

# Determining what is 'native' vegetation under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*

**Updated: April 2026**

As part of managing vegetation on your property, you may need to determine whether a particular species is 'native' and therefore regulated under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA).

The Census of the Queensland Flora and Fungi (the Census) identifies plants considered 'native' and 'native and naturalised' in Queensland. This factsheet will help you to use the Census to determine whether any species is considered 'native' in a particular location. Native vegetation may be subject to clearing restrictions under the VMA.

## How do I find out what species of plant it is?

To use the Census the first thing you will need to know is the scientific name of the plant. If you do not know the common or scientific name of the plant, firstly contact your local government or natural resource management group for assistance with identification.

If identification is difficult, the Queensland Herbarium provides a free plant identification service to the public. Go to [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) and search 'identify specimens'. Fees may apply to commercial clients.

*If you know the common name of the plant (e.g. Umbrella Tree), a search of the internet will usually provide the scientific name (e.g. Heptapleurum actinophyllum). However, care should be taken as scientific names may change over time e.g. the genus name for Umbrella Tree changed in 2020 from Schefflera to Heptapleurum and some plants may have a variety of common names which can vary from region to region.*

## What is meant by 'native', 'non-native' and 'naturalised'?

**Native plants** are those that are considered to have evolved in Queensland unaided by humans or have migrated to and persisted in Queensland without assistance from humans from an area in which they are considered to be 'native'. The Census will include native plants as either '**Native to Qld**' (that is, 'native' across all of Queensland) or '**Native and Naturalised in Qld**' (that is, 'native' in specified pastoral districts within the Census, while being 'non-native' elsewhere).

**Non-native** plants are species that are wildlife introduced to Australia, or Queensland, by human intervention (excluding pre-European introductions) and have then successfully established populations by reproducing without cultivation or other human intervention. The Census will include 'non-native' species as either: '**Formerly naturalised**', '**Doubtfully naturalised**' or '**Naturalised in Queensland**'.

One species has been separately categorised in the Census. *Cocos nucifera* (the Coconut Palm) is considered to include two taxonomic types. This species is considered 'native' within the Cape York Peninsula bioregion. However, the 'domesticated' taxonomic type is considered 'naturalised' in the remaining bioregions. Coconut Palms are therefore considered non-native under the VMA when found outside the Cape York Peninsula bioregion.

There are 13 **bioregions** recognised in Queensland (Appendix 1). Each bioregion hosts numerous **regional ecosystems** which are vegetation communities associated with particular combinations of landform and soil. For more information on Queensland's bioregions go to [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) and search 'regional ecosystem framework'.

## How do I know if a particular species is considered 'native' under the VMA?

**Step 1:** Go to [www.data.qld.gov.au](http://www.data.qld.gov.au) (or [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au)) and search 'flora fungi census'.

**Step 2:** Select the most recent Census and open the database.

*The Census is usually updated annually - screenshots below are from the 2024 version.*

**Step 3:** Select full data set (see example below).


### Census of the Queensland Flora and Fungi 2024

Data usability rating: 


Contains open format machine-readable open data.

Names, distributions and status of Queensland plants, algae, fungi, lichens and cyanobacteria, based on the Queensland Herbarium database 'Herbrecs'. Please refer to [Flora census web page](#) for further information.

#### Data and Resources

 **Introduction to Queensland plant and fungi census 2024**  
Provides information about the data presented in the 2024 Queensland census,...

 **Full data set Queensland flora and fungi census 2024**  
Names, distributions and status of Queensland native and naturalised plants,...

 **List of definitions and terms for the 2024 flora and fungi census**  
List of abbreviations and terms for the 2024 plant and fungi census.

 **Census of the Queensland flora and fungi 2024: Vascular Plants (Print)**  
Names, distributions and status of Queensland native and naturalised plants,...

