



GAMING Nature Centre

Invasive Species



An invasive species is an organism, which has been introduced into areas where it is not native and competes with native species for foods, nutrients, and habitat. Invasive species often have no natural enemies and can grow out of control. Invasive plants can make your shoreline or streamside less attractive for wildlife. They can also cause problems for you.

Reduce the spread of invasive plants:

Become informed

- Learn what invasive species are a problem in your area, what they look like, and monitor for their presence. Learning the difference between invasive non-native plants and native plants is the first step to managing vegetation on your property.
- Consult with resource people before you try to control or eradicate an invasive species.

Practice prevention

- Avoid disturbing ground unnecessarily. Once ground is disturbed, invasive plants can get a foothold and out-compete native species.
- Plant ground cover immediately after construction or other disturbance of your soil, before weed seeds can get started.
- Watch out for other common garden and landscaping plants, which may be aggressive in your area. Most invasive plants were introduced as landscaping plants.
- Before you bring your mower from home to the cottage, clean or hose down the blades. You don't want to bring weeds from the city!

Control methods

- Be careful! It is easy to inadvertently do more harm than good when working with alien invaders. For example, watch that your shoelaces don't pick up seeds.
- Plants are easiest to pull when young, before their root systems strengthen.
- If you are hand pulling, choose a day when the soil is damp from recent rainfall but not soggy. Loosen the plant around the roots and pull carefully. Minimize soil disturbance; don't leave it turned over and exposed. Instead, gently tread it back down the way a golfer replaces divots.
- If you are trying to control established plants, make sure that you prevent them from flowering and going to seed. You may need to mow or weed-eat twice during the growing season; however, if you choose your timing carefully, they may not flower again for the rest of the season.
- For plants like thistles, which have roots that break off and then form new plants, cut off the plant at the ground, then pour boiling water from a thermos over the exposed cut main root stem. This will set the plant back substantially. Repeat it when the plant resurfaces, and you'll find you gradually weaken the plant.
- Watch seed heads! If you have pulled a weed that has seeds forming, put it head first into a large sturdy plastic bag to prevent further spread. **CAUTION:** The flowers of some plants will continue to form into seed heads even after pulling (thistles, for example).

Dealing with the waste

- **NEVER** compost the plants. Improper composting will only help to spread invasives.
- If you live in an area where burning is permitted, the waste can be burned.
- If burning is not an option, place all the waste in sturdy plastic garbage bags and dispose of it in a landfill. This may seem like an anti-environmental option, but invasives are better off in a landfill than filling the land!

For More Information:

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Source: Living By Water Project, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and The Shore Primer