



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
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## MEDIA ADVISORY

May 1, 2009

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### **Treatment of Invasive Plants Under Way Along Kissimmee River** *SFWMD working to limit spread of Old World climbing fern, Brazilian pepper*

**Okeechobee, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has begun a month-long effort to control two highly invasive, exotic plants – Old World climbing fern and Brazilian pepper trees – growing along the Kissimmee River.

District staff is spraying herbicides approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency along the length of the river, from Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee, to limit the spread of these plants. The treatment is scheduled to last through the end of May 2009.

Since it first made its way to Florida in the late 1960s, Old World climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) has become one of the most invasive exotic plants in the state. The climbing fern grows quickly in South Florida without the natural pests and conditions that keep it in check in its native areas of Australia, Asia and Africa. The fern covers and shades out native plants, eventually killing them.

Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) is a South American shrub first introduced into Florida as an ornamental plant in the 19th century. Today, it is considered one of the most noxious, widespread weeds in the state. The peppers readily invade everything from fallow farmland to hardwood hammocks and mangrove forests.

The SFWMD [Vegetation Management Division](#) is responsible for managing nuisance and invasive exotic vegetation throughout the District. Implementation of a vegetation management program helps to ensure the continued use and function of the region's water resources and preservation of South Florida's conservation lands.

For more information about the current treatment along the Kissimmee River, please contact Victoria Nowlan at (863) 462-5260, ext. 3045, or [vnowlan@sfwmd.gov](mailto:vnowlan@sfwmd.gov).

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**About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)**

*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.*