

MARCO'S MOST UNWANTED TREES

AGGRESSIVE



INVASIVE



DESTRUCTIVE

WANTED FOR: UPROOTING INFRASTRUCTURE, SMOTHERING NATIVE PLANTS, FUELING WILDFIRES, CREATING STORM HAZARDS



TOXIC

BRAZILIAN PEPPER
SCHINUS TEREBINTHIFOLIA

Bio: An evergreen tree/shrub with dense foliage and bright red berries. Native to South America.
Why Unwanted: One of Florida's most aggressive invaders. Forms dense thickets, displaces native plants, and causes skin and respiratory irritation in humans. Nearly impossible to control once established.



FIRE HAZARDS

PUNK TREE
MELALEUCA QUINQUENERVIA

Bio: Tall, white-barked tree native to Australia, known for its spongy bark and bottlebrush-like flowers.
Why Unwanted: Rapid seeder and water hog. Destroys wetlands, increases fire risk, and is nearly impossible to remove due to extensive root systems.




AUSTRALIAN PINE
CASUARINA SPP

Bio: Evergreen tree with slender "needlelike" branchlets (tiny scale leaves) and rough, peeling bark.
Why Unwanted: Alters native plant communities by displacing native species. Its seeds (tiny 1-seeded nutlets) spread and establish, forming dense monocultures.



DOWNY ROSE-MYRTLE
RHODOMYRTUS TOMENTOSUS

Bio: A fast-growing, evergreen shrub or small tree with fragrant pink flowers and dense foliage.
Why Unwanted: Forms impenetrable thickets, shades out native plants, and disrupts fire cycles. Its seeds are spread widely by birds, making control extremely difficult. Prohibited under Marco Island Ordinance #98-19.



EAR TREE
ENTEROLOBIUM CYCLOCARPUM

Bio: Large ornamental tree from Central America with a wide, spreading canopy and distinctive ear-shaped seed pods.
Why Unwanted: Fast-growing and heavy-seeding. Escapes cultivation in SWFL. They establish in disturbed areas and compete with native hardwoods. Its dense canopy suppresses understory plants, and fallen pods create litter that reduces natural regeneration.



BISHOPWOOD
BISCHOFIA JAVANICA

Bio: Evergreen or semi-evergreen tree with shiny trifoliate leaves and milky sap.
Why Unwanted: Produces abundant bird-dispersed berries. Invades hammocks and wetlands, displacing native plants and altering forest structure.



EARLEAF ACACIA
ACACIA AURICULIFORMIS

Bio: Medium-sized ornamental tree from northern Australia and Asia with yellow flower spikes and curved seed pods.
Why Unwanted: Produces dense shade, displaces native shrubs, and spreads aggressively by seed and root suckers.



SURINAM CHERRY
EUGENIA UNIFLORA

Bio: Evergreen shrub or small tree (to ~30 ft) with opposite, glossy leaves and orange-red ribbed fruits.
Why Unwanted: It invades hammocks and natural areas, forming dense thickets that displace native plants and prevent regeneration.



GUAVA/STRAWBERRY GUAVA
PSIDIMUM GUAJAVA/PSIDIMUM CATTLEIANUM

Bio: Shrub or small tree with opposite, glossy leaves and pale fruit (yellow or red berries) containing many seeds.
Why Unwanted: Aggressive suckering + seed spread by animals. Forms dense thickets that crowd out native plants in forests and woodlands.



SAPODILLA
MANILKARA ZAPOTA

Bio: Evergreen with clusters of alternate leaves and brown, rough fruits containing hard black seeds.
Why Unwanted: Escaped cultivation in South Florida. Animals eat and spread the fruit. Large trees shade out natives; seedlings form dense patches that block understory growth.



TOXIC

CARROTWOOD
CUPANIOPSIS ANACARDIOIDES

Bio: A medium-sized ornamental tree with glossy leaves and bright orange seed pods.
Why Unwanted: Spreads prolifically via bird-dispersed seeds. Invades coastal forests and hardwood hammocks. Disrupts natural succession and native regeneration. Illegal to plant under Marco Ordinance #98-19.



CAMPHORA
CINNAMOMUM CAMPHORA

Bio: Evergreen tree from eastern Asia with glossy, aromatic leaves and small black fruits.
Why Unwanted: Produces up to 100,000 seeds annually, spread widely by birds and other animals. Invades disturbed areas, hammocks, and floodplains, forming dense stands that displace native species



CHINABERRY TREE
MELIA AZEDARACH

Bio: Deciduous tree from Asia with fernlike leaves and pale purple flowers that develop into hard, yellow berries.
Why Unwanted: Spreads aggressively from bird-dispersed fruit. Seeds germinate in hammocks, edges, and disturbed areas, creating dense stands crowding out natives. Known for brittle wood that breaks in storms.



DISHONORABLE MENTIONS

OTHER INVASIVE TREES FOUND IN FLORIDA, ALSO HARMFUL TO NATIVE HABITATS.

- Dalbergia sissoo - Indian Rosewood
- Ficus microcarpa
- Laurel fig
- Albizia julibrissin
- Mimosa tree
- Albizia lebbeck
- Woman's tongue
- Bauhinia variegata
- Orchid tree
- Calophyllum antillanum
- Santa Maria
- Koelreuteria elegans
- Golden rain
- Leucaena leucocephala
- Lead tree
- Syzygium cumini
- Java plum
- Syzygium jambos
- Rose apple
- Triadica sebifera
- Chinese tallow

THERE'S MORE CULPRITS OUT THERE! SEE OUR POSTER ON OTHER PLANTS

TREES LISTED IN RED ARE PROHIBITED BY LAW IN FLORIDA OR UNDER MARCO ISLAND ORDINANCE #98-19 & SEC 30-435 POSSESSION, SALE, TRANSPORT, OR PLANTING OF THESE SPECIES IS ILLEGAL. OTHER SPECIES SHOWN ARE NOT BANNED BY LAW BUT ARE CLASSIFIED AS CATEGORY 1 INVASIVES BY THE FLORIDA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL DUE TO THEIR SEVERE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT. ALL DISPLACE NATIVE PLANTS, ALTER HABITATS, AND REDUCE BIODIVERSITY.

PLANT NATIVE ALTERNATIVES INSTEAD. LEARN MORE BY SCANNING THE QR-CODE