

Exotic Control Program

Brazilian pepper and melaleuca have been ecological disasters in south and central Florida and are a major threat to many native plant communities.

The FNPS Board of Directors, at its July meeting, decided to support an effort to persuade the U.S. Department of Agriculture to begin research on biological control of melaleuca and Brazilian pepper. Biological control is the use of one organism to suppress population levels of the target organism. If a successful control agent can be found, it would be a cheap and effective way to bring these two pests to heel.

If you want to help in this effort, write to: Ernest L. Corley, Jr., Director, South Atlantic Area, Russell Research Center, P.O. Box 5677, Athens, GA 30613; or to Dr. Warren Shaw, National Research Program Leader, USDA/ARS BARC - West N. Bldg., Beltsville, MA 20705.

USDA bases its decisions on research projects largely on economic losses caused by the pest species. The most useful letters are those with financial figures such as: "My company spends \$xxx a year to remove Brazilian peppers," or "An allergic reaction to melaleuca blooms caused me (or someone you know) to be hospitalized for five days at a cost of \$xxx." etc.

● Steve Farnsworth