

### Activity #1

# Weed Risk Assessment Bingo

#### Length:

One class period

#### **Prerequisite Activity:**

"What Makes a Plant Invasive?" and other activities from "Weed Warriors" Unit 5 in the Rain Forest Module are helpful, but not essential

#### **Objectives:**

- Learn which biological traits contribute to a plant's ability to invade new areas.
- Rate a species' "weediness," using criteria adapted from the Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment.
- Distinguish between non-native and invasive plants in Hawai'i.

#### Vocabulary:

Evolve	Tuber
Invasive	Vegetative fragmentation
Nitrogen-fixing	
Pollinate	
	Invasive Nitrogen-fixing

## ••• Class Period One: Weed Risk Assessment Bingo

### Materials & Setup

Print enough bingo cards for every student to have one, plus ten or more spares, depending on how many rounds you would like to play.

#### For each student

- 1 Bingo card pp. 9-38
- 32 Bingo markers (pennies, beans, or other small objects will work)
- Student Page "How to Spot a Potential Plant Pest" pp. 39-40
- Scrap paper

#### Instructions -

- 1) Pre-assign the Student Page "How to Spot a Potential Plant Pest" as homework or read it in class.
- 2) Lead a discussion about the weed risk assessment process with your students, using information from the Teacher Background page "The Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment."
- 3) Tell students that they will be playing a game of bingo based on questions drawn from the



Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment. Pass out bingo cards and markers. Each card represents a different non-native species found in Hawai'i. Some, but not all, are invasive.

- 4) Read the characteristics on the Teacher Background Page "Weedy Characteristics" slowly, one at a time. Students place markers on their cards as the matching characteristics are read. Characteristics have different point values. Some indicate such a high potential for invasiveness that they earn two or five points. Other characteristics indicate a low potential for invasiveness and earn a negative point score. Have students tally their scores separately on a piece of scrap paper. When a student's card earns 9 points, it's an invasive pest. He or she yells "pest" and the game pauses. If the card is filled out properly, he or she wins that round.
- 5) Have the winning student read each characteristic with a marker on it. Discuss with the class why having that characteristic might make a species likely to become invasive.
- 6) Remove the winning weed card from rotation, replacing it with a spare. (To illustrate the weed's invasiveness, you can place it in a "quarantine" box.) Have students clear and swap their cards with one another between each round. Play several more rounds, reading the questions in a different order each time. In a final blackout round, the first student to completely fill his or her card wins.
- 7) Starting with the cards having the most markers and finishing with the cards having the least, review each of the characteristics. Discuss why having a particular suite of characteristics might make a species even more likely to become invasive. Ask how many students did not have nine markers. Plants that score just below nine fall into a gray area: they may or may not be weeds. At present they are not likely to become invasive, but they require further evaluation. Plants with low scores are not weeds. They can be safely planted in Hawai'i. Ask students to guess the identity of their species. The cards are numbered; match the numbers on the cards to the numbered species.

## Journal Ideas

- What characteristics make a plant weedy? What characteristics don't appear to affect weediness? What could be the influence of certain combinations of characteristics? (For instance "bird-dispersed" and "many seeds.")
- Do you think that plants that score high on the Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment should be allowed into Hawai'i? Why or why not? What about plants that score low?
- What are the benefits of using non-weedy species in landscaping and agriculture?
- Name a species that has weedy characteristics but is also considered useful in Hawai'i. Who gains from its use? Who (or what) is negatively impacted by its continued use? Is it possible to mitigate the negative impacts? Who should be responsible for/pay for that mitigation?

## Assessment Tools\_

- Participation in game and discussion
- Journal entries



### Teacher Background Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment

The purpose of a weed risk assessment is to identify species that are likely to become invasive pests in a given area. This allows consumers, nursery owners, and resource managers to make informed decisions about what non-native plants can be safely imported and planted.

The Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment (WRA) is a series of forty-nine questions relating to the species' biology, geographic origin, and behavior in Hawai'i and elsewhere. Biologists consult published scientific records to answer the yes or no questions, which results in a score for each species.

A high score (7 or more\*) means the plant poses a high risk of becoming an invasive pest in Hawai'i and other Pacific Islands. A score of zero or below indicates that the plant is not likely to have major ecological or economic impacts in Hawai'i or on other Pacific Islands, based on the screening process. Plants that score 1-6 fall in a gray area. More information is needed to determine whether they could have major ecological or economic consequences in Hawai'i or on other Pacific Islands. The WRA is a proactive reference tool; it has no regulatory function at this time.

