Cryptostegia madagascariensis
Bojer ex Dcne.

Rubber vine *Cryptostegia madagascariensis* occurs naturally along the western coast of Madagascar. It has been dispersed widely largely due to its popularity as an ornamental; and for extraction of its latex content for rubber manufacture. It is found in tropical climates world-wide where it is has naturalized. *C. madagascariensis* prefers the Northern, wetter part of the coast. Its counterpart *Cryptostegia grandiflora* on the other hand prefers a drier climate. Where the two species overlap, *C. madagascariensis* is thought to out-compete *C. grandiflora* due to its preference of a wetter climate. (*C. grandiflora* is an aggressive woody climbing shrub which is capable of growing over trees up to 30m high).

*C. madagascariensis* is considered highly invasive in Hawaii, Australia and Brazil. On Anegada, in the British Virgin Islands, *C. madagascariensis* is one of three highly invasive plant species (the others being *Casuaria equisetifolia* and *Kalenchoe pinnata* = *Bryophyllum pinnatum*) moving into natural areas where they pose a threat to the Critically Endangered (CR) endemic herbaceous vine *Metastelma anegadense*, the CR Pokemeboy (*Acacia anegadensis*); and the CR *Cordia rupicola*.

Small plants can be pulled by hand or dug out with the fruits bagged and disposed of properly, however the milky sap should be avoided.

Starr *et al* (2003) note that there are several chemical listed in Australia for *Cryptostegia* spp. control. Grazon DS, Banvel, Brushoff, Tordon, Velpar, Graslan, and 2, 4-D are all used, however as *C. grandiflora* is the species causing most concern it is not known how effective these might be on *C. madagascariensis*. In Hawai‘i, Garlon has been used in cut stump treatments as well as mechanical removal. Foliar spraying has been shown to be most effective on smaller plants. Basal bark spraying is not effective on multi-stemmed plants; however with singular-stemmed plants, the spray should be completely around the base. Root application has also been used in Australia; however this method is a non-selective method. It has however been found to useful by farmers that were far off in the bush and needed a lightweight method for controlling individual outliers.

References:

ISSG 2012. Global Invasive Species Database [link]