

BISCHOFIA JAVANICA BLUME

Euphorbiaceae/Spurge Family

Common Names: Bishopwood, javawood, toog
Synonymy: *Bischofia trifoliata* (Roxb.) Hook.
Origin: Tropical Asia, Pacific Islands

Botanical Description: Evergreen tree commonly 12-18 m (35-60 ft) in height, with dense, rounded head, smooth branches, and milky sap. Leaves alternate, long-petioled, trifoliolate (3 leaflets); leaflets shiny, bronze-toned, oval-elliptic, 15-20 cm (6-8 in) long, with margins small toothed. Flowers tiny, without petals, greenish-yellow, in many-flowered clusters (racemes) at leaf axils; male and female flowers on separate plants (dioecious). Fruit pea-sized, berrylike, fleshy, to 9 mm (0.33 in) in diameter, brown or reddish or blue-black, 3-celled.

Ecological Significance: Introduced to Florida for ornament earlier this century by a west coast nursery-grower (Morton 1976). Noted as sometimes planted in south Florida in 1947 (Bailey and Bailey). Reported as naturalized in Dade County near Homestead in 1971 (Long and Lakela), as becoming a “weed tree” in south Florida in 1974 (Morton), and as invading hammocks (Morton 1976). Now common in old fields and disturbed wetland sites, and invading intact cypress domes and tropical hardwood hammocks, where it displaces native vegetation and alters the structure of the plant community (personal observations of several veteran land managers in southeast counties). Used extensively in street landscaping throughout south Florida for many years. Its landscape use now discouraged by some horticulturists (Broschat and Meerow 1991).

Distribution: Naturalized populations in Florida documented by herbarium specimens from Dade, Broward, and Pinellas counties (Wunderlin *et al.* 1995). Reported for 21 natural areas in Lee, Collier, Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties (EPPC 1996). Cultivated near coasts from Sarasota to Cape Canaveral (Stresau 1986). Apparently not naturalized elsewhere in the Neotropics, but widespread in its native range of tropical Asia.

RH



Leaflets

Life History: Fast-growing from seed or cuttings, thriving best in moist soil (Morton 1974). Leaves deciduous in times of drought. Also root suckers. Limited to areas with average minimum temperatures of 1.6 to -1.1°C (35-30°F) (Broschat and Meerow 1991). Flowers in spring. Fruits copiously in Florida, with seeds dispersed by birds (Morton 1976). Seedlings can grow in sun or shade and adapt quickly if light conditions change (Kamaluddin and Grace 1992a, 1992b).

TP



In MacArthur Beach State Park

KAL



Mature fruits