[Science](#) [algae](#) [biodiversity](#) [bryophyte](#) [flora](#) [fungi](#) [lichen](#) [plant](#)

**Step 4:** You can either:

- Download a copy of the database; or
- Search the database on the webpage without downloading a copy.

In the example below, we will search the database for the Umbrella Tree (*Heptapleurum actinophyllum*) without downloading a copy.

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**Step 5:** Select the 'Fullscreen' option.

## Full data set Queensland flora and fungi census 2024

Download (CSV)

Data API

datastore Active

URL: <https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/6b5944ec-953c-465d-b160-fe63223a8e36/resource/79ea3a...>

Names, distributions and status of Queensland native and naturalised plants, algae, fungi, lichens and cyanobacteria, based on the Queensland Herbarium database 'Herbrecs'.

Table

Fullscreen

Embed

**Step 6:** Click into the highlighted search box, type the scientific name of the species that you are interested in and press 'Enter'.

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 18,216 total entries) 0 columns selected 0 cells selected

Search: Heptapleurum actinophyllum

_id	Kingdom	Sub_Kingdom	Division	Class	SubClass	Order_Name	Group_Name	Family	Subfamily_Name	Clade_Name	Botanical_Name
5730	Plantae	Viridaplantae	Streptophyta	Equisetopsida	Magnoliidae	Apiales	Angiosperms	Araliaceae			Heptapleurum actinophyllum

**Step 7:** Click into a cell in the table and use your arrow keys to scroll across to the 'Naturalisation Status' column.

*You may need to widen the column cell with your mouse to read the full details*

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 18,216 total entries) 0 columns selected 0 cells selected

Search: Heptapleurum actinophyllum

_id	Taxon_Name	Genus	Species	Rank	Infra_Name	Naturalisation_Status	NCA_Status
5730	actinophyllum (Endl.) Lowry & G.M.Plunkett	Heptapleurum	actinophyllum	Species		Native and naturalised in QLD	

**Step 8:** **Table 1** provides guidance on the species' 'Naturalisation Status' result and whether the species is regulated under the VMA.

To determine the bioregion in which your plant specimen site is located, you can request a free vegetation management property report which includes information and maps to help you identify the type of vegetation on your property.

Go to [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) and search 'vegetation mapping'. Table 2 in section 1.2 of the report will indicate the bioregion.

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**Table 1. Naturalisation status in the Census and regulation under the VMA**

Naturalisation Status	What does this mean?	Native and regulated under the VMA?
Native to QLD	Native plants are those that are considered to have evolved in Queensland unaided by humans or have migrated to and persisted in Queensland without assistance from humans.	Yes
Naturalised in QLD	Plants introduced to Australia or Queensland by human intervention (excluding pre-European introductions) and which have successfully established populations by reproducing without cultivation or other human intervention.	No
Formerly naturalised in QLD	Species that were previously considered naturalised but are presumed to have disappeared from the landscape (not collected for more than 50 years).	No
Doubtfully naturalised in QLD	Species that have populations that may be in the early stages of naturalisation and not yet established in the landscape, or their continued existence in the landscape may be doubtful.	No
Native and naturalised in QLD	<p>These are plants that are ‘native’ to part of Queensland but have become naturalised in a pastoral district* outside of their native range.</p> <p>Appendix 1 of this factsheet contains a list of 27 species that are identified ‘native and naturalised’ in the Census and are considered ‘native’ under the VMA because they are a component species of regional ecosystems in specified bioregions of Queensland.</p> <p>Through recent movement and cultivation by people, these species have also been introduced to other parts of Queensland where they are considered to be ‘non-native’. In those parts of Queensland, where plant species have become naturalised outside their native range, they may also become problematic and invasive weed species.</p> <p>For example, the Umbrella Tree (<i>Heptapleurum actinophyllum</i>) is a ‘native’ component species of regional ecosystems in the Wet Tropics bioregion of northern Queensland, but due to introduction by humans, has become a common garden plant, and even an invasive pest of bushland areas, in south eastern Queensland. It is therefore regulated vegetation in the Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands, and Central Qld Coast bioregions only. In all other Queensland bioregions, the Umbrella Tree is considered ‘non-native’ and therefore not regulated under the VMA.</p>	See Appendix 1

\* Historically, 15 pastoral districts were created to assist in administering pastoral runs. A run referred to a large area on which sheep and cattle were depastured without the need for a lot of fencing.