Learn more about the WRA: http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/faculty/daehler/wra/

\*For the purposes of this lesson's game, the score has been adjusted. In the game, plants that score 9 and higher are invasive.



# Teacher Background Weedy Characteristics for Bingo

(The following questions were adapted from the Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment for the purpose of this game only. They will not provide an accurate score and should not be used outside of the classroom.)

#### Read to students:

These are some of the questions that biologists use to determine whether or not a plant is likely to be invasive in Hawai'i. Each bingo card represents a real plant, which may or may not be a weed. As the questions are read, add markers to the matching squares on your card. Some characteristics score more than one point, others score zero points, and some subtract a point. Keep a tally of your score on a piece of scrap paper. If your plant scores nine or more, it's a pest. Yell "pest!"

- Does it have a climbing or smothering growth habit? (Yes = 1) Vines and climbing plants can completely shroud other vegetation, including trees, blocking out sunlight and eventually weakening or killing the underlying plants.
- Does it form dense thickets? (Yes = 1) Plants that grow closely together in dense thickets deprive other vegetation of light, water, and nutrients. They can prevent other plants from growing in an area. Such thick growth also impedes the movement of humans and animals in an area.
- Is it a grass? (Yes = 1) Grasses tend to be very competitive. They are adapted to grow quickly, disperse rapidly, and form thick cover. They may also tolerate grazing or fires that can kill other plants.
- Is it a nitrogen-fixing woody plant? (Yes = 1) Nitrogen-fixing plants (mostly legumes, plants in the pea family) have bacteria in their roots that convert nitrogen from the air into a form that plants can use. Nitrogen is an essential nutrient for all plant growth, and these plants may have a competitive edge with this built-in ability to produce their own fertilizer.
- Does it form underground storage organs, such as corms or tubers? (Yes = 1) Plants store energy in these structures, allowing them to resprout or grow back even after repeated cutting, browsing by animals, fires, or droughts.
- Is it water dispersed? (Yes = 1) Plants with buoyant seeds or plant parts can spread rapidly and invade waterways, rivers, streams, and coastlines.
- Is it wind dispersed? (Yes = 1) Wind-dispersed seeds tend to be small and often have hairs, wings, or other structures that allow them to travel long distances on wind currents. These plants have the ability to invade very remote and isolated areas.
- Is it bird dispersed? (Yes = 1) Bird-dispersed seeds are found in fleshy or pulpy fruits that birds like to eat. Birds swallow the seeds, then deposit them later, after they've flown somewhere new.



Bird-dispersed plants have the ability to spread rapidly far from the original seed source.

- Is it likely to be dispersed by humans? (Yes = 1) Plants that people desire (as food, fuel, or ornamentals) tend to be planted wherever people live, work, or grow crops. This gives plants an added opportunity to invade new areas.
- Does it require specialist pollinators? (Yes = -1) Plants that have specific pollinators, such as hummingbirds, bats, large moths, etc., may not be able to produce seeds in a new area lacking their pollinator. Therefore, requiring specialist pollinators is a handicap, not a weedy advantage.
- Is the species suited to a tropical climate? (Yes = 1) Species suited to a tropical climate will find themselves at home in the Hawaiian Islands.
- What is the quality of climate match? (Medium =1, High =2) Tropical climates can vary. Some are hotter, more humid than Hawai'i. Plants coming from a climate that closely resembles those found in these Islands will have a good chance of thriving here.
- Does it have broad climate suitability? (Yes = 1) Some plants can invade a variety of climates. They would find many niches on Maui, where diverse ecosystems range from sunny coastline to snow-capped summit.
- Is it an agricultural or forestry weed? (Yes = 2) Some plants compete with valuable farm crops, or forestry plantations, reducing yields and increasing management costs. Others may be unpalatable to cattle or other grazing animals and reduce the quality of pasture. If a plant has been reported as an agricultural or forestry weed elsewhere, it is likely to be one in Hawai'i.
- Is it an environmental weed? (Yes = 2) Environmental weeds invade natural areas, compete with native species and threaten biodiversity. They can also degrade the functioning of watersheds, increase erosion, and modify soil health. If a plant has been reported as environmental weed elsewhere, it is likely to be one in Hawai'i.
- Is it a member of the melastome family? (Yes = 1) Many plants in the melastome family have proven themselves to be fast-spreading pests throughout the Pacific. If it's been recognized as a problem species in similar island environments, it's likely to be one here.
- Is it aquatic? (Yes = 5) Aquatic plants introduced into new areas almost always become highly invasive. When freed from natural competitors or predators, they often experience "explosive" growth rates and quickly dominate their new habitat.
- Does it produce spines, thorns or burrs? (Yes = 1) Plants armed with these natural defenses can harm or injure humans and animals, and may outcompete plants lacking this protection. Spines, thorns and burrs also make removal or control of the species more difficult, and hazardous.
- Is it an allergen, or toxic to humans? (Yes = 1) Some plants have chemicals or pollen that can cause rashes, severe allergic reactions, sickness, or even death to people that come into contact with or consume them.



