



## O'ahu Army Natural Resources Program

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### Notice: Likely Melastomaceae Seed Contamination of cinder

In September 2016, OANRP staff discovered Melastomaceae seedlings growing out of potting media at both our nursery at Schofield Barracks and at the Nike Nursery Facility in the northern Waianae Mountains. In all, about 20 seedlings have been found. In order to positively identify the species, several keiki are being grown out to flowering stage to allow for definitive identification. Thus far, it appears to be some type of *Tibouchina* or possibly a *Melastoma*. Both genera are on the Hawaii Noxious Weed list.

We strongly suspect the cinder in our media is the source of the *Tibouchina* contamination. We are currently in the process of bare-root cleaning and transplanting all 2,400 of the plants we still hope to outplant this year, as we don't want to introduce *Tibouchina* anywhere, much less remote native forest.

Why do we think the cinder is the source of the contamination?

- Pots were all brand new
- Potting media kept indoors
- Potting media mix made up of cinder (Big Island), Sunshine Mix #4 (Canada), Perlite (Oregon, extreme heat used in manufacturing), and Vermiculite (purchased in 2014, unlikely source). Both *Tibouchina* and *Melastoma* are not known from North America, according to [www.cabi.org](http://www.cabi.org).
- Shade houses fully enclosed (therefore birds unlikely disperser)
- No known, extant populations of *Tibouchina* or *Melastoma* within 10 miles of our greenhouses
- *Tibouchina* and other Melastomaceae are established on the Big Island.

This is the first time we've found such Melastomaceae contamination in our nursery in more than 10 years of operation. We suspect that the contaminated cinder was part of a purchase made in May or September of this year. In future, we will not use cinder as part of our media. We have discussed the issue with the vendor, and also have notified HDOA.

We strongly encourage other programs examine their greenhouses, potting media, and any plants destined for outplanting for similar contamination. Also, it may be prudent to monitor the sites of previous reintroductions for *Melastomaceae* keiki and other pests. If *Tibouchina* seeds can make their way to Oahu, a pathway may exist for other noxious pests too.

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Left: Melastomaceae seedling sprouting out of pilo pot



Right: 3-4 month old Melastomaceae, being grown for identification