## So, can I remove the plant once it has been correctly identified?

The clearing of vegetation may be regulated by the Commonwealth, state or local government at any location. Whether a plant can be cleared, and how it can be cleared, depends on the particular circumstances at that location.

If you are uncertain as to whether a plant can be cleared, it is recommended that you contact the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, Vegetation Hub on 13 58 34, or by emailing [vegetation@nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au](mailto:vegetation@nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au). You may also need to seek advice from other agencies (go to [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) and search 'what other laws apply to clearing').

## Need further information?

For further information on the vegetation management framework contact the Veg Hub on 13 58 34, or by emailing [vegetation@nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au](mailto:vegetation@nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au).

For further information on determining non-native species, refer to the most recent Census, or contact the Queensland Herbarium by emailing [Queensland.Herbarium@qld.gov.au](mailto:Queensland.Herbarium@qld.gov.au) or phoning (07) 3199 7699.

## Appendix 1: Bioregions in which 'native and naturalised' species are considered 'native' under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*

Species name*	Native to these bioregions
<i>Acacia coleii</i>	Gulf Plains, NW Highlands, Einasleigh Uplands, Mitchell Grass Downs, Desert Uplands, Brigalow Belt
<i>Acacia conferta</i>	Brigalow Belt, Central Qld Coast, SE Qld, New England Tableland
<i>Acacia dietrichiana</i>	Einasleigh Uplands, Gulf Plains, Desert Uplands, Brigalow Belt
<i>Acacia elachantha</i>	Gulf Plains, NW Highlands, Mitchell Grass Downs, Desert Uplands, Brigalow Belt, Channel Country
<i>Acacia fimbriata</i>	Brigalow Belt, Central Qld Coast, SE Qld
<i>Acacia hemsleyi</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Gulf Plains, NW Highlands, Desert Uplands, Mitchell Grass Downs, Brigalow Belt (North)
<i>Acacia holosericea</i>	All bioregions except SE Qld
<i>Acacia macradenia</i>	Brigalow Belt, Desert Uplands, Mitchell Grass Downs, Mulga Lands
<i>Acacia mangium</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics
<i>Acacia podalyriifolia</i>	Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands
<i>Acacia spectabilis</i>	Brigalow Belt, Mulga Lands
<i>Albizia lebbekii</i>	Cape York Peninsula
<i>Aleurites moluccanus</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics
<i>Blakella torelliana</i>	Wet Tropics
<i>Buckinghamia celsissima</i>	Wet Tropics
<i>Chionanthus ramiflorus</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Brigalow Belt, Einasleigh Uplands, Central Qld Coast
<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Gulf Plains, Cape York Peninsula, Central Qld Coast, Brigalow Belt
<i>Diplazium dietrichianum</i>	Wet Tropics
<i>Epipremnum pinnatum</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands, Central Qld Coast, Brigalow Belt
<i>Grevillea banksii</i>	Brigalow Belt, SE Qld
<i>Grevillea glossadenia</i>	Wet Tropics
<i>Heptapleurum actinophyllum</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands, Central Qld Coast
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Gulf Plains, Wet Tropics
<i>Laportea interrupta</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands
<i>Millettia pinnata</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Gulf Plains, Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands, Central Qld Coast, Brigalow Belt
<i>Piper umbellatum</i>	Wet Tropics, Central Qld Coast
<i>Terminalia arenicola</i>	Cape York Peninsula, Wet Tropics, Brigalow Belt

\*Source: *Census of the Queensland Flora and Fungi 2024*