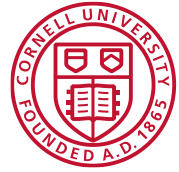


Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Garden-Based Learning



Invasive Species FAQs

Q: What is an invasive species?

A: Invasive species are non-native species that can cause harm to the environment, the economy or to human health. Invasives come from all around the world. As international trade increases, so does the rate of invasive species introductions. (Sourced from Nuisance & Invasive Species, Department of Environmental Conservation, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>)

Q: Why are invasive species a threat?

A: Invasive species threaten nearly every aspect of our world and are one of the greatest threats to New York's biodiversity. They cause or contribute to:

- Habitat degradation and loss
- The loss of native fish, wildlife and tree species
- The loss of recreational opportunities and income
- Crop damage and diseases in humans and livestock

NYS ranks near the top in many invasive categories, and is #1 for the greatest number of invasive forest pests.

(Sourced from Nuisance & Invasive Species, Department of Environmental Conservation, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>)

Q: What are the top invasive species to be aware of in NYS?

A: There are 75 terrestrial and aquatic plant species that have been prohibited or regulated because of their high level of invasiveness. Invasive species of concern vary by region. Some of the invasive pests which are currently wreaking environmental havoc and costing tens of millions in economic damage and control efforts, are emerald ash borer, Asian longhorn beetle, spotted lanternfly, and hydrilla. Though they may have a limited presence in NYS, or not be known to be here currently.

In addition, MGVs can expect inquiries about Japanese knotweed, Asian multicolor lady beetles, and hogweed.

See <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/99141.html> for more information.

Q: Are all exotic (non-native) species considered invasive?

A: No, not all exotic species are invasive. In many cases, a species not native to an area is not adapted to it. If you introduced African elephants to Alaska - they would not survive. In other cases, however, a new species can do well in a new habitat, such as striped bass introduced to the Sacramento River in California. Only in a few cases do introduced species "go wild" and grow invasively, beyond acceptable levels. Current research seems to indicate that approximately 4-19% of the non-native species introduced into the U.S. might be invasive (U.S.

Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1993). (Sourced from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, <https://www.fws.gov/invasives/faq.html#q5>)

Q: Are all exotic species harmful?

A: No, not all exotic species are considered harmful. Non-native plants are fundamental to our lifestyle - most of our food crops, such as potatoes and wheat, are not native to the United States. Invasive species, however, are exotic organisms that have gone beyond being useful and have become harmful. A species is not usually recognized as invasive until it causes some sort of harm or cost to the ecology, economy, or to human health. Attempts to plant kudzu as a forage crop and an ornamental plant and attempts to develop a nutria population for fur harvest, for example, both backfired and have now become invasive species problems. There are some benefits to all species - but invasive species do more harm than good. (Sourced from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, <https://www.fws.gov/invasives/faq.html#q6>)

Q: What can I do about invasive species?

A: There is a lot that the private citizen can do to help in our fight against invasive species. Most importantly, citizens can become educated about invasive species of concern in their area. Nearly 40% of new infestations are discovered and reported by educated people going about their daily lives. Even children have reported significant findings.

Other prevention strategies include cleaning your outdoor recreation gear and not releasing unwanted pets or dumping the contents of an unwanted aquarium into the wild.

- Visit the [Habitattitude Web Site](#) for more information on how the pet and aquarium owner can prevent the spread of invasive species.
- Aquatic recreationists should always clean and drain their boats and gear before leaving a site. Aquatic invasive plants can get stuck on various parts of a boat, and aquatic organisms can be transported in water. For a comprehensive list of how one can help prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species, please visit the [Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers/Protect Your Waters Web Site](#).
- The seeds of invasive plants can easily get transported in mud and dirt. Always remember to clean the dirt off of your hiking boots or off of your vehicle before you leave an area.
- Do your homework and do not plant or transplant any species that is on the prohibited list. If you already have one on your property, try to prevent seed from maturing and spreading into natural areas.

Q: How can I determine if a plant or animal that I have seen or caught is invasive?

A: If you have a species that you think might be invasive, take a photo and immediately email to your local Cornell Cooperative Extension or PRISM, the DEC or iMapInvasives.org. Include the date, your contact info, and site address.

For More FAQs related to Invasive Species, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at <https://www.fws.gov/invasives/faq.html#q1>

- Consult local natural resource guidebooks and field guides
- Consult web pages on the Internet that can help one identify invasive species



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