

Environmental impacts of Lantana in Australia

Lantana has been confirmed as one of Australia's worst environmental weeds, with 1322 native plant and 158 native animal species negatively affected by its invasion, according to research by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). In comparison, only 142 native species (all animals) utilize or benefit from its presence.

Species at risk include 279 plants and 93 animals listed as rare and threatened under state and/or national threatened species legislation.

Lantana forms dense single species thickets (monocultures) that overwhelm and outcompete native plant species. This significantly alters the local environment and reduces biodiversity in the region.

Lantana has a core distribution that extends from Far North Queensland to southern New South Wales and west to the Great Dividing Range. This area encompasses some of these states' richest environmental systems, including several World Heritage areas.

To combat the worst impacts of lantana on our environment, a national Plan to Protect Environmental Assets from Lantana is being instituted with funding from the Australian Federal Government and support from various state agencies, regional groups and private individuals.

This plan provides a framework for the protection of our most vulnerable species and ecosystems and through the use of a triage system, ensures funding is directed to sites where management outcomes are most likely to achieve species protection goals.

For more information on this project and how you can be involved, please visit the NSW DECC website at: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/LantanaPlan/index.htm.



Lantana infestations in Springbrook National Park, Queensland. (Mick Richards)