Bangalow palm

Archontophoenix cunninghamiana

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Family
Arecaceae (palm)

Where is it originally from?
Australia

What does it look like?
Rainforest palm (<14 m tall) with strong arching fronds and a grey trunk with a uniform diameter and distinctive rings. Bright green leaves (2-4 m long), have leaflets with a prominent midrib on either side of the stem. New leaves are usually pink-red. From spring to summer, dark purple flowers (1 m) grow out from the base of an extension of growth (crownshaft) at the top of the trunk, developing into small (1.5 cm) green fruit which ripen to bright red in late summer to autumn.

Why is it weedy?
Self-fertile, setting large amounts of seed. It has the potential to establish in native plant habitats and has a similar habitat to nikau.

How does it spread?
Bird spread the seeds long distances. Also spread by water and gravity.

What damage does it do?
Forms stands crowding out native species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Prefers habitats similar to those of nikau: gullies, stream banks, swampy areas. Grows readily in shaded area of canopy cover.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - dig out small plants or excavate larger areas.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply either glyphosate gel (120g/L strength)
3. Drill - Drill downward sloping holes around the circumference of the trunk about 8-10 cm apart, or Frill (make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree, taking care not to ring-bark the plant). Fill the holes with undiluted 'neat' glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient)
4. Foliar spray (Seedlings only) - Apply Glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient) herbicide (20ml/L) plus organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L) to cover entire plant Note: Non selective. Avoid overspray onto desirable plants.
CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Keep checking for seedlings and pull out before they can establish.

Photo: Trevor James

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