Furcraea foetida

Mauritius hemp

Furcraea foetida (L.) Haw.
Syn. *Agave foetida*, *Furcraea gigantea*

Family: Agavaceae

Description: Long pointed leaves, to 8 ft long by 8 inches wide, light green, succulent, arranged densely around a short stem, a few widely spaced prickles on margins of most leaves, especially near the base. A somewhat woody stalk emerges after several years and grows to about 40 ft; lateral branches, themselves usually branched, bear numerous pale yellow flowers along the branches, pendant, 1 inch in diameter, fragrant, 3 inner petals (tepals) positioned between 3 outer ones. Fruits are capsules, cylindrical, containing black seed. Many bulblets (bulbils) capable of developing into new plants are formed on inflorescence. Genus named for French chemist A.F. Fourcroy (d. 1809); *foetida* for the slightly unpleasant smell of the plant sap[70]. Often confused with sisal (*Agave sisalana* Perrine), also a weed of arid areas. Both were introduced into Hawai‘i in attempts to start a cordage industry[59, 70]. The inflorescences of sisal are upright at the end of the branches.

Agave sisalana

Distribution: Originally from South America, cultivated for fiber, and thus widely naturalized. Occurs in dry, rocky areas. In Hawai‘i, naturalized on all islands except Ni‘ihau and Kaho‘olawe. First reported in Hawai‘i in 1888[70].

Environmental impact: Displaces other plants in drier forests and pastures. Plants encroach across trails, a hazard especially on cliffside trails. Woody stalks block roads and trails when they fall.

Management: Tolerant of aqueous sprays of glyphosate, hexazinone, and triclopyr and to soil applications of hexazinone. Sensitive to foliar sprays of 2,4-D in diesel and very sensitive to foliar sprays of triclopyr in diesel or in crop oil. Drizzle applications of triclopyr in oil at 1 lb/acre effective in clearing trails of Mauritius hemp[52] (misnamed as *Agave sisalana* in cited paper).