



Miconia trees

(*Miconia calvenscens*)

A tree native to tropical rainforests in Central and South America. Introduced as an ornamental species in French Polynesia in 1937 and New Caledonia in the 1970s.

Description

- The trunk is 4 to 12 metres tall and can reach 16 m in some cases
- Large, oval leaves, 20 to 80 cm long and 8 to 30 cm wide, smooth, dark green on the upper side, purple on the under side, acuminate tip, smooth or slightly indented edges, with three, clearly marked longitudinal veins
- The inflorescences are made up of panicles 20 to 35 cm long, sessile flowers in groups of five, with bracts 2 to 3 mm long, smooth, white petals
- Round fruit, purple to black at maturity, 3.5 to 4.5 mm in diameter, seeds oval to pyramidal in shape and 0.5 mm long

Ecology and reproduction

- May be found in wet, tropical forests, from sea level to 1 400 metres altitude in Tahiti
- The trees form dense, single-species thickets
- Rapid growth (up to 1.5 m per year), capable of reproduction after 4 to 5 years, capable of vegetative multiplication
- Seeds are dispersed by birds (ornithochory), on slopes (barochory) and by water (hydrochory). They germinate immediately on being exposed to light or following a dormant period in soil

Documentation

- Birnbaum P., 1994. Histoire de l'invasion d'une plante introduite, *Miconia calvenscens*, dans une île polynésienne, Tahiti. Journ. d'Agric. Trad. et de Bota. Appl., nouvelle série, vol XXXVI (2) : 283 – 295.
- Meyer J.-Y. 1996. Status of *Miconia calvenscens* (Melastomataceae), a dominant invasive tree in the Society Islands (French Polynesia). Pacific Science 50(1): 66-76.
- Meyer J.-Y. & Florence, J. 1996. Tahiti's native flora endangered by the invasion of *Miconia calvenscens* DC. (Melastomataceae). Journal of Biogeography 23(6): 775-783.
- Meyer J.-Y. 1998. Observations on the reproductive biology of *Miconia calvenscens* DC (Melastomataceae), an alien invasive tree on the island of Tahiti (South Pacific Ocean). *Biotropica* 30(4): 609-624.
- Meyer J.-Y. 2005. Le Miconia : une plante ornementale envahissante à Tahiti menace sérieusement la Nouvelle-Calédonie. Les cahiers de l'agriculture et de l'environnement. 15 : 17-18.
- CABI. 2018. Invasive Species Compendium: *Miconia calvenscens* (miconia). <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/33990>

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Classification

Order	Myrtales
Family	Melastomataceae
Genus	<i>Miconia</i>
Species	<i>M. calvenscens</i> (DC., 1828)

