



For assistance with identifying invasive plants on your property, advice on control methods, or help finding a tree removal professional, contact your

- county cooperative extension office
- county environmental resources department
- local office of the Florida Division of Forestry

For more information on melaleuca and its management, visit the TAME Melaleuca Web site

<http://tame.ifas.ufl.edu>

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MELALEUCA

Help for the Property Owner

Public sources of information and
support for private land owners



<http://tame.ifas.ufl.edu>



Melaleuca flower and cluster of seed capsules.



Each seed capsule contains hundreds of tiny seeds.



Melaleuca fuels hot fires. Fire helps melaleuca spread.

Melaleuca quinquenervia (aka paper tree, paperbark, cajeput) has been the poster child for invasive plant species in Florida for years. Since its introduction from Australia a century ago, melaleuca has infested more than half a million acres of natural areas in the greater Everglades region. Melaleuca trees produce millions of seeds, are adapted to fire, grow quickly and invade a wide range of native habitats. They form dense forests that crowd out other vegetation, interfere with water flow and alter ecosystems.

Public agencies responsible for managing Florida's natural resources have made melaleuca removal a priority, dedicating funding and personnel to melaleuca management programs in parks, preserves, and conservation areas. Their diligence over the last two decades has measurably reduced melaleuca acreage on public lands. But that same level of funding and technical expertise is not always available for private lands, making melaleuca removal an overwhelming and expensive task for many individual landowners. Unmanaged melaleuca anywhere serves as a seed source for further spread of this Everglades invader.



Work crews killing melaleuca by hand in the Everglades.



Stemming the Everglades invasion: Melaleuca on the left was treated.

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.

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.

Before removing any trees, please first check with your city or county environmental resources personnel to ensure compliance.

Invasive Plant Removal

- **Palm Beach** County's Invasive Vegetation Removal Incentive Program will pay for removal of melaleuca and Australian pine and share costs for removal of seven other prohibited species on properties within 500 feet of a designated natural area. The county will remove Old World climbing fern (Lygodium) and air potato vines on all properties free of charge. Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resource Management, (561) 233-2400 or www.pbcgov.com/erm/.

- **Miami-Dade** County's Environmentally Endangered Land Covenant (EEL) is a property tax incentive program whereby property owners are given the lowest tax assessment offered in exchange for preserving their property as a natural area for ten years. Property management requirements under the program include invasive species control. Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management, (305) 372-6585 or visit www.miamidade.gov/derm/.

- **Highlands** County has a short term federal grant to reimburse land owners for 50-75% of the cost of removing five acres or more of melaleuca, Brazilian pepper, or Old World climbing fern. Highlands Natural Resources Department, (863) 402-6545.

- The City of **Naples**' Melaleuca Tree Removal Program offers to remove melaleuca trees from residential properties within city limits at no charge. City of Naples Community Services Department, (239) 213-7120.

- The City of **Sanibel** Natural Resources Department has conducted a successful melaleuca removal program throughout the island and is now focusing on Brazilian pepper and Australian pine removal.

- **Fort Lauderdale** Parks and Recreation Department has modified its melaleuca removal policy. Although they will not remove melaleuca on private property, they are targeting melaleuca trees

Cost-Share and Incentive Programs

on public property in residential areas – parks, rights-of-way and medians – and replacing them with non-invasive species. Call their Urban Forestry program at (954) 761-5785 to notify of melaleuca trees on rights-of-way near your home.

Land Management and Conservation

- **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation** Commission's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) assists private landowners to enhance or restore



Pine flatwoods and saw palmetto

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.

Similarly, the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance with conservation practices on agricultural land. Visit www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov or call (352) 338-9515.

- **US Fish and Wildlife Service's** Partners Program restores, improves, and protects fish and wildlife habitat on private lands by providing technical or financial assistance to qualified landowners, or finding other suitable programs that

will. Visit <http://southeast.fws.gov/partners> or call (239) 353-8442 ext 232.

Community Grants

Counties like Miami-Dade, Broward, and Sarasota offer neighborhood or community grants to organizations and non-profit groups, including neighborhood associations, for landscape improvements and urban forestry.

Free Replacement Trees

Miami-Dade, Broward and St. Lucie Counties have tree giveaway programs for residents.

- **Miami-Dade County's Adopt-a-Tree:** (305) 372-6555
- **Broward County's Replant Broward:** (954) 436-7579
- **St. Lucie County's Adopt-a-Tree:** (772) 462-2526

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 UF IFAS/St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension Service at <http://kgioeli.ifas.ufl.edu>, or by calling the USDA-ARS Invasive Plant Research Laboratory at (954) 475-6564.



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



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