

HERNANDO COUNTY CODE ENFORCEMENT

PROPERTY OWNER'S GUIDE TO BRAZILIAN PEPPERS

Brazilian pepper, *Schinus terebinthifolius*, is an invasive exotic plant introduced into Florida in the late 1800's as an ornamental plant and has spread rapidly through Florida's unique plant and animal communities.

Brazilian pepper threatens native environments with dense growth, high seed production and germination. Distributed by birds, it aggressively invades damp areas and disturbed sites, such as: roadsides, ditches, and cleared land. Natural ecological communities, such as pinelands, hammocks, and mangrove islands are also being invaded and overwhelmed. Due to Brazilian pepper's ability to invade aquatic and wetland habitats, the State of Florida has placed it on the Prohibited Aquatic Plant List. This action made it illegal to import, transport, collect, cultivate, sell or possess Brazilian pepper in Florida.



Brazilian pepper also poses several health threats to humans. A relative of poison ivy and poison sumac, the sap from Brazilian pepper can cause a persistent irritation to the skin. Pollen from the flowers is known to cause respiratory irritation leading to sinus congestion, sneezing, and headaches.

Brazilian pepper is an evergreen shrub or small tree up to 33 feet tall. Clusters of red berries can be found on female trees nearly year round. If in doubt, have a specimen properly identified prior to control operations. County Cooperative Extension agents are a good resource for plant identification.

ERADICATION METHODS

Eradication of Brazilian pepper by property owners requires persistence. Once the large plants are eradicated, the site must be monitored for new seedlings.

Removal of large quantities of fresh foliage is labor intensive, causes extra burdens to the landfill and promotes germination. If infestation is heavy and in large areas, it is recommended to kill the trees by herbicides and let them rot on site. Removal of dead trees after treatment will cost less labor.

Plants that are treated and die in residential areas should be cut and removed for aesthetic reasons. Plants that are treated and die in undeveloped areas may be left uncut to rot in place.

Herbicides are designed to kill the entire plant, including the roots. For the property owner, two methods of herbicide application are recommended: 1) Cut stump treatment for large plants, and 2) foliar application for seedlings and re-sprouts. Remember, with any pesticide, **“THE LABEL IS THE LAW”**. **Never use a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with the label.**

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1. Basal Bark Applications

Herbicide is applied with a sprayer directly to the bark around the circumference of each stem/tree up to 15 inches above the ground. The herbicide must be in an oil-soluble formulation and if not ready to use form, it may be mixed with specially formulated penetrating oil. Garlon-4 and Pathfinder II can be used.

2. Basal Soil Application

Granular herbicide can be applied by a hand-held spreader to the basal soil of the plant. Velpar is usually used in this treatment. Rainwater will soak the chemical into the soil.

3. Foliar Application

Foliar applications often require considerably more herbicide and can kill non-target vegetation. Extreme caution should be used and only apply where seedling densities would make hand removal too time consuming.

a. Dilute herbicide in spray bottle as directed on the label. Concentrated Roundup, Rodeo, Garlon 3A, and Brush-B-Gon are used for this method.

b. Carefully spray leaves until all leaf surfaces are wet. Avoid damage to neighboring plants by minimizing over-spraying and observing drift patterns. **Do not apply during windy conditions or when rain is expected within 24 hours.**

If the Brazilian pepper is in an aquatic environment (tree is in water), only Rodeo herbicide can be used. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Invasive Plant Management, Permitting Section may require a permit. Call (850) 488-5631 for more information.

4. Cut Stump Treatment

a. Cut Brazilian pepper at ground level with a saw. Follow all safety precautions recommended when cutting and applying herbicide! Avoid contact of sap or cut plant surfaces with skin. Gloves, goggles, long sleeve shirt and pants offer good protection. Wash work clothing separately from other laundry.

b. Immediately apply the herbicide according to label instructions. Use a clean garden spray bottle or a paint brush to apply the herbicide. Do not wait more than five minutes to apply the herbicide, because the cut stump will begin to harden and the herbicide will not be absorbed properly.

c. Check treated stumps every four to six weeks for sprouting. Reapply herbicide to new growth. If possible, re-cut top of stump and repeat cut stump treatment. Stumps from large trees may require several applications over time to achieve control.

d. Dispose of cut branches according to local ordinance.

Contact local pest control supply stores, lawn and garden stores, or hardware stores for available products.

