

Phyllanthus maderaspatensis

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Species: *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* L.

Common Names: canoe weed; ergana kabira, soreb kabir, and um areiga (Sudan); cholf and tarlanoi hindi (Arabia)

Synonyms: None found

Bayer Code: PYLMP

Description: A perennial herb or woody sub-shrub up to 1 m high, generally glabrous or very finely hairy with a deep taproot. Stem angular, almost winged. Leaves alternate, but twisted so they all extend from one side of the branch, grayish, linear-lanceolate, variable in size up to 6 cm long x 1 cm wide but usually rather less; petiole very short, with two purplish stipules, 2–3 mm long at the base. Flowers monoecious, very small, pinkish green, on pedicels 1–2 mm, one female and/or several male, in clusters in the leaf axils or opposite the leaf base, mainly male in the upper leaf axils, mainly female in the lower two thirds. Female flowers larger than male with a six-lobed calyx. Fruit a flattened globose, three-lobed shape, about 3 mm in diameter, gray-brown or olive green, to reddish when ripe. Seeds 1–2 mm long, light brown, triquetrous, with rows of minute black tubercles.

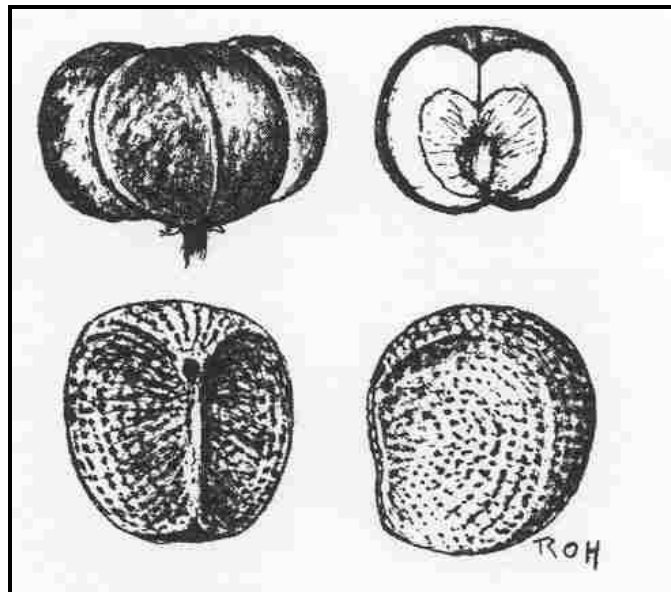


Figure 1. *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* fruit (top) and seed (bottom) from Reed (1977)

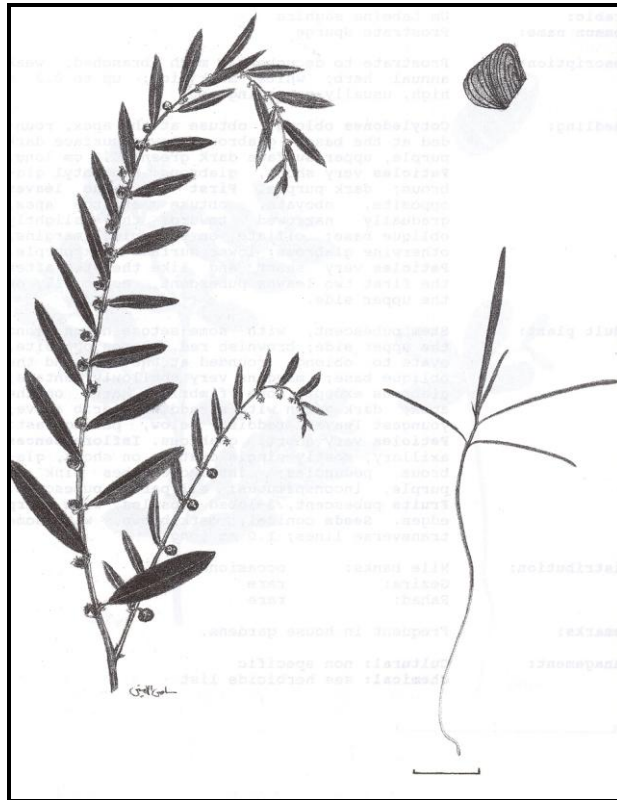


Figure 2. *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* from Braun (1991) ®

Distribution: *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* is native in a wide range of African countries plus India and Sri Lanka, and “naturalized elsewhere.” Native in Africa (Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Republic of South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe); and Asia (Burma, India, Malé Atoll, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Yemen). It has naturalized in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia (NGRP, 2009; Chaudhary and Akram, 1987; Holm et al., 1979; Hutchinson et al., 1958; Moody, 1989; Reed, 1977; Tackholm, 1974; Wells et al., 1986).