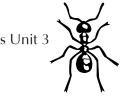
- Is it toxic to animals? (Yes = 1) Poisonous plants can harm the health of pets and livestock that accidentally eat or come into contact with them. These plants can thrive even in areas with pressure from grazing animals.
- Is it a fire hazard? (Yes = 1) Certain plants (especially some grasses) increase the risk of fire to both natural and residential areas. They may produce a lot of biomass that easily burns when it dries out, or they may contain highly flammable chemicals in their leaves or sap.
- Is it shade tolerant? (Yes = 1) Plants that tolerate low light levels are often able to invade the understory of intact, native forests and may eventually outcompete native vegetation.
- Does it reproduce by vegetative fragmentation? (Yes = 1) Some plants are able to re-sprout from pieces of stems, roots, and even leaves that either break off or are cut off from the parent plant. This enables them to spread without producing seeds, and makes control or removal of these plants difficult.
- Matures within 1 year? (1 year = 1, more than 1 = 0) Plants that mature in one year or less are able to produce seeds rapidly. They tend to invade new areas and persist in areas much longer than slower growing plants.
- Is it capable of prolific seed production? (Yes =1) When plants produce large numbers of seeds, they increase their ability to take over an area as well as to spread away from the site and invade new areas.
- Does it have a persistent seed bank? (Yes =1) Seeds that remain viable or fertile in the soil for long periods of time are able to germinate years, or decades, after the parent plant is gone. This ability can make removal or eradication of certain plants difficult, if not impossible.

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# Teacher Background Bingo Card Plant Species (30 unique cards)

Card #			Number of Points	
1.	'Awa	(Piper methysticum)	[7]	
2.	Plumeria	(Plumeria rubra)	[5]	
3.	Banana	( <i>Musa</i> sp)	[6]	
4.	Hawaiian bamboo	(Schizostachyum glaucifolium)	[8]	
5.	Miconia	(Miconia Calvescens)	[14]	
6.	Iron wood	(Casuarina equisetifolia)	[15]	
7.	Ivy gourd	(Coccinia grandis)	[14]	
8.	Pampas grass	(Cortaderia jubata)	[19*]	
9.	Banana poka	(Passiflora tarminiana)	[14]	
10.	Fountain grass	(Pennisetum setaceum)	[16]	
11.	Long thorn kiawe	(Prosopis juliflora)	[16]	
12.	Strawberry guava	(Psidium cattleianum)	[13]	
13.	Castor bean	(Ricinus communis)	[15]	
14.	Yellow Himalayan raspberry	(Rubus ellipticus)	[15]	
15.	Giant salvinia	(Salvinia molesta)	[23*]	
16.	Christmas berry	(Schinus terebinthifolius)	[16]	
17.	Fireweed	(Senecio madagascariensis)	[15]	
18.	Gorse	(Ulex europaeus)	[16]	
19.	Cane tibouchina	(Tibouchina herbacea)	[16]	
20.	Mountain apple	(Szygium malaccense)	[8]	
21.	Shampoo ginger	(Zingiber zerumbet)	[6]	
22.	Breadfruit	(Artocarpus altilis)	[6]	
23.	Coconut palm	(Cocos nucifera)	[5]	
24.	Spider lily	(Crinum asiaticum)	[7]	
25.	Royal Poinciana	(Delonix regia)	[8]	
26.	Wattle	(Acacia mearnsii)	[15]	
27.	Arundo	(Arundo donax)	[14]	
28.	Cat's claw	(Caesalpinia decapetala)	[16]	
29.	Kahili ginger	(Hedychium gardnerianum)	[12]	
30.	Lantana	(Lantana camara)	[15]	

\*Blackout



Weed Assessment Bingo #1					
Persistent seed bank	Environmental weed	Evergreen	Grows to 7 feet tall		
Shrub	Likely to be dis- persed by humans	Fire hazard	Native to tropical America & Africa		
Quality of climate match: high	Bird dispersed	Toxic to animals	Prolific seed production		
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Species suited to tropical climate	Agricultural/ Forestry weed	Forms dense thickets	Produces spines, thorns or burrs		
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