

SPECIES: *LANTANA CAMARA*

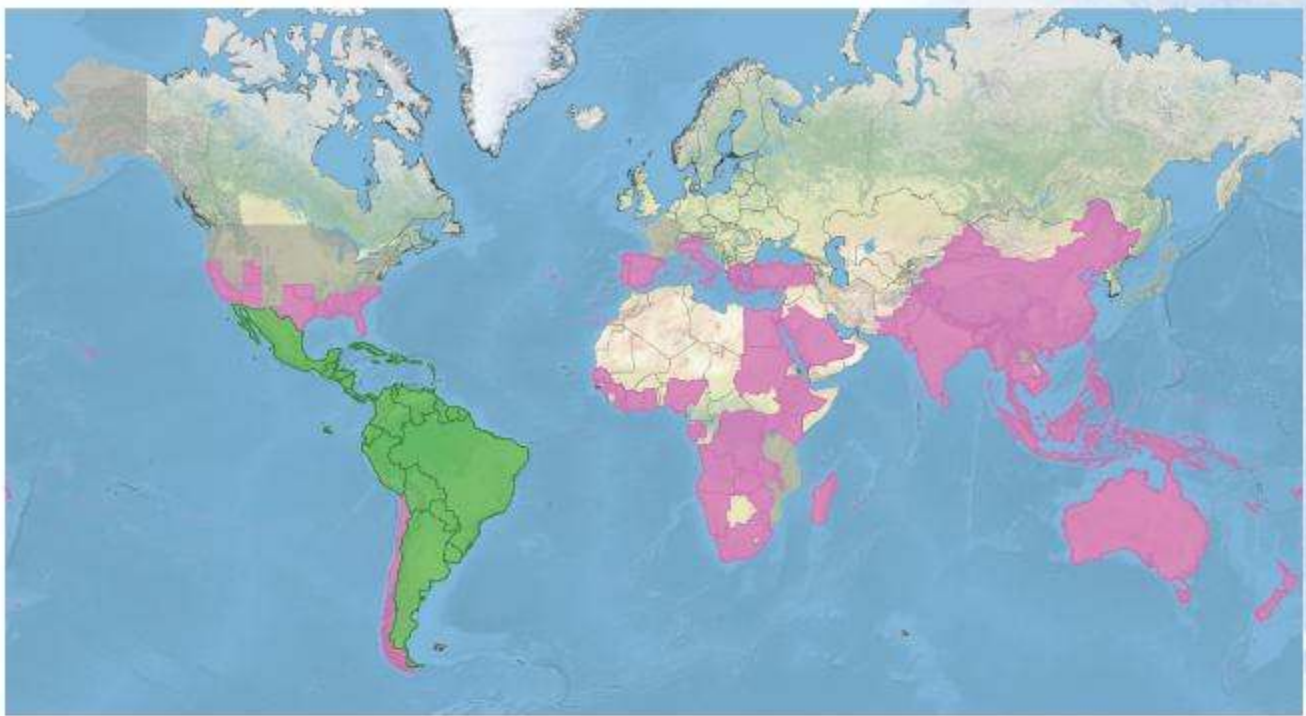
COMMON NAME: WILD SAGE, LANTANA

FAMILY: VERBENACEAE

Plant Description

Lantana is a perennial woody shrub that can grow to be 2-5 m. It is very adaptable, growing sparsely in dry environments, but forming dense thickets in wetter environments. It can also scramble up trees, like a climber. It has spread across the country, from southern India to the Himalayan foothills, and is observed up to 2000 masl. Young stems are square, and often have prickles. The leaves are opposite, green to yellow-green in colour, broadly oval, but with a pointed tip. The leaf margin has rounded teeth, and the leaves are rough to the touch. The flowers are small, tubular, and range in colour from cream, yellow, orange, pink, purple to red. Flowers are arranged in showy clusters, and are attractive to butterflies. Fruits mature rapidly and change colour from dark green to black. Flowering and fruiting is year round. Fruits are widely dispersed by a number of birds, but also by mammals like the sloth bear.





Source: CABI, 2022. *Lantana camara*. In: Invasive Species Compendium. Wallingford, UK: CAB International. <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/29771#toDistributionMaps> [accessed: 25/01/2022]

■ Introduced
■ Native
■ Origin not recorded

***Lantana camara* VERBENACEAE**

Origin: Central and South America

Introduction: The plant was introduced as an ornamental plant. Its first recorded observation in India is from Calcutta in 1809.

Impacts: Lantana forms dense thickets in the forest understory, suppressing regeneration of native species and changing forest structure and composition. It adds to the fuel load, and can lead to frequent and intense fires that can increase tree mortality. It is unpalatable, thus reducing forage availability for wild herbivores; the leaves can also be toxic to grazing animals, causing severe fodder scarcity for livestock. Lantana is also an alternative host for sandal spike disease of Sandalwood. Lantana-invaded forest are perceived as 'dangerous' by forest-dwelling communities, because the dense thickets increase the likelihood of encounters with wildlife. Lantana also suppresses regeneration of important plants like amla, which people harvest from the forest.

Management: The "cut-rootstock" method, first attempted in Corbett Tiger Reserve, is considered the most effective form of mechanical removal. This involves cutting Lantana individuals below the root collar, which prevents resprouting. (Uprooting—apart from being more labour intensive—is also less effective. It brings buried seeds to the soil surface, resulting in increased regeneration from seed).

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