Native and Naturalized Distribution of *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* L.

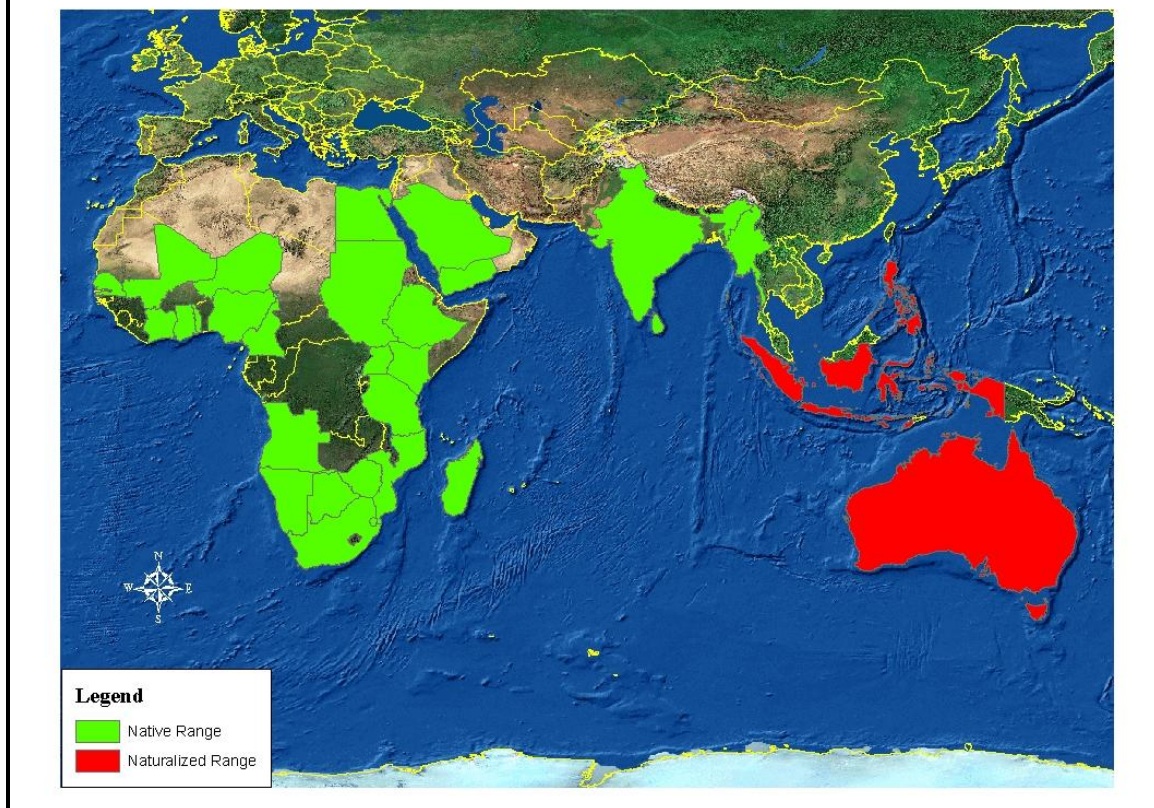


Figure 3. By Glenn Fowler, USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST, 2002 (Fowler, 2002)

Biology and Ecology: *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* is a plant thriving in a wide variety of ecologies from woodland, grassland, and streamsides to cultivated fields, including irrigated crops, mainly in tropical regions but also in the subtropics; for example, Arabia, Sudan, and southern Africa. In India it is an alternative host to the girdle beetle, *Oberea brevia* (Shrivastava, 1989).

Possible Pathways to the United States: Because it is a widespread weed of crops across Africa, Asia, and Australia, there is a significant risk of accidental introduction of *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* with crop seed or other agricultural produce. It is used as a fodder and in Sudan for headaches; therefore, it is possibility that it will be deliberately introduced.

Adverse Impacts: Holm et al. (1979) record *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* as a “principal” weed in Australia and Sudan and a “common” weed in Zimbabwe. Wild (1955) notes that it grows mainly in open woodland but could also be a serious weed of sugarcane due to its resistance to the herbicide 2,4–D. Chaudhury and Akram (1987) note that it can cause “heavy infestations” in cultivated land in Arabia. In India, it can be a dominant weed in sorghum (Kandasamy, 2000), sugarcane (Honyal, 1997), and cotton (Sreenivas 2000). Braun (1991) indicates it is abundant in irrigated cotton in Sudan. Wells et al. (1986) reports that *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* is a competitive weed of dry cropping situations tending to replace other vegetation. It is poisonous to mammals (NGRP, 2002). This is an aggressive weed, not easily controlled, flourishing in a wide range of habitats with potential to invade crops and natural vegetation across considerable areas of the United States.

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