Help Is Out There

Listed here are some of the public sources of information and support available to private land owners of all scales for managing melaleuca and other invasive plants on their properties. These programs help Florida’s natural areas by reducing potential sources of new and renewed melaleuca infestations.

These programs also serve as good examples for other municipalities by showing creative ways to help constituents cope with the burden of invasive plants.
Wildlife Habitat

Parks and Recreation or call (352) 338-9547.

Melaleuca is similarly regulated in many Counties by state agencies, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) assists private landowners to enhance or restore habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species and Special Species of Concern. Visit www.myfwc.com/lip or contact LIP Coordinator at (850) 488-3831.

• USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats on private lands. WHIP provides the landowner with technical and financial assistance to implement a wildlife habitat development plan for a mutually agreed upon period of years. Visit www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov or call (352) 338-9547.

Biological Control for Melaleuca

Two insects, a weevil and a psyllid, feed on melaleuca leaves and serve as biological controls for the tree. Their feeding stunts melaleuca growth, thins the canopy, reduces flowering and can even kill seedlings. Both insects are found on melaleuca throughout Florida. Additional insects are also available directly from the USDA-ARS Invasive Plant Research Laboratory at (954) 475-6564.

Pine flatwoods and saw palmetto

Weevil adult (left), larva (center) and feeding damage (right).

Poyllid adult (left), nymphs (center) and feeding damage (right).

Legislation

Federal and State: The federal government (USDA) includes melaleuca on the Federal Noxious Weeds List, prohibiting its importation and interstate transport without a special permit. Two state agencies, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), regulate melaleuca as an aquatic and terrestrial weed, respectively, making it unlawful to possess, collect, release, transport, cultivate, import or introduce the tree without a special permit.

Local: Melaleuca is similarly regulated in many counties and municipalities through local invasive species ordinances. In addition, local ordinances often include building code statutes that require newly developed properties be cleared of melaleuca (and other invasive exotic plants) and maintained free of invasive plants for a designated time or even indefinitely.

Permitting: Many localities require permits for tree removal in an effort to preserve urban canopies. Most, however, have exemptions for melaleuca and other invasive exotics, allowing their removal without prior approval. A free permit may still be required to make sure native or other desirable vegetation is not removed by mistake. Also, if the tree removal process involves heavy equipment (other than chainsaws) or is taking place in environmentally sensitive areas or wetlands, a permit may be required.