

Lantana camara

Recognize the problem

Family: Verbenaceae (verbena family).

Common names: Lantana

French: Lantanier, Thé de Gambie; **Kinyarwanda:** Umuhengeri; **Kikuyu:** Mitauti.

Perennial, highly variable and woody shrub, 2-5 m high which can be erect or scrambling; stem is quadrangular sometimes with prickles; branches with small thorns.

Leaves: Yellow-green to green, generally oval with a pointed tip, 2-12 cm in length, and 2-6 cm wide, with a rough surface.

Flowers: Small, multi-coloured (yellow, orange, white, pale violet, pink or red), in stalked, dense, clusters ca. 4 cm across.

Fruits: Round, fleshy, 2-seeded, each 5mm wide, green turning purple then blue-black when maturing; arranged in dense, round clusters (roughly similar in appearance to a blackberry).

Background

Origin: Latin America.

Introduction: As ornamental.

Habitat: Tropical and subtropical regions.

Spread: By birds and humans.

Invades: Hedges, edges of crop fields, degraded lands, roadsides, riparian zones, pastures and parklands, plantations, forest edges.

Impacts: In many countries Lantana encroaches on agricultural land, reduces the carrying capacity of pastures and is a weed in many agricultural crops. Most of the pasturelands in India have been invaded to some degree resulting in lost productivity of approximately US\$924 million per year. It would not be unreasonable to state that Lantana significantly reduces the potential agricultural output in Africa. In forestry it tends to over-run young plantations, to prevent access to older ones and increase fire hazards. Clearing of crop fields is labour-intensive and, therefore, increases management cost. The shrub forms extensive, dense and impenetrable thickets which smother natural vegetation and may harbour tsetse flies. It is toxic to livestock and children have been known to die after eating unripe berries.

Lantana flower and leaves. (Photo by © CABI)



Lantana infestation. (Photo by © Dan Clark, USDI National Park Service, Bugwood.org)



Scientific name(s) > *Lantana camara*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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