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

Citizen Watch

Story By Kelly Estes and Dawn Refsell

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

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.

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.

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

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.