrupta* Roem. & Schult.

Cordia hispida Benth.

Cordia soccorensis Brandegee

Cordia brevispicata M. Martnes & Galeotti

Corida chacoensis Chodat

Cordia chepensis Pittier

Cordia peruviana var. *mexicana* DC.

Cordia imparilis J.F. Macbr.

Cordia linearis DC.

Cordia littoralis Pittier

Cordia mollis Pittier

Cordia oblique Kunth

Cordia palmeri S. Watson

Varronia macrostachya Jacq.

Varronia guianensis Desv.

Varronia currasavica Jacq.

Lantana bullata L.

Bayer Code: CRHCY

Description: A variable much-branched, resinous, glandular, odorous shrub up to 3 m high, branched mainly from the base. Leaves are subsessile or shortly petioled, entire, ovate or elliptic, 5–12 cm long with acute tips, grayish-green, rough on the upper surface but paler and finely pubescent below. Flowers are white or greenish, about 5 mm long with lobes 1–2 mm long, broadly rounded and reflexed, arranged in terminal spikes. Calyx campanulate, 2–4 mm long with spreading hairs. Fruits are fleshy, 5 mm across, broadly ovoid, maturing red, contain a single stony seed 4 x 5 mm that is protuberant and warty and very irregularly shaped.

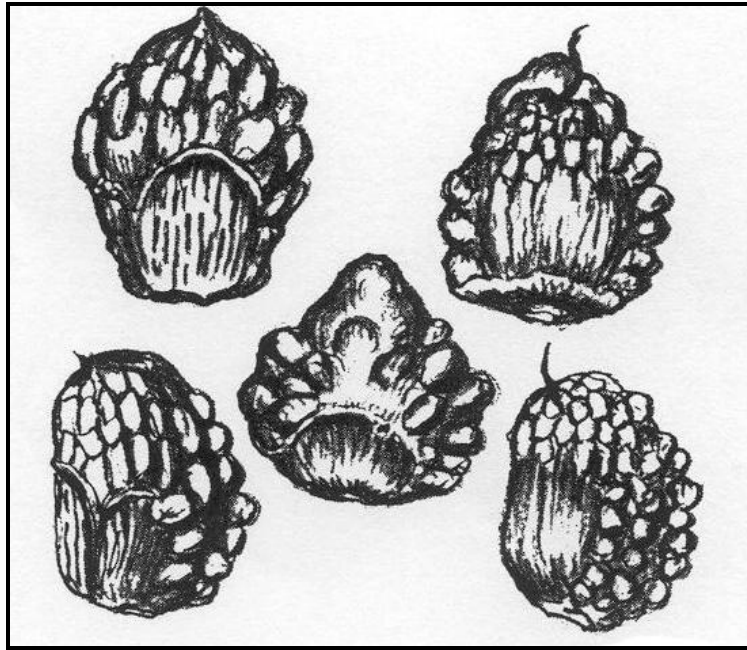


Figure 1. Seeds of *Cordia macrostachya* from Reed (1977)



Figure 2 Fruiting branch of *Cordia macrostachya* from Agrolink (2002)

Distribution: *Cordia curassavica* is apparently restricted to the true tropics, originating in the New World but now naturalized in parts of the Old World. It is native in the Americas (Antilles, Bahamas, Mexico, Surinam, Panama, Trinidad); naturalized in Asia/Indian Ocean (Christmas Island, Malaysia, Mauritius) (Reed, 1977; Swarbrick and Hart, 2001; Randall, 2008).

