

CONTROL OF *MIMOSA PIGRA* IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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*Abstract.* *Mimosa*, *Mimosa pigra* is an extremely aggressive, prickly, woody weed growing to a height of 4-6 m. Its favoured habitat is the broad open floodplains where it rapidly forms dense impenetrable thickets (2, 4).

It is a native of tropical America and in Australia only occurs in the N.T., probably being introduced into Darwin prior to 1891 (3). In 1952 it was reported in the upper Adelaide River area and reached the Arnhem Highway on the same river system in 1975 (4). It now covers over 40,000 ha of floodplain from Arnhem Land in the east to the Daly River Aboriginal Reserve in the west.

An integrated approach has been developed to contain the spread of this weed (1). Chemical control commenced in 1965 and research is continuing to evaluate herbicides for both ground and aerial application. Biological control investigations commenced in 1980 with a joint project initiated by the Division of Primary Industries and CSIRO Division of Entomology.

Because of a major problem with mimosa in Thailand, chemical and biological control research has been supported since 1984 by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (1).

In the Northern Territory, chemical control is being carried out in areas that are isolated from the major infestations along the Adelaide River, and on roadsides. This is aimed at reducing its spread while research into biological control is progressing. The Division of Primary Industries assists landholders with a spray equipment loan scheme, by subsidising the cost of herbicides and their aerial application, and by coordinating control programs.

If this control effort is not maintained, mimosa will become a major economic and ecological problem in all the wetlands of northern Australia.

## REFERENCES

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