

# Mikania micrantha: Invader in Chitwan National Park, Nepal

## What is mikania?

Mikania is an invasive plant species and has been named one of the world's 100 worst invaders. Native to South America, it entered Chitwan National Park around 1992 after a large flood and is spreading from east to west.

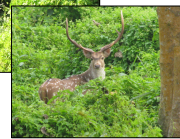
## Field Identification

- heart-shaped leaves
- small white flowers
- long viney stem
- grows like a mat over other vegetation and trees



## Why is mikania a problem?

Mikania is a threat to rhinos because it smothers native plants by stealing light, water, and nutrients. About 20% of rhino habitat in Chitwan has the most severe infestation. Mikania also destroys habitat for deer which are prey for the threatened Bengal tiger. Wildlife may change their habits in response to mikania invasion.



## How is the issue being addressed?

Current management is primarily manual. Fire and herbicide treatment are not suitable for Chitwan. Biological controls have not been introduced yet.

## Future management depends on

- community involvement
- introduction of biological controls
- awareness
- grazing by wildlife
- research

## What can you do?

- Do not pull mikania because this encourages rapid re-growth from remaining roots.
- After walking in the jungle, clean your shoes and clothes in order to prevent the spread of seeds.

For more information, visit the Biodiversity Conservation Center, Sauraha or <http://apfism.net/factsheet>

Support from



National Trust for Nature Conservation  
राष्ट्रिय प्रकृति संरक्षण कोष

SIT Study Abroad  
a program of World Learning

