

# Brazilian Pepper

*Schinus  
terebinthifolius*



Brazilian pepper-tree  
*Schinus terebinthifolius*  
Photo by Ann Murray  
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## What is Brazilian pepper?

Brazilian pepper is a medium-sized evergreen shrubby tree, typically 15 to 30 feet in height, native to Brazil and Paraguay. Brazilian pepper produces dense clusters of small berries that change from green to bright red as they ripen. Seeds are often spread by raccoons, opossums, and some migratory birds.

Look for:

- compound leaves with 7-9 leaflets per leaf
- small white flower clusters (September-November)
- berry-like fruit clusters, glossy green, maturing to bright red

## How can you help?

- Because of its aggressive growth rate, never plant Brazilian pepper. Possession of Brazilian pepper with the intent to sell or plant is illegal in Florida without a special permit.
- Learn more about [Brazilian pepper treatment at this UF/IFAS online document](#)
- Check out [EDDMapS](#) for species that are popping up in your area
- Join your local [CISMA](#) and follow [FISP](#) for updates.
- [Sign up for alerts on EDDMapS!](#)

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## Why should we manage it?

Brazilian pepper is highly invasive and thrives on wet and dry sites. Brazilian pepper invasions represent a significant threat to Florida's native plant and wildlife populations:

- Brazilian pepper forms dense thickets that exclude all other plant life by producing a closed canopy.
- Brazilian pepper thickets alter natural fire regimes.
- Brazilian pepper negatively impacts estuaries and mangrove shorelines by outcompeting native vegetation.
- Brazilian pepper thickets are considered poor habitat for native wildlife species and may negatively impact bird populations.
- Brazilian pepper berries have been reported to produce a narcotic or toxic effect on native birds and wildlife.
- Brazilian pepper is related to poison ivy, so allergic reactions can occur when coming in contact with its sap, leaves, and pollen.

*Being able to quickly identify an exotic species in an area and eradicate it before it spreads is one of the most efficient actions that we can do to reduce future treatment costs and impacts to native ecosystems.*