

Miconia

(*Miconia* species)

Regional priority weed objective: Prevention

First discovered in 2003 on the Far North Coast of NSW, Miconia is part of a national eradication program funded by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Queensland. Within the Tweed, Byron and Lismore shires, thirty-five mature plants have been removed and seedlings are frequently found around these sites.

Four species of Miconia (*M. calvescens*, *M. racemosa*, *M. nervosa*, and *M. cionotricha*) have been detected in Australia. Only *Miconia calvescens* has been found in Northern NSW.

Miconia calvescens

Sought after by plant collectors for its striking appearance, this Miconia species, also known as the velvet tree, has the potential to become a major problem in the rainforests of Northern NSW. Already having a devastating effect in Tahiti and Hawaii, it has been labelled the 'purple plague' where it has formed dense thickets replacing native plants and affecting wildlife populations.



Description: *M. calvescens* is a small tree up to 15m high.

Leaves: The leaves are green on top with a deep purple underside and can be up to 70cm long. Three large veins run the length of each leaf from the base to the tip. The top of the leaves are soft like velvet to touch.

Flowers: Pink or white in a large panicle of over 1,000 individual flowers.

Fruit: Black to purple, 6mm in diameter, and contain up to 200 small seeds.

Dispersal: Spread by fruit-eating birds and mammals. Can also reproduce vegetatively.

Habitat: Thrives in rainforest understories.

Miconia

Declaration and similar species

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These weeds are not currently found in the state, or are present in small numbers, pose significant biosecurity risk and prevention is a reasonably practical objective.

Importation, possession, and sale are prohibited. Landholders are required to notify the local control authority if they are aware of any Miconia and are required to keep their land free of this plant.

The following Miconia species of similar appearance are all scrambling shrubs up to 3m.



Miconia nervosa

The stems and veins of *M. nervosa* leaves are light red in colour. Leaves can grow to 25cm long, tapering to a long drip-tip. The leaf surfaces have small, fine pink hairs.



Miconia ciontricha

Its common name is Hairy maya; all surfaces are covered in a thick coat of fine russet-coloured hairs.



Miconia racemosa

The leaves of *M. racemosa* form in opposite pairs and the traverse veins are quite deep, forming a quilted pattern. The flowers are pink and grow on racemes.



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