



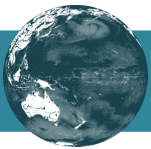
Red seaweed

Acanthophora spicifera (Vahl) Børgesen 1910

KEY FEATURES



- Erect seaweed up to 40 cm tall, branches 2–3 mm wide, sparingly branched with spined lateral branches, no spines on main axes
- Colour highly variable with shades of red, purple, yellow, orange, or brown; often very dark in intertidal, high-motion areas, and lighter in shallow areas with low water motion and reflective sandy or silty bottoms
- Inhabits a wide range of substrates from reef to mudflats worldwide
- Known from places with high water motion as well as calm tidepools
- Occurs on hard substrates (rocks, basalt ledges, dead coral heads) and epiphytic on other algae, or floating in large mats
- Typically, intertidal to subtidal, 1–8 m, down to 22 m depth in the Virgin Islands (West Tropical Atlantic)



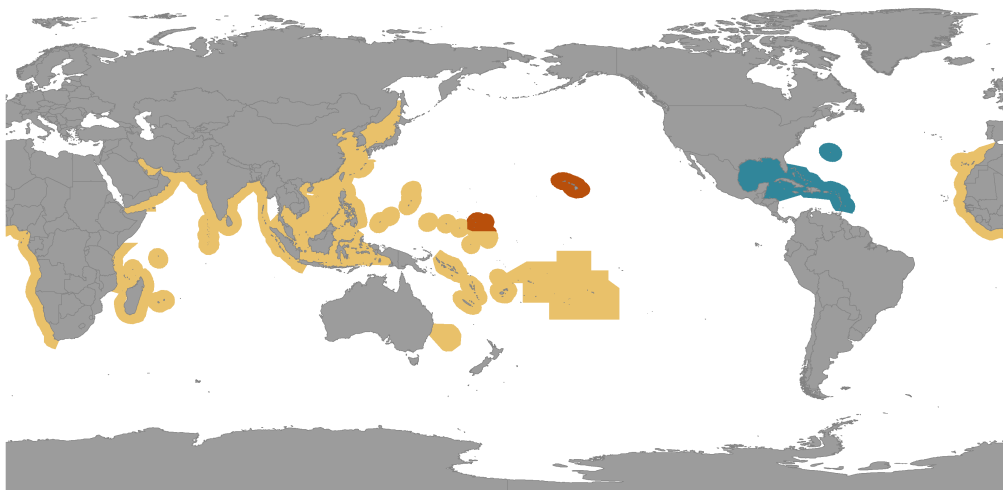
PATHWAY

✓ ballast water

✓ biofouling

✓ aquaculture transfer

- Native
- Cryptogenic
- Non-indigenous





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IMPACTS



Environmental impacts

This species adapts to a wide range of conditions which allows it to invade a diverse variety of habitats. It has a high recruitment rate and has displaced many native species of seaweed in Hawai'i where it has now become a widespread and dominant species



Human health impacts

None known



Social & cultural impacts

None known



Economic impacts

Through displacement of native algae may indirectly affect the abundance of fish and invertebrates of commercial interest

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Complex life history, with a triphasic alternation of generations; has distinct haploid sexual and diploid asexual reproductive stages, allowing species to have a high reproductive output, and can spread through fragmentation due to brittle morphology

DISTRIBUTION

Native range Type locality St Croix, Virgin Islands; found around central America, Mexico, Caribbean, and Bermuda

Non-indigenous range Non-indigenous in Hawai'i, cryptogenic distributions in Australia, Africa, Asia, Indian Ocean, and the Pacific islands

CREDITS AND REFERENCES (click reference for more information)

Images Modified from, top: M. M. Littler, D. S. Littler ([CC0 1.0](#)), bottom: J Smith from [Goodwin et al. \(2015\)](#)

References [Abbot \(1999\)](#), [Weijerman et al. \(2008\)](#)

