

***Chromolaena odorata* (L.) R.M. King and H. Robinson in the Congo.**

(*Chromolaena odorata* (L.) R.M. King et H. Robinson au Congo)

G. BANI and P. LE GALL

Laboratoire d'Entomologie agricole, Centre DGRST-ORSTOM
Brazzaville, Congo.

Introduction

C. odorata was introduced to Congo more than 3 decades ago. Its rapid growth makes it the most dominant weed in idle lands. Even though the majority of the population consider *C. odorata* as a noxious weed, some people find the plant beneficial. Based on personal observations and investigations conducted in Congo, this paper describes the present status of the plant in Congo.

Origin

Originating in Central and South America and the Caribbean, *C. odorata* was introduced to Asia in the 1840's. It came to Africa from Asia in 1937. *C. odorata* was first collected in 1965 (Gautier 1992), however, farmers began to notice the weed in the early sixties during the presidency of Marien N'gouabi, for whom the plant was named.

Habitat

C. odorata is found throughout Congo with the southern and southwestern regions being most affected (Fig. 1). The central region is currently being colonized. In the northern part of the country, *C. odorata* is less frequent. *C. odorata* is found in a variety of landscapes. Its spread is facilitated by land cultivation, road construction, and electrical lines. In cities, *C. odorata* even occurs in vacant lots and along sewer lines that are not being maintained.

Local names

The most popular names of *C. odorata* in the south and southwest are: lantana of N'gouabi, Mataya onbala (the invader); Comilog (a railroad company); Kalamilebe; Kalamana; and Diabantou (toxic).

Noxious effects

Due to its rapid growth rate, *C. odorata* displaces other spontaneous plant species from the forest and savanna. *C. odorata* also contributes to forest degeneration (de Foresta 1991). In addition, *C. odorata* reduces diversity of the vegetation and decreases the quality of pasture. Another ecological impact derives from its representing an optimum breeding habitat for *Zonocerus variegatus* (Bani 1990).

