Alien vegetation and native biota in tropical Australia: the impact of Mimosa pigra.

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## Abstract

In the coastal areas of northern Australia, the introduced shrub *Mimosa pigra* has been spreading rapidly in native ecosystems during the past decade. An almost monospecific tall shrubland replaces sedgeland initially, then riparian, aquatic, paperback and monsoon forest communities. The flora and fauna of two areas, one infested for about five years and the other for three, were compared with uninfested areas nearby. Although small mammals were more abundant at least in the short term, and frogs seemed little affected, many birds and lizards were lower in abundance. Furthermore, it is likely that the advantage of the new habitat for small mammals is in the form of shelter from avian predation and that this would disappear as the shrubland spreads and removes the foods resources of nearby native habitats. A massive loss of animal and plant species may well occur if the spread of this aggressive weed is not halted.





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