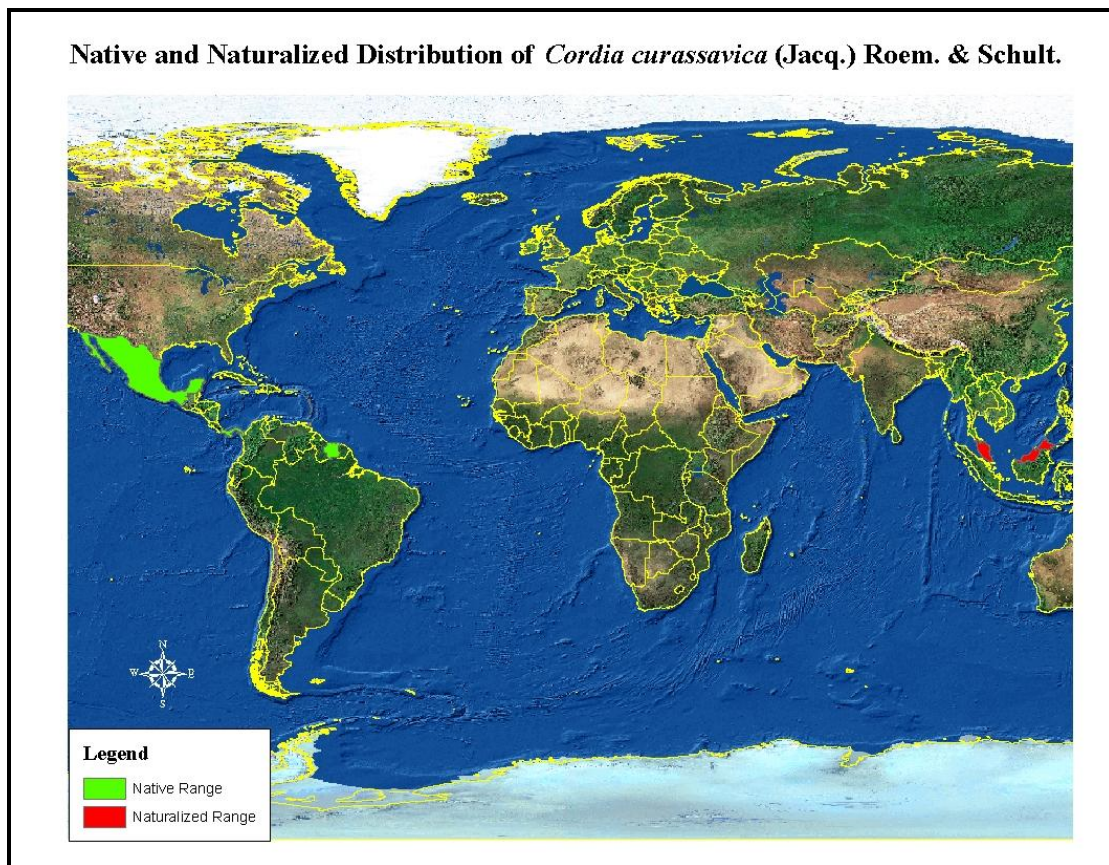


Figure 3. By Glenn Fowler, USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST, 2002 (Fowler, 2002)

Biology and Ecology: Reed (1977) indicates that *Cordia curassavica* is a plant of damp or dry thickets on hillsides. The fleshy fruit is distributed by birds. Biological control of this species is being attempted with apparent success in Malaysia, using the insect *Schematiza cordiae*, which causes defoliation and weakens and may eventually kill the plant (Ung et al., 1981). *Cordia curassavica* is not a crop weed, but deliberate introduction is possible as an ornamental.

Possible Pathways to the United States: Its presence in Mexico makes accidental or deliberate introduction more likely.

Adverse Impact: *Cordia curassavica* has invaded Christmas Island, where it has developed dense thickets that prevent regeneration or crowd out other vegetation (Randall, 2008). Swarbrick and Hart (2001) refer to it as a major environmental weed on the island. It has also naturalized in Malaysia and Mauritius and is recognized as a very significant threat to natural vegetation. It poses risks to tropical regions and offshore tropical islands of the United States.

Literature Cited:

- Agrolink. 2002. <http://agrolink.moa.my/pqnet/kwln/cordia.jpg>
- Fowler, G. 2002. Distribution Map. USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Center for Plant Health Science and Technology, Raleigh, NC.
- Randall, R. P. 2008. A Global Compendium of Weeds. Department of Agriculture of Western Australia. Last accessed <http://www.hear.org/gcw/>.

- Reed, C. F. 1977. Economically Important Foreign Weeds: Potential Problems in the United States. Agricultural Research Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, DC. 746 pp.
- Swarbrick, J. T., and R. Hart. 2001. Environmental weeds of Christmas Island (Indian Ocean) and their management. *Plant Protection Quarterly* 16(2):54-57.
- Ung, S. H., and A. Yunus. 1981. The present status of the biological control of *Cordia curassavica* in Malaysia. Pages 489-498 *Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds*, July 1980 / E.S. Del Fosse, editor. Melbourne [Australia] : CSIRO, Australia, 1981.