



For Immediate Release

Do the Ways We Live and Work Influence the Spread of Invasive Plants?

A recent study shows we may be overlooking important information that can help us predict how and where invasive plants are likely to spread. Researchers writing in the journal *Invasive Plant Science and Management* say invasion pathways can be closely linked to trends in how we live and work.

The team collected data on nonnative plants found on six of the main islands in the Hawaiian archipelago, including how and when each plant was introduced. They identified almost 1500 nonnative species that have survived and reproduced over many generations without cultivation. The plants were found to originate from a wide variety of climates, continents and taxonomic groups.

When the data on nonnative plant introduction was analyzed alongside socioeconomic data, an important trend emerged. As the island economy moved from agriculture to tourism, the establishment of nonnative ornamental plants increased exponentially – introduced to beautify tourist areas and residential communities. Nonnative plants also began to move more quickly from island to island after the rise of tourism, despite the barrier represented by ocean borders.

How should communities respond? The research team recommends monitoring landscaped areas for invasive ornamentals and taking steps to prevent their import and sale through nurseries. To contain new invasions, they also recommend regulatory controls and rapid updates to noxious weed lists.

Want to know more? You can read the article “Plant naturalization trends reflect socioeconomic history and show a high likelihood of inter-island spread in Hawai‘i” at [\[link to the article as a FirstView paper online on Cambridge Core\]](#).