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If possible, schedule eradication in late summer or early fall, before new berries have ripened. If ripe berries are present, take precautions to avoid dropping berries during brush removal. Every seed is a potential new plant that will need to be eradicated. **Hand pick seed clusters and dispose in plastic bags if possible.**

Hand removal is an effective method for control of seedlings or for a few small plants. Using a shovel, dig up as much of the root system as possible. Dig out any loose root fragments from the hole. Resprouting from root systems will continually need to be cut back where herbicide has not been used. Persistence in removing sprouts and seedlings will eventually eliminate Brazilian pepper from the site.

Professional Weed Control

If the job appears too large to handle alone, there are professional eradication and removal services available. Check your local Yellow Pages under Weed Control, Landscaping, Lawn Maintenance, or Tree Service.

PREVENTING RE-ESTABLISHMENT

Even if all Brazilian pepper is removed from a site, there is always the threat of re-establishment from an outside source. Seeds are dispersed by birds and small mammals. Routinely surveying your property and removing any new plants is the only way to keep your property free of invasive exotic plants. To help reduce the sources of seed, educate neighboring property owners on the negative impacts of Brazilian pepper and how they can eradicate it.

PLANT NATIVE SPECIES

One of the best ways to keep Brazilian pepper from re-establishing itself after removal is to give the native plants a head start. By planting native species, Brazilian pepper has a harder time regaining a foothold.

When planting native species, try to pick plants that replace the species that were displaced by the Brazilian pepper and offer wildlife food or habitat. There are numerous nurseries that specialize in native plants for aquatic and upland habitats with personnel who can help determine which plant will work best on your property. To locate native nurseries in your area, contact the Cooperative Extension office at 352-754-4433 or check the Association of Florida Native Nurseries' web page at <http://members.aol.com/afnn/>.

Hernando County Ordinance 2001-05

Local governments around the state have become involved in the fight against invasive exotic plants in many ways. On March 13, 2001, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners adopted Ordinance 2001-05, known as the Brazilian pepper Eradication Ordinance, which became effective June 1, 2001. Ordinance 2001-05 states that it is unlawful for any owner of improved or unimproved property to suffer, allow or permit growth of Brazilian pepper on such property. It is also unlawful for any owner of improved or unimproved property to fail to remove upon notice any Brazilian pepper on such property.

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If the Code Enforcement Department finds and determines that a prohibited condition exists, as described in Section 3 of Ordinance 2001-05, it shall so notify the record owner of the offending property in writing and demand that such owner cause the situation to be remedied. If the prohibited condition is not remedied after notice, Code Enforcement may arrange for the Brazilian pepper to be removed and may bill the property owner pursuant to Section 5 of the ordinance. The expenses to remedy the condition and administrative costs shall be paid within thirty (30) days, after which a Special Assessment Lien will be made upon the property.

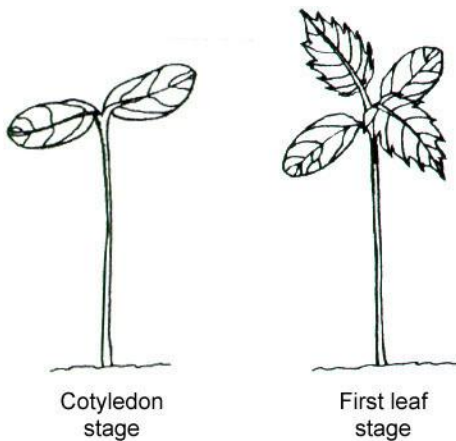
Remember: Small quantities of properly containerized pepper plants can be disposed of in the compactors at transfer stations. Resident's trailers must be 5' x 10' x 2' or less to use transfer stations and all loads must be tarped.

Large volumes and commercial entities must go to the Northwest Waste Management Facility at 14450 Landfill Road, Brooksville, FL.

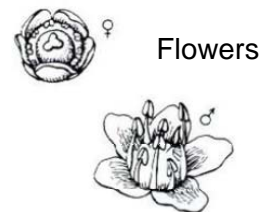
For more information contact:

Hernando Co. Mosquito/Aquatic Weed Control
1525 E. Jefferson Street, Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: 352-754-4060
Email: moscont2@co.hernando.fl.us

Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Invasive Plant Management
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 705
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000
Phone: 850-245-2809



Leaf stages



Flowers