

# Invasive Plants Know No Boundaries

by Robert L. Farley

Invasive plants know no boundaries, nor do they discriminate against potential habitat targets. The invasion of wild and natural areas by invasive plants is of primary concern in Florida, but one state agency recently took aim on a different sort of environment.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) committed to removing and excluding invasive plants from the right of way on State Road 20 within sight of the State Capitol Building in Tallahassee. This urban road, home to many state agency buildings, was the recipient in 1985 of a beautification project performed by Arbor Green, a Tallahassee non-profit group promoting and implementing community beautification. A large number of trees and shrubs were donated and planted by hundreds of community volunteers. Plantings included a group of memorial live oak trees that bear plaques commemorating past governors and other community leaders.

As often happens, this effort was diminished over the years by invasion from the usual suspects; kudzu, mimosa, privet, camphor tree, chinaberry, and ligustrum were the primary culprits crowding out the shrubs and invading the canopies of the memorial trees.

Twenty five years after installation, the FDOT Midway Operations Center mobilized its maintenance forces and removed the offending plants and liberated the long suffering beautification project. Over the course of several weeks, the maintenance crews worked diligently (and carefully) on



*FDOT maintenance crews removing a large camphor tree (Cinnamomum camphorum) from Apalachee Parkway (SR 20) within sight of the State Capitol Building.*

the heavily travelled road to cut vegetation, treat stumps, and chip and haul the trimmings. The result is a safer, more scenic gateway road to our State Capitol. Kudos to the Florida Department of Transportation.

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