

**WARNING**

# MIKANIA VINE

*Mikania micrantha*



Queensland  
Government  
Natural Resources  
and Mines

## DECLARED



### A smothering vine

- A serious pest in the Pacific Islands, S.E. Asia, Indonesia and New Guinea
- Potential to become a major pest of the Queensland Wet Tropics and other humid regions of Northern Australia
- Smothers agricultural plants
- Destroys natural environment, drives out native animals

1. Mikania vine can be distinguished from several other weedy vines by its opposite leaves and clusters of small, greenish-white flowers

The plant's twining stems are slender, ribbed and bear white hairs

2. Clusters of small white to greenish-white flower heads are produced mainly at the end of stems growing in full sunlight
3. Seeds are very small and black with a tuft of white bristles that are longer than the seed
4. Heart-shaped leaves are arranged in opposite pairs along the stem

# MIKANIA VINE *Mikania micrantha*

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## DESCRIPTION

There are many species of Mikania, most native to the Americas, and many are serious weeds. Mikania micrantha is also known as 'mile-a-minute weed' because it rapidly chokes and smothers areas it has recently colonised. It prefers rich, damp soil where there is greater than 1000mm rainfall/year and thrives in open, disturbed areas and partial shade. It can grow slowly in deep shade but is unlikely to flower.

Mikania is a much-branched scrambling perennial vine. Leaves are heart-shaped and arranged in opposite pairs along the stem. They are 4 -13 cm long and taper to an acute point, with 3 main veins arising from the leaf base. The leaf stalk is 2 - 8 cm long.

Clusters of flower heads sit at the end of multiple stems. Individual flowers are white to greenish-white. Each flower head is 4 to 6 mm long and contains 4 individual flowers.

Mikania vine has tufted seeds, well equipped for wind dispersal. Seeds are black, 1.5 - 2mm long, thin, 5-angled and have a tuft of over 30 fine, white hairs or bristles. The tuft is longer than the seed.

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## THE PROBLEM

Mikania vine rapidly grows and is a major environmental weed, as well as a pest in plantation crops and commercial forests, from West Africa through India to south-east Asia and the Pacific Islands.

It produces tens of thousands of fine, fluffy seeds that are wind-blown or carried by water, machinery and animals. Mikania vine also reproduces vegetatively, shooting readily from small cuttings.

Thriving in humid tropical areas, mikania vine has the potential to cause serious damage to agriculture (including sugar cane, tropical fruit and vegetable production) and native vegetation in northern Australia. The World Heritage listed forests of north Queensland are threatened by this weed.

In June 1998, several small populations of mikania vine were detected in the Mission Beach/Bingil Bay and Forrest Beach (near Ingham) areas of north Queensland. These, and a small infestation near Kuranda, discovered in August 2001, are now the targets of an eradication campaign.

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## WHAT SHOULD I DO

If you think you have found this plant, please contact your local Council Pest Management/Environment Officer, or your local Department of Natural Resources and Mines Land Protection Officer on 1800 803 788, for free advice on how it can be safely removed.

For those in the Mareeba area, you can also contact the Quarantine Botanist, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Mareeba, on (07) 4048 4742 for identification purposes.

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## DECLARATION DETAILS

Mikania micrantha is declared in categories P1 and P2 under the Queensland *Rural Lands Protection Act 1985* which refers to plants which should not be introduced to Queensland, but if found must be destroyed. It is also an offence to sell this plant.