

A new poster series can help Illinoisans identify destructive invasive plants.

Citizen Watch

INVASIVE PLANTS THREATENING ILLINOIS HABITATS

The invasion of natural habitats by non-native or exotic plants poses a serious threat to Illinois natural ecosystems, second only to habitat destruction in importance. New invasive plants can harm our natural resources and biodiversity and directly impact the economies that rely upon these resources. BE ON THE LOOKOUT... for these new invaders to Illinois and report any suspected findings.

WETLANDS
Lakes, Streams, Rivers, Ponds, Sloughs, Bogs

WOODLANDS
Forests, Timber, Windbreaks

AGRONOMIC
Row Crops, Orchards, Nurseries, Greenhouses

GRASSLAND
Prairie, Roadside, Pasture, Fencelines, Right-of-Ways

If left unchecked...

Hydrilla
Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata) is a fast-growing, submerged aquatic plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Alligator Weed
Alligator weed (Alternanthera versicolor) is a fast-growing, annual plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Japanese Knotweed
Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Oriental Bittersweet
Oriental bittersweet (Sarcocolla angustata) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Purple Loosestrife
Purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Mile-a-Minute Vine
Mile-a-minute vine (Tropaeolum peruvianum) is a fast-growing, annual plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Roadside
Common Tansy (Tanacetum officinale) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Spotted Knapweed
Spotted knapweed (Centaurea maculosa) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Water Hyacinth
Water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes) is a fast-growing, aquatic plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Brazilian Elodea
Brazilian elodea (Elodea brasiliensis) is a fast-growing, aquatic plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Chinese Yam
Chinese yam (Dioscorea oppositifolia) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Five-Leaf Aebelia
Five-leaf aebelia (Aebelia chinensis) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Japanese Hops
Japanese hops (Humulus japonicus) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Miscanthus
Miscanthus (Miscanthus sinensis) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Leafy Spurge
Leafy spurge (Euphorbia esula) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Giant Hogweed
Giant hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels.

Public Safety and Wildlife
New plant species are being identified in Illinois and having dramatic effects on our natural resources. For the environment, but also human and wildlife. For example, giant hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum), an aggressive native plant species has been considered a public health hazard. Then contact with the sap from this plant can produce a rash and blisters. Early and frequent identification and removal can prevent the damage that this plant can do. Invasive plants can also have economic impacts on agriculture and forestry. For example, purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) is a fast-growing, perennial plant that forms dense mats. It can block sunlight and oxygen from reaching other plants and animals, leading to a decline in biodiversity and oxygen levels. Early detection of invasive species is critical in preventing the destruction of habitat areas due to displacement of natural and/or native species, and to preventing injury to humans and wildlife.

USDA
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Illinois Natural History Survey

Story By Kelly Estes and Dawn Refsell

An estimated 5,000 non-native plants have escaped and now exist in the United States' natural ecosystems, slowly overtaking native species. All citizens of Illinois interested in preserving its diversity need to be alert for these invasive plants, and know how to report suspected infestations.

A new poster series, Illinois Invasive Plants, has been created by the Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois, USDA-APHIS-PPQ and the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area to provide information on the identification of these invasive plant species and impact they have on human and wildlife health and the environment.

A 17-inch by 38-inch poster highlights the top four invasive plants in Illinois' four major habitats (grassland, woodland, wetland, agriculture). Four smaller (8.5 inches by 11 inches) posters correspond to the four habitats on the large poster and showcase eight to 12 plants with a photo and

distribution in Illinois on the front and information on identification and why the plant is considered invasive on the back.

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Kelly Estes is with the Illinois Natural History Survey and Dawn Refsell with the University of Illinois.

Keeping a vigilant eye out for invasive plant species is easier with a new series of posters.



To order the Illinois Invasive Plant publications from the Illinois Natural History Survey, e-mail cjstahl@inhs.uiuc.edu or call (217) 244-2161. The publications are free, but customers are responsible for postage.