

# Media Release

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## Look out for purple plague in FNQ

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Landholders in the Wet Tropics should be on the lookout for a plant with giant purple leaves that poses a serious threat to our rainforests.

Natural Resources, Mines and Water (NRMW) Project Co-ordinator for Tropical Weed Eradication, Dr Kylie Galway, said *Miconia calvescens*, commonly known as the purple plague, could form dense thickets in the rainforest understorey, replacing native plants and causing serious problems for wildlife.

"*Miconia calvescens* originated in tropical America and was introduced to Queensland as an ornamental because of its large, attractive leaves," she said.

"The State Government, through NRMW has become involved in an ongoing national cost shared eradication program."

Dr Galway said the eradication program also involved control operators from Cairns, Douglas, Eacham, Johnstone and Mareeba Shire councils, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Our priority is finding and destroying seedlings and fruiting plants, but we also want to spread the word in the community, and remind landholders that they have an important part to play in control and eradication," she said.

"*Miconia* is a Class 1 Declared pest under the *Land Protection (Pest & Stock Route Management) Act 2002* and as such landholders have a responsibility to control plants and minimise the spread to neighbouring areas."

Dr Galway said *Miconia* was easy to identify, with distinctive large leaves, up to 70cm in length, with purple undersides and three prominent veins.

"Landholders who suspect *Miconia* is present on their properties should contact NRMW (Centre for Wet Tropics Agriculture on 4064 1144) or their local government pest management officer for further advice."

More information about *Miconia* is available online at:

[www.nrm.qld.gov.au/pests/weeds/declared\\_plants](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/pests/weeds/declared_plants)

**For further information contact: Regional Communications Officer: Katrina Anderson-Dreisig, 4799 7552 or 0419 715 389**

