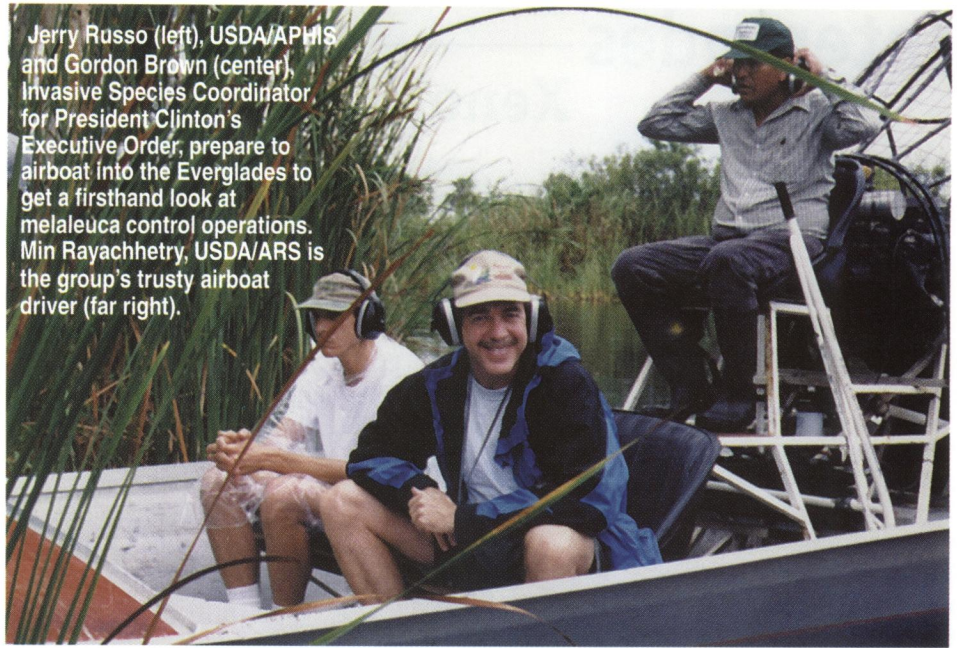


Congressional staff shown invasive plant problems in South Florida

USDA organized a tour for Congressional staffers from the House Resources and Appropriations committees and the executive office of USDA in South Florida Sept 24-6 to view invasive plant problems in the region. FLEPPC members helped out during the particularly soggy weekend, as helicopters, airboats, and raincoats were used to help highlight problems of melaleuca trees (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), Old World climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) and other pest plants in the Everglades.

The serious threats posed by, and possible solutions for, invasive plants were exemplified particularly well.



Jerry Russo (left), USDA/APHIS and Gordon Brown (center), Invasive Species Coordinator for President Clinton's Executive Order, prepare to airboat into the Everglades to get a firsthand look at melaleuca control operations. Min Rayachhetry, USDA/ARS is the group's trusty airboat driver (far right).

Melaleuca has begun to be brought under control after ten years of multi-agency planning, funding, and hard work. Millions of dead melaleuca trees were evident during the outings, along with millions more awaiting treatment. Old World climbing fern was seen to be a brilliant green living carpet that

only recently began to overtake large areas of South Florida's natural areas, while management techniques are still uncertain. These and other plant problems are recognized as serious impediments to the multi-billion dollar Everglades restoration project.

Other primary focus points of the tour were plant importation and quarantine practices at USDA's facilities at Miami International Airport and USDA's biological control laboratory in Fort Lauderdale. At Miami Airport, visitors saw the awesome scope of work USDA faces as more than 500 million plant importations arrive annually at the airport! USDA biocontrol researchers explained the "ins and outs" of their work before getting the group to conduct a field release of the melaleuca-consuming melaleuca snout beetle. A trip to Everglades National Park further illuminated the invasive plant hurdles lying in the path of natural areas managers in the South Florida region.

Many agencies, individuals, and Florida EPPC members contributed to the tour including the City of Sanibel, University of Florida, South Florida Water Management District, National Park Service, South Dade Soil and Water Conservation District, Tropical Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and Fairchild Tropical Gardens. Hopefully, the visitors returned to Washington with a clearer sense of the scope of the problems posed by invasive plants both in South Florida and the nation. —Mike Bodle



S O M E
EXOTIC
 SPECIES NEED TO
RUN WILD

Others Don't. Improved JLB Oil Plus makes your basal-applied herbicides work better. Better penetration. Better uptake. A natural vegetable oil based diluent at a reasonable cost. Order today from "The Adjuvant Experts."

HELPS CONTROL:

- Brazilian Pepper
- Chinese Tallow Tree
- Australian Pine
- Downy Rose Myrtle
- Salt Cedar

800-228-1833



BREWER International

P.O. BOX 6006 • VERO BEACH, FL 32961-6006 • WWW.BREWERINT.COM • FAX: 561-778-2490